

# Addiction and Recovery During the Holidays

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## Navigating Mental Health and Addiction During the Holiday Season

The holiday season is often portrayed as a time of joy, celebration and togetherness. However, for many, it can also be a period of heightened stress, anxiety and temptation. The pressure to attend gatherings, the financial strain of gift-giving, and the emotional weight of family dynamics can all contribute to mental health challenges and the risk of relapse for those in recovery<sup>1</sup>.

## Celebration Gatherings: A Double-Edged Sword

Holiday gatherings can be a source of joy, but they can also be a trigger for stress and anxiety<sup>1</sup>. The expectation to be happy and social can be overwhelming, especially for those dealing with mental health issues or addiction<sup>1</sup>. It's important to recognize that it's okay to feel a range of emotions during this time and to take steps to protect your mental well-being.

## Tips for Staying Clean and Sober During the Holidays

**Plan Ahead:** Identify potential triggers and plan how to handle them<sup>2</sup>. This might include bringing a sober buddy, having a non-alcoholic drink in hand, or planning an exit strategy if things become overwhelming<sup>2</sup>.

**Lean on Your Support Network:** Don't hesitate to reach out to friends, family, or support groups for help<sup>2</sup>. Having a strong support system can make a big difference.

**Set Boundaries:** It's okay to say no to events or situations that might compromise your recovery<sup>2</sup>. Prioritize your well-being and communicate your needs clearly and respectfully<sup>2</sup>.

**Practice Self-Care:** Make time for activities that recharge your mind and body, such as exercise, meditation, or spending time in nature<sup>3</sup>.

**Create New Traditions:** Consider starting new, sober friendly traditions that can help you enjoy the holidays without relying on substances<sup>4</sup>.

## Resources for Help

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health or addiction during the holiday season, there are resources available:

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): Text "NAMI" to 741741 for crisis support
- American Addiction Centers: 1-866-644-4401

Remember, you're not alone. The holiday season can be challenging, but with the right support and strategies, you can navigate it successfully. Take care of yourself and reach out for help when you need it.

### Resources:

1 [mentalhealthfirstaid.org](http://mentalhealthfirstaid.org)

2 [americanaddictioncenters.org](http://americanaddictioncenters.org)

3 [samhsa.gov](http://samhsa.gov)

4 [continuumrecoverycenterofcolorado.com](http://continuumrecoverycenterofcolorado.com)

