



# Miami-Dade County Employee Assistance Program



## Managing 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 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.

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. Here are some wellness tips to help you cope with stress and integrate “me” time into your schedule this holiday season.

### Wellness Tip:

*Focus on what you can control in these moments of hardship. Focus on the unknown and controllable does not change the outcome.*



**Miami-Dade County  
Human Resources  
Department  
Employee Assistance Program**

**601 NW 1<sup>st</sup> Court  
Miami, FL 33136**

**Office: 305-375-3293**

### 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 practice or exercise to boost your mood and your resilience.

If you, a family member or a team member are struggling with feelings or emotions that are hindering your/their ability to engage in daily life please feel free to reach out to our team at Miami-Dade Employee Assistance Program (EAP). 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 virtual and on-site assessments for all employees that are in need of assistance. To set up an assessment with an EAP counselor at no cost please **call 305-375-3293** or **email [Jessica.Hughes-Fillette@miamidade.gov](mailto:Jessica.Hughes-Fillette@miamidade.gov)**. The hours of operation are Monday-Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.