Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance professionals at JP Griffin Group

OVERCOMING LONELINESS AND DISAPPOINTMENT DURING THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed many aspects of daily life—including how you celebrate the holidays. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) urged all Americans to avoid gathering and traveling for the Thanksgiving holiday, and these views will likely apply to future holiday celebrations.

Although following the CDC's advice is essential to preventing the spread of COVID-19, canceling trips and holiday plans can make for a lonely, disappointing or stressful holiday season. While these actions can help slow the spread, they can have negative effects on your mental health. This article discusses ways that you can cope with this unprecedented holiday season.

Coping During the Pandemic and Holidays

Consider the following strategies to help cope with the loneliness and disappointment that comes with celebrating safely during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- **Manage your expectations.** Remember that this year is going to look and feel different. Managing your expectations for yourself and others will help you stay positive. Give yourself and those around you some kindness and leniency. Everyone is trying to balance staying safe with feeling "normal" during a time of year that usually is spent together with loved ones.
- **Set healthy boundaries.** Being away from family and friends during the holidays can be tough. If you start to feel overwhelmed or anxious, take a step back. Practicing self-care can also help soothe feelings of anxiety or stress.
- **Reach out to loved ones.** It's important to continue leveraging video, social media, text messaging or phone calls to stay socially connected with loved ones. Remember to reach out to those who may be especially isolated in nursing homes or other facilities with visitor restrictions.
- **Recognize your holiday stress triggers and relievers.** Financial pressures and personal demands are two common triggers. Holiday stress may cause some people to fall into unhealthy habits such as smoking, drinking or eating too much. It's important to be aware of those harmful stress relievers.
- **Monitor your moods.** Stay in tune with how you're feeling, and keep a journal if that helps. Take care of yourself by paying attention to what makes you happy and incorporating those aspects into your daily life.
- **Make time for your health.** Your well-being includes both mental and physical health. Try to keep your normal sleep schedule, eat healthy foods and stay physically active.

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- **Do what's best for your household.** It all comes down to doing what's best for your health and the health of your loved ones. Keep in mind that making the difficult decision to be apart this year may mean you can spend many more years together.

Even though this year's holiday season may not look like past years, you can still make it special and comfortable by prioritizing your mental health and well-being. Remember that staying safe this year means staying home for the holidays.

If you are experiencing distress or have concerns about your mental well-being during this holiday season, please contact your mental health professional or use the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Helpline by calling 800-662-HELP (4357).