



Miami-Dade County Employee Assistance Program



Navigating Holiday Stress

As we are beginning the holiday season—we will experience a whirlwind of gift-giving holidays, marketing blitzes, and holiday activities galore in a different world than years past. While this season is meant to bring feelings of love and cheer, it's also represents holiday stress for many. In fact, according to a poll conducted by American Psychological Association found that more than 80% of us find the holiday season to be 'somewhat' or 'very' stressful—that ranks navigating the holidays right up there with asking for a raise.

Emotional Wellness Tip:

Give yourself the gift of time and attention this holiday season. Carving out 5 minutes once a day (or more if you like) to check in with yourself and take a 5 deep breaths can make a big impact on your mind and your body.



Miami-Dade County
Human Resources Department
Employee Assistance Program

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Emotional Wellness Stream:

<https://web.microsoftstream.com/channel/28dc7326-8d6f-4855-b3a2-70d7f6e8ca01>.

The holidays are also often a time when we focus on others, by sending cards, buying gifts, and cooking food, but during high stress times it is more important than ever to find time for you. If you know that the holidays are going to be stressful, plan accordingly by making sure you are carving out time to practice self-care each day so you are able to navigate some challenges as they arise. Our wellness tips will give you some tips on how to cope with stress and integrate “me” time into your schedule this holiday season.

- **Learn to say no.** Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity. If it's not possible to say no when your boss asks you to pick up an extra shift for them or work overtime, try to remove something from your agenda to ensure you are getting the time you need to be present for the ones you love and make up for the lost time. Remember you *cannot pour from an empty cup*. Make sure you are refilling your cup with time for self-care this season.
- **Set aside differences.** Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all of your expectations. Set aside grievances until a more appropriate time for discussion. Try your best to be understanding if others get upset or distressed when something goes awry. Chances are they're feeling the effects of holiday stress and depression, too. Make sure you are making time to process your own feelings with those you love who are outside the situation. Reaching out to your support system sometimes gives you a new perspective on things that may be weighing on you.
- **Be realistic.** The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Choose a few to hold on to and be open to creating new ones. Even though your holiday plans may look different this year, you can find ways to celebrate.
- **Reach out.** If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out support. Community, religious or other social groups may have opportunities to connect via websites, online support groups, social media sites or

virtual events. This can offer support and companionship. If you're feeling stress during the holidays, it also may help to talk to a friend or family member about your concerns. Try reaching out with a text, a call or a video chat. If you are community focused, think about possibly volunteering your time or doing something to help others such as dropping off a meal or dessert at a friend's home or donating to a local food kitchen. Being in the service of others can lift your spirits and broaden your friendships.

- **Acknowledge your feelings.** If someone close to you has recently passed away or you can't be with loved ones for other reasons, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. It's OK to take time to cry or express your feelings. You can't force yourself to be happy just because it's the holiday season but you can give yourself the space and permission to feel those emotions and reach out for help and support. There are a myriad of emotions that we may experience within the holiday season, make sure you are practicing self-care techniques such as mindfulness, exercise, breathwork or prayer.

We are here to support:

If you or a loved one are struggling this holiday season, you are not alone and we are here to support. Miami-Dade's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a confidential service which focuses on assisting those who are struggling with thoughts or feelings that may be affecting their ability to function at home, work or in the community. Our EAP counselors focus on supporting employees with internal and external resources that assist in setting the foundation for restoration or enhancement of emotional and mental wellness.

The EAP is also providing onsite and virtual assessments and support sessions for all employees that are in need of assistance. To set up services with an EAP counselor at no cost please **call 305-375-3293** or **email Jessica.Hughes-Fillette@miamidade.gov**. The hours of operation are Monday-Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.