



jingle **ALL THE WAY...** **TO BURNOUT?**

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For many people, the holiday season is a time of warmth, celebration, and connection. Yet behind the twinkling lights and festive cheer, this time of year also brings a unique blend of pressures: feeling happy and joyful at every moment, family dynamics, and financial struggles, just to name a few. Holiday stress is both common and completely normal, but understanding where it comes from and how to manage it can make the season far more enjoyable.

One of the biggest contributors to holiday stress is the never-ending list of things people may have to do. Shopping, cooking, planning activities, travel, childcare, wrapping presents, etc. So many things packed into a short period can cause intense stress and feelings of being overwhelmed. It is common for people to spend more money than they can afford, and finding the ability to say “no” can also be challenging. All of these factors not only increase holiday stress but also contribute to future stress in the new year.

The holidays bring added family time, which brings added tension. While reconnecting with relatives can be joyful, it may also reopen old conflicts, amplify grief, or highlight complicated dynamics. For people who have lost loved ones, the holidays can be a painful reminder of who is missing. Even positive gatherings can be draining, especially for those who are introverted or managing social anxiety.

Despite all of these stressors, there are things that you can do to help manage burnout and stress. First, set boundaries. It is completely fine to say no to things.

If that means long travel or being around family members who cause stress, boundaries are a healthy way for us to regain control. In the midst of all the noise, make sure to take time to listen to what your body, mind, and soul need. If you are unable to avoid certain travels or family activities, give yourself time in your day to take some space to recharge, rejuvenate, and regain some calmness. Deep breathing can be very helpful in these situations. Other skills could include taking a walk, stepping outside for some fresh air, listening to music, or spending time with family members who fill your cup and bring you joy.

Next, it’s essential to find time to rest during this period. Incorporate moments of relaxation into your daily routine. This could include a quick catnap during car travel, some quiet time to read or listen to an audio-book, enjoying calming music, or even going to bed earlier. Taking these steps will help you take care of yourself as best as you can.

Lastly, the most important piece of all is to give yourself some grace and practice self-compassion. Holidays can be a time of joy and happiness, but it is also okay if they don’t bring those feelings. Losing loved ones or experiencing traditions change can lead to increased stress. Remember, it is completely fine to not be okay all of the time.

Enjoy this holiday season while ensuring your needs are met too. We can’t fill from empty cups!