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Employee Assistance Service for Education

Monthly Article

Reframing and Creating New Opportunities for Celebrating Traditions

Ways to Celebrate Safely This Year

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MESSAGE FROM EASE

Resiliency is a skill many have developed during the pandemic, by discovering new ways to learn, communicate, and celebrate life. We have now come to realize that this holiday season won't look like the others as safety guidelines have been put in place to stay healthy during the pandemic. Many of us are having to change our traditional plans for events, holidays and milestones of life. Finding other ways to stay in touch and acknowledge special days is crucial.

As the holiday season approaches many will have to find new ways to celebrate by thinking differently, being creative and open to new ideas. During these uncertain times, these new traditions shared will bring families closer together and they will be a source of hope and reassurance. It can be easy to get "stuck" in our ways. When we are not confined by our expectations, we can "re-story" our lives and experiences and have more options, which is why it's important to reframe our thinking and create new opportunities to celebrate annual traditions.

In the month of October, many celebrate Halloween - a time in which we're used to dressing up in costumes and engaging in the traditional "trick-or-treating". However, this year we have been encouraged to celebrate safely by avoiding the traditional Halloween activities. Although it may seem and feel like the pandemic has put a pause on Halloween this year, there are still many ways to celebrate safely and get in the Halloween spirit! Maintaining a sense of normalcy is important for everyone, especially children.

When these major life routines are changed, it is normal to feel some kind of an emotional reaction. It is natural to experience feelings of loss and grief. It is important to talk about what one is feeling to allow a chance for venting and release. If there seems to be a sense of overwhelm, it may be more helpful to share with a professional who is trained to help.

EASE is available 24/7 if you want to talk at 1-800-882-1341
REFRAMING AND CREATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR CELEBRATING TRADITIONS

By: EASE Staff

Every year as the holiday season approaches, families look forward to the big gatherings and traditions that come along with certain holidays. But this year will look different as we’ve had to postpone these celebrations due to the pandemic. As we continue to experience difficulties to changes in our routines and traditions, it can create stress—especially for those who are used to celebrating with big groups of family and friends. This year, there may be a sense of pressure about making the holidays feel extra special, similar to the years before or pressure to try and keep up the traditions that one is used to. These added responsibilities can bring along feelings of stress, anxiety and depression while also coping with feelings of fear and anxiety due to the pandemic. This year, it’s important to reframe and create new opportunities for celebrating traditions. Although this year’s holidays will look different, reframing your perspective and the lens by which you view and experience holidays can create new opportunities to celebrate. Even with social distancing measures in place, there are still ways to celebrate and get into the holiday mood.

The holiday season has been known to bring unwelcomed guests - feelings of stress and depression, or the holiday blues. Factors that contribute to these feelings include social isolation, grief and seasonal depression. Now, these feelings can be exacerbated even more as many people are already experiencing feelings of loneliness due to the pandemic, loss of a loved one and loss of a sense of normalcy and traditions. According to research by the National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI), approximately 24% of people with a diagnosed mental illness find that the holidays make their condition "a lot" worse and 40% "somewhat" worse. For many people, holidays are described as wonderful times of the year, but what research suggests is that there is a lot of pressure for people who are living with depression to be joyful and social. If you’re experiencing any of these feelings or know someone who is, there are some things you can do to help. Meditate to quiet your thoughts, start a new holiday tradition instead of focusing on what once was, treat yourself and practice self-care or give to someone in need. Remember that you don’t have to face your feelings alone, if you don’t have close friends or family that you feel comfortable opening up to, there is help. EASE therapists are here willing to assist you in working through your feelings.

Get Creative and Celebrate Safely

With Halloween right around the corner, guidelines by the CDC suggest that traditional door-to-door trick or treating be avoided this year. However, there are still ways to celebrate this holiday in a safe manner and bring the spooky season to life.

Some ways to celebrate this year:

- Host a Zoom costume party and pumpkin-carving contest.
- Prepare a scavenger hunt with candy in your backyard or throughout your house!
- Have a Halloween movie marathon night via projector in the backyard!
- String up a Halloween-themed piñata filled with candy!
- Head to a drive-in theatre for Halloween movies! Search online for drive-in theaters near you!
- Decorate your house to the max! Use Halloween decorations to transform your home, porch and more.
- Use gloves to prepare and line up individually wrapped goody bags for families to grab and go at the end of your driveway or your yard while maintaining a social distance.
- Use gloves and create a package/pumpkin basket of goodies for a neighbor, friend or family member that you can deliver to their door at night. Ring the doorbell and leave the treats at their doorstep for a contact-free way to celebrate.
- Try out a drive-through haunted house! Search online for haunted roads or drive through haunted house experiences in your area!

https://www.familyhconline.com/ways-to-deal-with-holiday-blues-seasonal-depression/

TALK TO US
EASE has counselors if you want to talk.
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