

# How to Survive the Holidays

1. Don't Stress – Determine to Enjoy the holidays
  - a. Non- negotiables
    - i. These are your non-negotiables, what you will not give up
    - ii. What are your priorities, list them out
    - iii. Traditions, keep them or make up new ones
    - iv. Choose 1 major priority for each holiday
      1. Choose 2-3 important, but not as major priorities for each holiday
  - b. Mindset
    - i. Expectations, there is no perfect holiday
    - ii. Don't expect people to know or do, ask them kindly and let them know specifically what you want from them
    - iii. Keep a regular Routine
    - iv. Moderation, everything in moderation, - don't overdo it
    - v. Schedule family photos now! Beat the rush
    - vi. Take note of what stresses you out and why
      1. Adjust now and prepare for what you can do to relieve that stress before it happens
  - c. Traveling
    - i. Pack 2 weeks ahead of time, so you have time to gather everything you need
    - ii. Make a list, for each person of what to pack
    - iii. Breathe – sometimes you just need to “be”
    - iv. What is the weather like where you are, what is the weather like where you are going, what is the weather like along the way>
    - v. Snacks, reading material, games
      1. Be sure to pack charging cords and accessories, headphones
    - vi. It is okay if you forgot something, (make a list to help you not forget)
2. Your first year sober, Your first year alone and sober, or Your first year alone
  - a. You have to change what you have done in the past
  - b. Who do you know that is in the same situation that you are in
  - c. Things you can do
    - i. Volunteer
      1. At a soup kitchen or a few of them
      2. Visit group homes
      3. For the elderly, even your neighbors
      4. Participate in a gift drive
      5. Participate in wrapping gifts or gift giving to kids of parent(s) in prisons, away in the military, overseas, etc

- ii. Help others
      - 1. Decorate
      - 2. Go shopping
      - 3. Cooking
      - 4. Baking
      - 5. Bake cookies to share with co-workers, neighbors, the postal carrier, package delivery people, pizza delivery people, etc.
      - 6. Give fruit baskets, deli baskets
      - 7. Holiday care packages
    - iii. Ask ahead of time who you can call if you need to talk to someone
    - iv. Focus on today, not yesterday or tomorrow
    - v. It's okay to say no
    - vi. It's okay to ask for suggestions
  - d. Most importantly
    - i. Be good to yourself
    - ii. Feel your feelings
    - iii. Seek help if you need to
  - e. Prepare to be uncomfortable
    - i. It is okay to be uncomfortable
    - ii. This is your first holiday sober or alone
    - iii. Others are going to be uncomfortable, it's okay to let them know what is okay and what is not
    - iv. Plan ahead how you will handle an uncomfortable situation in a healthy way
  - f. Be Thankful
    - i. do something different but no overextending yourself
    - ii. be kind to you and to others
    - iii. take time to tell yourself that you are okay.
3. Focus
- a. Focus on what you can do – not what you used to do or might be missing out on
  - b. Create a heartfelt tribute to those who aren't here this holiday but keep it simple and personal
  - c. Volunteer at an animal shelter, they need cared for too
  - d. What community events are going on

Websites to visit:

21 Essential Holiday Travel Tips: How To Survive Travel Chaos This Season

<https://upgradedpoints.com/travel/essential-holiday-travel-tips/>

NAMI – National Alliance on Mental Health

<https://nami.org/Blogs/From-the-CEO/December-2021/The-Most-Difficult-Time-of-The-Year-Mental-Health-During-the-Holidays>