

# EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

## HOLIDAY PLANNING DURING COVID-19

Since the beginning of the pandemic, holidays, special events, and celebrations have changed dramatically. Many have lost loved ones, financial stability, and a sense of normalcy. As we navigate a second year of COVID-19 with variants, vaccinations, and division in our country, it's important we check in with family and friends to encourage communication and understand their feelings and preferences about holiday gatherings that may have changed from before the pandemic, to during, and now.

Holidays may not be the same. However, there are various ways to find peace and moments of joy in the midst of the all the changes, and as we reflect on all we have endured over the past couple of years.

### Here are some suggestions for handling holiday planning during the pandemic:

- When planning holiday celebrations with loved ones during a time of change and uncertainty, remember that communication is key to understanding and honoring others' feelings and preferences.
- Encourage conversations with family members and friends and ask them how they're feeling about holiday planning and celebrations.
- Find common ground to alleviate stress and ensure everyone enjoys the celebrations.
- Get the kids involved. Be open to new traditions suggested by younger family members that may be more meaningful to them. You never know, you may learn something new or find newfound enjoyment.

Most importantly, take care of your mental health. The pandemic has increased stress and anxiety levels for many people. If you feel overwhelmed, try to replace negative thoughts by focusing on the things you can control. Building your resilience skills can help protect your mental health.

### Try these tips to use your strengths and build resilience:

- Keep connected by staying in touch with positive and supportive people, even if you cannot see them in person.
- Recharge your batteries by allowing yourself time every day to do something you like. Taking time to engage in a pleasant activity or hobby will give you a positive lift.
- Keep your sense of humor by seeking out things that make you laugh.
- Practice gratitude by focusing on the things you are grateful for every day, like loved ones and nature.



**EAP is here to provide you with compassionate and caring support.**

**Go online to [eap.calhr.ca.gov](https://eap.calhr.ca.gov) or call 1-866-327-4762 to get started.**