



AdvocateAuroraHealth™

Employee Assistance Program

The 2020 holiday season will inevitably look different for most of us. As this unprecedented pandemic year comes to an end, know that your feelings and expectations about the holidays are probably complicated. You might be experiencing feelings of disappointment or even depression, which only add to pre-existing feelings of isolation and loneliness that come with the pandemic.

Holidays can stir up grief and loss. Perhaps you are still mourning the loss of a love one and will be missing their presence. Perhaps your family is facing job or financial stress due to impacts of the pandemic. Others, like essential workers, may be working overtime and unable to take as much time off. The season can feel vastly complicated as we realize what has historically helped foster our joy will likely be different.

Please consider the tips below to help prepare for your holiday season:

1. **Acknowledge that this year is unique** – Similar to just about everything else, this year's holiday season will come with adaptations. Recognize that this year is unique and may be particularly challenging, but it's only one year.
2. **Reflect on your reason for the season** – This is not the year to 'make it up to the kids' and overpromise or overspend. Stay aligned with your values. Don't forget the gift of gratitude as we've had the year to slow down and realize what is important.
3. **Your presence is the present** - If you can't get together with loved ones physically, explore virtual ways to celebrate together. This might be the year you find new traditions and ways to stay connected, including sharing old pictures or telling stories from the past.
4. **Communicate your boundaries** – It's likely you will be reconsidering your own holiday season boundaries. Best to have these conversations sooner than later to avoid awkward moments, whether hugging or attending larger parties.
5. **Re-commit to wellness** – Don't over-indulge on food or drink as it will only add to your feelings of stress and guilt. Get regular exercise and plenty of sleep. Practice mindfulness and deep-breathing exercises regularly.

You are not alone. Talk, text, or video with family and friends about how you are feeling. Consider reaching out to your EAP if additional support is needed.

AAH EAP is here for you!

800-236-3231