

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

NATIONAL STRESS-FREE FAMILY HOLIDAYS MONTH

Are you tired of feeling stressed out by the holidays? December is National Stress-Free Family Holidays Month, a campaign encouraging people to simplify and avoid being overwhelmed financially and emotionally during this busy time of year. If there's one thing the pandemic has taught us, it's about the value of quality time spent with family and friends.

Give yourself a break, and try these ideas for a calmer month:

- **Consider creating new holiday traditions that reduce stress.** For example, if preparing a big, elaborate family meal fills you with dread, change it up and make it a potluck instead. Or pare down the menu and buy prepared foods that will save you time and effort. Use online shopping and delivery services if feasible.
- **Focus on your presence, not presents.** Chances are, your fondest holiday memories aren't about the gifts you received, but about experiences with the people you love. 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.
- **Create a realistic budget and stick to it.** Think ahead about the total amount of money you can spend this holiday season on food, gifts, decorations, travel expenses, and other costs. Stick to your budget and avoid going into debt.
- **Delegate.** Ask your children, partner, and other family members for help with holiday tasks.
- **Don't feel obligated to accept every invitation and every request.** You only have so much time and energy. Spend it wisely and focus on activities that energize and please you and your family members.

