

# eap perspectives

Volume 8, Issue 2

Solutions Employee Assistance Program

## Take Control of Your Holidays!

Whether you celebrate Thanksgiving, St. Nicholas Eve, Kwanza, Winter Solstice, Three Kings Day, Hanukkah, Christmas, St. Lucia Day, Boxing Day or New Year's, holidays are occasions for celebration, but they are also stressful.

After experiencing the stress brought on by too little time and too much to do, Donald and Nancy Tubesing, co-authors of "Kicking Your Holiday Stress Habits" (Whole Person Associates, 1996), sought ways to turn the holiday traps that were making them miserable into holiday treasures. "To make our holidays less stressful and more enjoyable, ask yourself these three questions," suggests Nancy.

- Which holiday traditions are truly meaningful to you and which are merely habitual?
- Which social activities are pleasurable events and which are just obligations?
- Which gifts do you love to select and present and which do you hate shopping for and feel required to give?

"From all your answers, make a list of shoulds and another lists of wants. The shoulds can easily gobble all your limited time and energy, stealing from activities you truly enjoy. The answer? Reduce or eliminate the activities you believe you should do."

**BE NATURAL** to remind us to take



*The Staff of Solutions EAP wishes you & your family warm holidays and a peaceful New Year!*

*care of ourselves at this time of year.*

- B – Breathe** deeply
  - E – Exercise** 20 minutes, three times a week
  - N – Nutrition:** 3 balanced meals daily
  - A – Attitude:** negative attitudes are contagious
  - T – Time management** to set priorities and limits
  - U – Uniqueness:** recognize your own uniqueness
  - R – Relaxation:** take your mind off your to-do list
  - A – Associations** with nurturing support systems
  - L – Laughter:** still the best medicine
- Source: [www.iuinfo.indiana.edu](http://www.iuinfo.indiana.edu)

## Holiday Stress

*It's All In Your Head!*

*By Abby Anderson, MS, LPC, CEAP*

What's the big mystery about the causes of stress? It seems obvious, doesn't it? Too many things to do and not enough time to do them in, or too many difficult people in the world! Are these really the main causes of stress?

Stress is defined as "**The perception of a threat, physical or emotional and the individual's belief or knowledge that they are unable to cope with that threat**". Based on that, it makes sense that whether or not we feel stressed is determined by our *perception* of a threat. That can be anything from thinking you don't have enough time to finish your holiday shopping and that there will be dire consequences (real or imagined and usually not physical!) to taking on a new responsibility at work, feeling over your head and imagining this will lead to being fired! **Thoughts create your feelings** (including stress). When you look at any situation, you are viewing it through your own perspective, kind of like sunglasses that color what you're seeing.

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Call the EAP for *free & confidential* counseling and referral.

**1-800-526-3485**

[www.solutions-eap.com](http://www.solutions-eap.com)

**Solutions**  
FOR PEOPLE IN THE WORKPLACE

Solutions EAP is a program of MidState Behavioral Health System, Middlesex Hospital and Behavioral Health Connecticut, LLC.



## HOLIDAY STRESS TIPS

Stress makes its presence known about this time of year just as surely as mall parking lots become clogged with cars. But there are a few tricks that you can do to keep holiday stress from stealing your sanity.

- ❖ We tend to put unrealistic demands on ourselves. We try to do too much to make our holidays perfect. Then when reality doesn't match our fantasies, we're disappointed. So be realistic and pace yourself. Make deliberate choices about what *you* want to do and whom you *want* to be with. Set limits – you don't have to do everything.
- ❖ Take stock by making a list of things that you find stressful. Don't forget the positive things – they can be as stressful as the negative. Now use the list to avoid any unnecessary stressors. Also, use it to plan carefully and efficiently.
- ❖ Plan your shopping carefully, so it is as stress free as possible.
- ❖ Stick to your budget as closely as possible. Remember the true meaning of the holiday to keep things in perspective.
- ❖ Watch your eating and drinking habits. Sure, you want to enjoy yourself, but if you're losing control of your celebrating, then really how much fun is it?
- ❖ Try to keep to your exercise routine. Exercise is one of the best ways to reduce stress. If you're on an exercise regimen, by all means stick with it. If you don't exercise, take a walk and make it a habit.
- ❖ Get plenty of sleep.
- ❖ Loaf a little, play a lot.
- ❖ Smile, play, HUG SOMEONE!
- ❖ It's okay to feel sad about losses. Acknowledge them, don't stuff them. You may even want to create a new ritual remembering your loved ones.
- ❖ Accept your family as they are. You're not going to magically change them over the holidays.

### Holiday Stress: It's All In Your Head

*Continued from page 1*

Why is PERCEPTION important? Well, if you think about it, how we view the world determines our interpretation of events. Our perspective is made up of our life experiences, our cultural background, our family experiences and also our distinctive personalities. We interpret situations and see them as stressful. If you keep in mind that your thoughts create your feelings, then it is easier to see that you have choices on how to respond rather than react to any given event.

## Holiday tips

If you see what you want below, simply check off and send, or fax it to us. For specific requests, fill in the blank spaces below. Or call us for consultation and we'll do our best to find what you're looking for.

Call Solutions EAP at **1-800-526-3485**

[www.solutions-eap.com](http://www.solutions-eap.com)

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- **The Holidays are Coming – Avoid Stress**
  - **25 Tips for Holiday Survival**
  - **Kick Your Holiday Stress Habits**
  - **Don't Worry Be Natural – *Tips for parents***
  - **Going Back "Home," Seven Steps To Harmony**
  - **Head Off Holiday Havoc – *Give your children the gift of a stress-free season***
  - **20 Ways to Spend Less on Groceries for the Holidays**
  - **21 Steps for a Wiser Holiday – *Spending to Help You Avoid Becoming a Debt-Head***
  - **A Potpourri of Holiday Shopping Tips**
  - **Avoid Overspending This Holiday Season**
  - **How to Beat the Winter Blues**
  - **Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) Articles**
- Other topics I would like information on:*
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### *Other tips services:*

For information on parenting, stress, relationships, money, bereavement, eldercare and more, simply call **Solutions EAP at 1-800-526-3485.**

Or visit us on the web:

[www.solutions-eap.com](http://www.solutions-eap.com)

***Solutions for people in the workplace!***

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