

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS



Coping With Holiday Stress When You're a Caregiver at Home

The holiday season is a joyful time of year, but it can be stressful for anyone.

It can be especially taxing when you're caring for your senior loved one at home. Balancing the demands of the holidays with their unique needs may be overwhelming.

Understanding how you can manage your stress and stay healthy during the holidays is important for your well-being. It's important for the health and well-being of your loved one as well. This is already a busy time of year, and there's even more to do over the holidays. **Something's gotta give! Go easy on yourself and try not to spread yourself too thin. It's okay to give yourself a break.**

Tips for Dealing With Holiday Stress

- 1. Communicate with your loved one.** Talk to your loved one about their expectations for the holidays. Ask them what they want to do and what they are comfortable with. Be open and honest about your own limitations and needs. Together, you can come up with a plan that works for everyone.
- 2. Adjust your expectations.** Don't try to do everything or make everything perfect. Set realistic expectations for yourself and your family. Focus on what's most important and let go of the rest. Remember that the holidays are about spending time with loved ones, not about having a perfect meal or a perfectly decorated home.
- 3. Plan ahead.** Plan ahead for any special needs your loved one may have during the holidays. Make sure they have any necessary medications, equipment, or supplies. If you're traveling, make sure you have everything you need to keep your loved one comfortable and safe.
- 4. Take care of yourself.** It's important to take care of yourself during the holidays, especially if you're a caregiver. Make time for activities that help you relax and recharge. This could be anything from reading a book to taking a bubble bath to going for a walk. Whatever it is, make it a priority.
- 5. Seek support.** Don't be afraid to ask for help. Reach out to friends and family members who can provide support and assistance. Join a support group for caregivers to connect with others who are going through similar experiences.
- 6. Create new traditions.** Creating new traditions can be a great way to reduce stress and make the holidays more enjoyable for everyone. Involve your loved one in the planning process and come up with activities that they can easily participate in. This could be anything from baking cookies to watching a holiday movie together.

7. Practice gratitude. Take time to reflect on what you're grateful for during the holiday season. Focus on the positive aspects of your life and the things that bring you joy. Practicing gratitude can help reduce stress and improve your overall well-being.

8. Consider a move to senior living. The holidays can be a lonely time of year for seniors. One of the benefits of being in senior living during the holidays is there are plenty of festive things to do and experience with new friends. It also makes the transition to senior living easier because there are so many fun activities and lively celebrations they can participate in.

Above All Else, Just Breathe

It's bound to happen—there will likely be a moment when you catch yourself stressing out. Your face feels hot, your body throbs, and you suddenly feel overwhelmed. This is when you need to remind yourself to breathe. In fact, Donal McGraw, MBK Senior Living's Regional Director of Wellness Programming & MBK Fit, suggests trying Pranayama, which is the practice of breath regulation common in yoga.

"I recommend stepping away for a moment from whatever you have going on and using the 4-7-8 breathing technique," Donal recommended. "This involves breathing in for four seconds, holding the breath for seven seconds, and exhaling for eight seconds. This breathing pattern aims to reduce anxiety or help people get to sleep."

By following these tips, you can reduce stress and enjoy the holiday season with your senior loved one. Remember to communicate openly, plan ahead, and take care of yourself.

Happy holidays!