



December 2010

Managing Holiday Stress (Adapted from SAMSA Article November 2010)

Have you ever wondered how we can achieve peace on earth when we can barely find a moment of peace in our own busy lives? The holidays are here, bringing more things to do, people to see, and places to go. These things might be fun, but they also can be stressful. To make this holiday season a happy and peaceful one, look for healthy ways to manage stress.

Get Real—Set Reasonable Expectations.

Family problems may escalate when the season arrives. The reality of the holidays, much like life, is that real people and families are not perfect. Change your expectations—don't expect holidays to be like the movies!

Tips for setting reasonable expectations:

- Do your best to stick to your regular family routine. Changing your schedule to fit in holiday activities and traveling can be tough on you and your kids, so try to keep things as normal as possible. Try to keep bedtimes and mealtimes the same.
- Talk with your family about schedules. Take time to explain each day's activities to your children and let them know what you expect from them. Together, choose activities that you really want to do. Say "no" to extra activities.
- Talk with your family about finances. Even young children can learn how to budget for gifts. Urge them to get creative and make presents or do something special for family members instead of buying them.

Get Relief—Take Time To Relax. Plan quiet time or at least downtime from activities. Take a few moments to read a book, take a bubble bath, or sit down and listen to your favorite songs. You also may want to:

- Play a board game with your family.
- Go for a walk with your family to see holiday displays in your neighborhood.
- Join your kids for fun family exercise.
- Settle down for story time with your family.
- Use time spent standing in lines or sitting in traffic to take a stretch break and loosen those tense muscles.

Get Giving—Volunteer at a Local

Charity. Carving out a few hours to volunteer at a charity might seem impossible but giving your time and energy may help you find the spirit of the season.

Just Do Your Best. As you enjoy the holiday season, do your best to limit stress. Don't expect everything to go as planned. Your child may get sick on the holiday, the oven might break as you are cooking a special dinner, or a storm may prevent relatives from visiting. When these things happen, let the family help decide on a new plan. **Don't let unexpected events ruin the holidays for you. Be adaptable and flexible.** You can help yourself and your children relax and enjoy the holidays for what they truly are: a time of joy, celebration, and peace with friends and family.

Source: SAMSA November 2010 Family Article

<http://family.samhsa.gov/be/holidaystress.aspx>

**To contact your CAP Representative please call:
450-947-2688 or toll-free 1-800-677-2729**