



COPING WITH A HEALTH EMERGENCY

A Guide for the Holidays

The holidays will look different for all of us this year as we continue to experience and adapt to losses from COVID-19.

The Red Cross has gathered some information on stress and tips for taking care of yourself and others during the holidays.



There are many creative ways we have adapted to the challenges of COVID-19, but at the same time you or someone you care about may still:

- Feel lonely. We may not all be able to share the holidays with the people we love.
- Feel sad that we are not able to honour family traditions in the same way as in other years.
- Feel overwhelmed by demands and pressures.
- Be afraid of getting sick with COVID-19, or of making others sick.
- Be experiencing financial worries and feel guilt or stress about gift-giving.
- Become easily frustrated with daily tasks or with family and friends.
- Feel tired, worried, or even feel nothing.

Planning for the holidays during the pandemic when we are also trying to be safe and managing COVID-19 fatigue can be challenging for all of us. Here are some suggestions that may help make the holidays less stressful.



WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Simplify your plans over the winter holidays. Keep the parts of the holiday that have meaning for you. Start new traditions. Be creative.
- Reach out to others by writing letters or cards, or by phone, text or video. Try not to be alone for long periods of time. Others are also alone and are waiting for connection. Give and receive support. Call others in your network, send emails and text messages to stay connected.
- Make healthy choices. Keep holiday “cheer” to a minimum by celebrating responsibly.
- Keep your sleep routine consistent.
- Be patient with yourself and others and take small steps.
- Connect virtually with people to talk, play games, listen to music, watch movies, listen to audio books, do yoga, or dance. Have group chats and learn or do something new together, or simply take time for yourself. Carve out quiet times to recharge when necessary.
- Practicing gratitude strengthens you and others. Find something every day that you are thankful for.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP CHILDREN AND YOUTH:

Children may be experiencing many of the same thoughts and feelings as adults, but they may be expressed in different ways and can look different for each child.

There are some simple ways you can make this time still meaningful for them by:

- Letting them know how the holidays will look different this year. Ask them to share their feelings.
- Asking them if they want to plan something special with you.
- Brainstorming creative ways to celebrate with loved ones.
- Telling them about new things that will happen this year.
- Letting them know that the holidays look different for everyone around the world this year, regardless of when and where, as our lives and traditions are temporarily disrupted.

PROFESSIONAL HELP:

If you are feeling confused and don't know what to do to get through your day, there are supports available. Asking for help is a sign of strength.

Seek out support if you experience any of the following:

- Feelings of intense sadness, hopelessness and/or guilt
- Short temper or outbursts of anger
- Difficulty eating or sleeping
- Increased physical symptoms, such as headaches or stomach-aches,
- Increased alcohol or substance use

NEED HELP IN A CRISIS?

Text CONNECT to 686868 to reach Kids Help Phone counsellors; or call Crisis Services Canada toll-free at 1-833-456-4566.



RESOURCES:

Use the [Wellness Together Canada Portal](#) for help if you're experiencing social, mental health, emotional or substance use challenges.

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