

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

NATIONAL STRESS-FREE FAMILY HOLIDAYS MONTH

Holiday parties, family gatherings, decorating, baking shopping, gift lists, card lists... While the holiday season can be a festive time to enjoy the company of family and friends, it can also bring a great deal of extra stress, financial pressures, and fewer opportunities to relax.

December is National Stress-Free Family Holidays Month, a reminder that it's possible to enjoy the holidays without feeling overwhelmed.

Here are some practical tips to handle holiday planning and avoid that stressed-out feeling:

- **Focus on activities that energize and please you and your family members.** Research shows that experiences make people happier than possessions. Focus more on experiences and less on things. A winter hike in the woods, sledding, or spending time as a family doing something to give back to the community can lift everyone's spirits and create memories that last far longer than the latest toy or digital gadget.
- **Stick to your budget and avoid the stress of credit card debt.** Don't spend more than you can afford, as tempting as it may be. Carrying debt may result in stress and anxiety long after the holidays are over.
- **Simplify.** Let go of perfectionism and relax more. You don't have to have the best-decorated house on the block or prepare the world's best holiday meal. Let go of traditions that no longer serve you.

