

December 3, 2019

Press Release – For Immediate Distribution

Coping with Holiday Stress – General Tips and Vulnerable Groups

Three weeks until Christmas Eve. Does that thought fill you with excitement or anxiety? Does the return of Elf on the Shelf fill you with anticipation or dread?

During this busy holiday time, the Association of Psychology Newfoundland & Labrador (APNL) wants to remind the public that while this can be a joyous and exciting time for many, it can also be a period of increased stress and distress for others.

“Christmas can be a time filled with excitement and joy for many, but a period of high stress for others” says Dr. Janine Hubbard, Communications Director, APNL. There are ways to make the holidays easier “Check your expectations, remember that more is not always better, try to Include meaningful activities, and find ways to give to others. **Remember:** Balance. Joy. Meaning. Fun. Rest. Family. Friends. Community. Love. These are what holidays were meant for. Take the time to foster these things in a reasonable, flexible way for you and those around you” says Hubbard.

Holiday Stress:

- Set realistic expectations for ourselves and others – it is rarely possible to find the absolutely perfect gift, prepare the perfect meal or host a family gathering where everyone shows their best and most loving behaviour.
- Review your expectations for the holidays. Don't feel you must follow all the same traditions/activities if you're feeling overwhelmed. Select a smaller number of traditions/activities that are meaningful to you.
- Be mindful of quality of food and drink. The holidays also tend to interfere with regular sleep and exercise routines which are important for self-care.
- Be realistic about your finances
- Focus on what really matters to you

Vulnerable Groups

There are a number of individuals who may feel more vulnerable or experience higher levels of stress during the holiday season.

- Those who are bereaved and have lost someone close over the past year
- Families or couples who have recently separated or divorced
- Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder or ADHD may find the change in routines over the holidays particularly stressful
- Children with anxiety may have increased/new worries – Santa coming into the house, being watched by the Elf, socializing with distant relatives
- Individuals with eating disorders may find the increased focus on food and meals challenging
- People with depression or other mood disorders



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- Those without close family or social networks
- Anyone struggling financially or who has experienced job loss or reduction in pay/hours

Where/How to Get Help?

Immediate assistance is available through the Mental Health Crisis Line (709) 737-4668/1-888-737-4668 or through your local Emergency Department

Psychologists can be accessed through your local health care centre, via workplace Employee Assistance programs, and privately (see www.apnl.ca – click on Find a Psychologist for more details.).

Media interviews with a Psychologist on this (or other topics), can be arranged by contacting Dr. Janine Hubbard at 682-0235 or janine@janinehubbard.com