



MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE

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Coping With Holiday Stress and Anxiety

While often joyful, the holiday season can also bring a wave of stress and anxiety. With social obligations, financial pressures and the desire to create perfect memories, it's easy to feel overwhelmed.

The following are practical ways to manage these emotions and enjoy the season more fully:

- **Set realistic expectations.** Let go of the idea that everything must be perfect. Traditions evolve, and it's okay if things don't go exactly as planned. Instead, focus on connection, gratitude and rest.
- **Prioritize self-care.** Make time for activities that recharge you. Whether it's a quiet walk, reading or declining an invitation, protecting your energy is essential.
- **Budget mindfully.** Financial stress is common during the holidays. Set a realistic budget and stick to it. Thoughtful, low-cost gifts or experiences often carry more meaning than expensive purchases.
- **Stay connected.** Reach out to supportive friends or family, especially if you're

feeling isolated and in need of emotional support. Sharing your thoughts and feelings can lighten the emotional load. If you need additional support, consider consulting a mental health professional.

- **Practice mindfulness.** Take a few minutes each day to breathe deeply, meditate or reflect on your thoughts. These brief pauses can help you remain in the present, even in the midst of chaos.
- **Create boundaries.** It's okay to decline invitations or limit time with people who drain your energy. Protecting your mental health sometimes means saying "no" without guilt.
- **Focus on gratitude.** Focusing on what you're thankful for can help ease anxiety and foster a sense of peace. Try keeping a short daily gratitude list to stay grounded in the positives.

It's completely normal to feel stressed during the holiday season. By acknowledging your emotions and taking small, intentional steps to care for yourself, you can create a season that feels calmer and more peaceful.

Tips for a Mindful Year-End

As the year draws to a close, December naturally invites a moment of pause. Between the flurry of holiday plans and the anticipation of a fresh start in January, it's easy to overlook your emotional well-being. Yet, this month may be one of the most important times to gently check in with your mental well-being.

The end of the year offers a unique opportunity to reflect on what has passed and reset intentions for what's ahead. However, before rushing into resolutions, think about creating space for self-compassion and clarity. Consider the following tips to do just that:

- **Reflect.** Take a quiet moment to look back on the year—not just the milestones, but the everyday moments as well. What challenged you? What surprised you? What helped you grow? Reflection isn't about perfection; it's about awareness.
- **Recognize.** Celebrate your wins—big and small. Maybe you led a successful project, supported a teammate or showed up on tough days. Acknowledging your efforts builds confidence and

resilience. At the same time, recognize areas for growth without judgment.

- **Reset.** Take time to reset and set intentions for 2026. Consider what kind of energy you want to carry into the new year. What values will guide your choices? What boundaries or habits will support your well-being? A short mindfulness practice or writing a letter to your future self can help you connect with your vision.

As you take time to reflect, recognize and reset, remember that you don't have to navigate your well-being alone. If you're feeling overwhelmed or want to explore ways to support your mental health, consider reaching out to your HR representative to learn more about the mental health benefits available to you.