



thankful & blessed

TIPS FOR THE UPS & DOWNS DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Soon the holidays will be upon us—this time can be full of anticipation, joy, and excitement along with stress, anxiety and overwhelm. Holidays can be packed with social gatherings, hosting events, shopping for presents, traveling long distances, and trying to meet unrealistic expectations. It can also be a time of loneliness or grief. Family or work gatherings may cause dread due to anticipated family tensions, unpleasant conversations, or being with people who have mistreated you.

These coping tips can help you navigate this holiday season in a manner that promotes your mental health. FPC's Mental Health Ministry Team wishes you a holiday season that is less stressful and full of peace.

PRACTICING MINDFULNESS

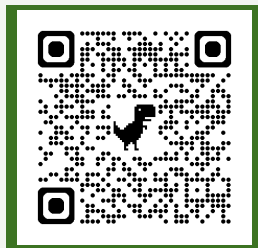
Be aware of your thoughts, feelings, and physical responses to situations and people.

Use a mindfulness exercise such as sitting down, closing your eyes, and taking 3 slow, deep breaths. Reflect on your feelings, thoughts, and sensations. Be kind to yourself and focus on feeling calm and centered.

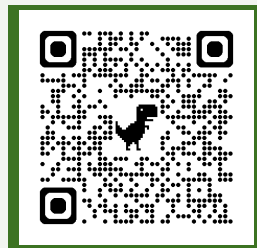
Take a moment to use a mindfulness skill from one of the apps listed below.



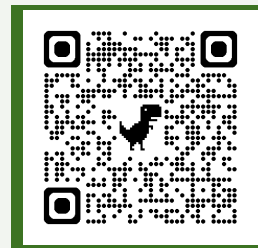
CALM HARM



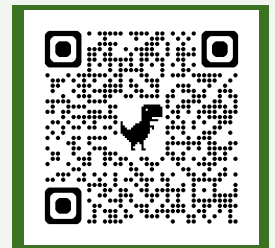
CALM



MINDSHIFT®



WORRY WATCH



MOODFIT

PRACTICING SELF-CARE

- Set realistic expectations.
- Keep things in perspective.
- Avoid overscheduling.
- Prioritize what is important to you and your family.
- Give yourself & family permission to say "No."
- Take time for yourself.
- Get enough sleep, eat a healthy diet, and drink plenty of water.
- Consume alcohol and food responsibly.
- Get outside—breathe in the fresh air, see the sun & nature around you.
- Reach out if you need help with your "to-do" list.
- Seek help to talk about your emotions and stress.
- If you are in therapy, stay in therapy.

MANAGING FAMILY GATHERINGS

- It is not about being “perfect.” It’s about being present.
- Respect differences and focus on common ground with others.
- Don’t lose sight of what really counts, and it’s okay if what counts is different for you than it is for others.
- Take a break—step away from someone you no longer want to converse with. It is healthy to remove yourself from situations.
- Try to respond with kindness.
- Before the family gathering, set ground rules with your family to not discuss certain topics such as politics or past feuds. Remind others of these ground rules if one is breached, gently reminding them back to the agreed upon parameters.
- Reach out for help and delegate duties when preparing for and cleaning up after family events. Make sure you get to enjoy the event as well as others.

HONORING THE LOSS OF A LOVED ONE

- Make space for your grief.
- Pose a question to family members to see who would like to share a feeling or memory about your loved ones. Know that others might not be in the same place as you or have the same desire to connect, in which case you can lean on friends or consider journaling or writing a letter to your loved one so you can still get your needs met.
- It is OK to share tears and laughter of fun memories together. Expressing our grief is normal and can ease the pain we feel.
- Start a new family tradition such as lighting a candle for this person or setting a picture of them out around the home.

Avoiding Overspending & Financial Stress

- Make a budget and stick with it.
- Allow yourself to set a boundary with family who have different means, and consider your time and company as valuable gifts.
- Consider a family donation to a worthy cause instead of buying presents for many family members. Younger family members can be included in choosing what organization or cause to donate to.
- Gifts do not need to be tangible objects. Celebrating together and supporting each other are also valuable gifts.
- Consider inexpensive gifts that carry meaning to those receiving them.

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