Battling Holiday Stress

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To provide feedback or to receive a copy of today’s slides, send an email to jmeister@activehealth.net.
Learning Objectives

Battling Holiday Stress

- Examine what stress is
- Review common holiday stressors
- Learn the importance of managing holiday stress
- Review holiday stress survival tips and how to better cope with stress
What is stress?

**Physical** and **emotional** response to change

**Normal** reaction to increasing demands and changes in life

When brain perceives stress, it signals the **release of hormones** to address stress

- “Flight or fight response”
- When threat is gone, body is meant to return to normal state

When stress is **excessive** or **prolonged**
this can negatively impact health

Stress is **different for everyone**, and people can use **multiple ways to cope**
External and Internal Stressors

External
- Daily stress
- Major events
- Traumatic experience
- Holiday stress

Internal
- Uncertainty
- Negative thoughts
- Perceptions
The Holidays Are Here!
The Holidays Can Be Demanding!

- Shopping
- Buying and wrapping gifts
- Overspending
- Cleaning
- Entertaining
- Baking
- Overeating
- Drinking too much alcohol
- Lack of exercise
Common Holiday Stressors

• Financial Burden

• Guests

• Special Holiday Events

• Family Conflicts

• Feeling Lonely
Holiday Stress: Affects Mind, Body, and Behavior

**Mind**
- Overwhelmed
- Feeling anxious or worried
- Unable to focus
- Angry or irritable

**Body**
- Upset stomach and nausea
- Headaches
- Tense muscles and pain
- Fast heartbeat and breathing

**Behavior**
- Affects eating patterns (overeating/under-eating)
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Difficulty sleeping
- Overspending
Benefits of Managing Your Stress

Being able to manage your stress:

• Can help you to sleep better
• Can help you better control lifestyle behaviors
• You may get sick less and recover faster
• Reduce pain in your neck and back
• Improve your mood and mental state
• Connecting with others can become easier
• **Get you through the holidays!**
Holiday Survival Tips
**Holiday Tip #1: Time Management**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning your time</th>
<th>Know your limits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Set realistic goals</td>
<td>• Understand your responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Establish your priorities and create a to-do list</td>
<td>• Realize your true capacity</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Develop a daily routine</td>
<td>• Ask for help when needed</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Prepare a weekly schedule or plan for each day</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Get organized</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Plan your goals for each day the night before</td>
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Holiday Tip #2: Prepare and Save

• Plan ahead
• Make a list
• Stick to your budget
• Stay within your financial means
• Make homemade gifts or cards
• Take advantage sales during the year and post-holiday sales
Holiday Tip #3: Recognize Your Feelings

• Take care of yourself
• Consider volunteering at a community, spiritual or social event
• Connect with others
• Get support when needed
Holiday Tip #4: Eat With a Purpose

• Stay conscious of what you are eating
• What you eat can affect your energy level, physical health and mood

• Tips
  • Keep a food journal or log
  • Don’t skip meals
  • Eat a balanced meal
  • Drink water
  • Limit caffeine and alcohol
Holiday Tip #5: Engage in Physical Activity

• One of the most effective ways to manage stress
• Improves your mood and reduces symptoms of stress

• **Tips**
  • Engage in fun or enjoyable activity
  • Make it a routine
  • Exercise with a friend
Holiday Tip #6: Get Adequate Sleep

• Sleep affects our mood
• Insomnia can increase emotional distress, fatigue and productivity
• Lack of sleep can cause the body to produce more stress hormones

• Tips
  • Relax in the evening
  • Go to bed at the same time every night
  • Keep your bedroom quiet and dark
  • Avoid screen time before sleeping
  • Avoid large meals before sleeping
Holiday Tip #7: Engage in Relaxation Techniques

• **Release tension** and counteract the effects of stress on body
• Used to relax the **mind and body**
• Can be **self-taught** and **self-administered**
• Common techniques include deep breathing, guided imagery and progressive relaxation

**Tips**
• Deep breathing exercise is **easy and quick** to do and can be done anywhere!
Other Common Tips

- Take a break
- Do things you enjoy
- Volunteer
- Journaling
- Spend time with your friends and family
- Set realistic goals
- Face the problem and get advice from others
- Laugh
Summary

Stress is a **NORMAL** reaction to increasing demands and life changes

Stress can negatively impact our health but is **MANAGEABLE** with a few lifestyle changes

**Holiday Survival Tips:**

1. Manage Your Time
2. Prepare and Save
3. Recognize Your Feelings
4. Eat With a Purpose
5. Engage in Physical Activity
6. Get Adequate Sleep
7. Engage in Relaxation Techniques
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