Family Dynamics During the Holidays

The period between Thanksgiving and New Years can be both joyous and overwhelming. Managing tension among family members is probably the number one source of stress for most people. The following are some tips to help you take care of yourself and enjoy your holidays.

1. Remember that you have a choice about who to spend your time with. If certain people repeatedly do not respect you or tear you down, you can opt to not partake in activities with them.

2. Allow yourself to do what is best for you. If your family dynamics are unhealthy, set boundaries. Just because we are “supposed to” spend time with family at the holidays doesn't mean that certain people have earned the privilege of sharing your valuable time with you. If you're not ready to leave certain people out of your plans entirely, consider at least limiting your exposure to them.

3. Reflect on what triggers you and plan for this. For example, your brother never helps out, but is outspoken when things don't go as planned. Anticipate that this will happen again. What will you do to minimize the impact on you or prevent you from enjoying yourself? How can you make this situation less stressful on yourself?

4. Plan to meet your own needs. What is important to you this season? How do you want the holidays to look? What bothered you last year and what is within your control to change? Maybe this is your year to make your vision happen and stop worrying so much about others.

5. Set limits and practice saying no, especially if you're a people-pleaser. It’s ok to protect yourself and advocate for your needs. You can say “I can't host this year; it’s just too hard for me” or “I’m happy to host, but I’m going to need everyone to bring a dish this year”.

6. Prepare for how you will handle difficult situations. Can you sneak off and take a walk, listen to music, take a long shower, call a friend who gets it, exercise, use a mediation app? Whatever helps you, have your escape route ready so you can reduce your stress.

Make this your year to set boundaries and take care of yourself. Contact your Employee Assistance Program at the number below for help making a concrete plan.


Your Employee Assistance Program
Anytime, any day, you have free, confidential access to professional consultants and online resources to help you be your best. To access these services, call or log on to get started.

Toll-Free: 1.833.539.7285
Website: sowi.mylifeexpert.com
Code: SOWI

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