

COPING WITH EATING DISORDERS DURING THE HOLIDAYS



TIPS FOR STAYING ON TRACK IN YOUR EATING DISORDER RECOVERY



- **Create a holiday coping plan**
 - It's important to continue to meet with your therapist, dietitian, mentor, recovery coach, or any other members of your treatment team prior to the holidays.
 - Work to decide what foods you plan to have and any "fear foods" you might include.
 - Ask your therapist to help come up with ways to cope with triggering situations.
- **Remember, your eating disorder is a liar**
 - It can distort how you feel about your body, about food, and your perception of how others see you to keep you sick.
- **Build your support system**
 - Identify a friend or family member to give you support, help manage a difficult interaction with someone, or attend events with you.
- **Know that all foods are OK**
 - There are no rules for which foods to eat and which foods to avoid.
 - All foods fit - write this down if you need a reminder.
- **Do not follow any diet, fitness, or weight loss sites, pages or people on social media**
 - Remove notifications and maybe even unfollow them.
 - These sites may trigger you with diet and weight loss talk during the holidays.
- **Set healthy boundaries**
 - Prepare in advance for how you can set healthy boundaries with friends or family if diet or weight-related talk comes up.
 - Think of a few statements or strategies you could say if this comes up.
- **Practice self-compassion**
 - Practice kind and mindful self talk.
 - Practice self-care in the days leading up to holiday events.



THIS TIME OF YEAR CAN BE TOUGH, BUT IT CAN ALSO BE JOYFUL AND POWERFUL IN YOUR RECOVERY!



KENTUCKY
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COUNCIL



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HOW TO RESPOND TO DIET-TALK

- Use a neutral transition "I'm really thankful to have food to eat and share with my friends and family"
- Use humor "You're feeling guilty about eating that brownie. Why? Did you steal it?"
- Act as if the topic is a reminder "I'm hear that you're into your new diet, but speaking of new starts, how's the job?"
- Be direct "I'm declaring this table a diet-talk and guilt free zone"
- Gently educate "No food is 'good' or 'bad', all foods can fit into a healthy diet"

Diet and weight-related talk carries potential to be harmful. It is okay to remove yourself from a conversation that is toxic for you or to change the subject.

HOW TO SUPPORT SOMEONE WITH AN EATING DISORDER

Create Balance

- It's important for anyone with an eating disorder to prioritize how their energy is spent. This means supporting them in deciding which parties, events or activities to attend

Maintain Routines

- Helping your loved one develop structure is key. Encourage them to continue meeting with their treatment team. Help them plan activities for self-care during the holidays.

Discuss Meal Plans & Support

- If possible, be an active participant in your loved one's treatment plan over the holidays to ensure they continue regular meals and help them feel more comfortable with holiday meals.

Establish Boundaries

- Your loved one may feel increased anxiety with approaching social gatherings as they anticipate conversations about eating disorders and recovery. . Help them establish and maintain boundaries by advocating for them and supporting their decisions around how they spend time with friends and family.

References:

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