

HANDLING HOLIDAY STRESS & DEPRESSION

The holidays often bring added stressors which can be difficult for many of us to manage. Raised expectations, academic deadlines, extra family, work, and social obligations can add up to higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. It is important to take steps to help PREVENT some of the excess stress. This is especially true if the holidays have taken an emotional toll on you in the past.

TIPS TO HELP YOU MANAGE HOLIDAY STRESS & ANXIETY:

- **Be realistic** The holidays don't have to be “perfect” or “just like last year.” If your holidays look different this year, learn to enjoy new ways of celebrating.
- **Reach out** if you feel lonely or isolated. Talk to friends or family. Seek out community, religious, or other social events. Volunteer time to help others.
- **Set aside differences.** Try to accept friends and family as they are, even if they don't live up to your expectations. Be understanding - they may also be struggling with holiday stress.
- **Learn to say no.** Saying “yes” when you should say “no” can leave you resentful and overwhelmed. If you can't say “no” to certain obligations, try to remove something else from your schedule.
- **Don't abandon healthy habits.** Get quality sleep. Exercise regularly. Fit in some healthy snacks and meals.
- **Take a breather.** Make time to relax by yourself every day. Spending even 15 minutes alone, doing something you enjoy without any distractions, may refresh you enough to manage everything else you need to do that day.
- **Stick to a budget.** Before you shop for food or gifts, decide how much you can afford and stick to your budget. Don't try to buy happiness by overdoing things.
- **Acknowledge your feelings. If you're experiencing loss or hurt, realize that it's normal to feel sad and it's OK to cry - even during the holidays.**
- **Seek professional help if you need it.** If you are unable to complete your daily routines because you feel persistently sad, irritable, unable to sleep, or plagued by physical complaints, please visit the college Health & Wellness Office, or talk to your doctor or mental health professional.

HAPPY CHEMICALS

How to hack them

DOPAMINE

THE REWARD CHEMICAL

SETTING GOALS
COMPLETING A TASK
EATING GOOD FOOD
CELEBRATING LITTLE WINS
LEARNING SOMETHING NEW
SELF-CARE ACTIVITIES

OXYTOCIN

THE LOVE HORMONE

HELPING OTHERS
GIVING COMPLIMENTS
PETTING ANIMALS
PHYSICAL TOUCH
SHOWING LOVE AND AFFECTION

SEROTONIN

THE MOOD STABILIZER

MEDITATING
SPENDING TIME IN NATURE
PRACTICING GRATITUDE
SUN EXPOSURE
MOVE YOUR BODY

ENDORPHIN

THE PAIN KILLER

LAUGHING
EXERCISING
WATCHING A COMEDY
ESSENTIAL OILS
LISTENING TO MUSIC

Scan for a list of mental health & wellness resources available to currently enrolled

Los Rios students



IT'S OKAY TO ASK FOR HELP

