



Los Angeles County
Office of Education
**Employee Assistance
Service for Education**

DECEMBER 2021 |

CONNECT WITH EASE

Employee Assistance Service for Education

Seasons Greetings

Overview:

Monthly Article:

Take Care of You This
Holiday Season

**EASE CAN HELP DURING
DIFFICULT TIMES**

CONNECT WITH EASE:

(800) 882-1341

**Free confidential professional help for
district employees and family
members:**

Family troubles. Emotional distress.
Stress. Anxiety. Drug/alcohol use.
Grief. Loss. Life transitions.

Professional counselors are ready
to support you.

**Call the EASE Hotline for 24/7
support.**

MESSAGE FROM EASE

Well here we are... in the midst of the winter holiday season and at the end of another year! The pandemic has shifted so much of our "normal" living, and for many the last 22 months have felt like a blur. Our personal and professional lives have been in the state of constant flux, transition, and uncertainty. For many, the longevity of the pandemic has really taken a toll. Given this, the holidays are usually a time for family, happiness, and togetherness, but can also be a very stressful time. There is a lot of pressure and expectations for people during this time which can cause stress and anxiousness. We must also acknowledge that for many the holidays can be triggering with feelings of sadness, resentment, loss, nostalgia, or even the seasonal "blues".

As we approach this time this year, I encourage you to focus on what matters most; our health and wellbeing. Reducing stress and improving your mental health might be one of the items on your list this year! Being a healthier version of YOU is truly a gift to yourself and others personally and professionally. One easy, effective way to do this is by practicing gratitude. Taking a pause to reflect can allow you to receive long-lasting mental health benefits. It is important to stay grateful despite the stress and uncertainty we have all faced. Being grateful and expressing gratitude are more than nice things to do; they help one appreciate life. We also must shift our focus from one on giving "things" to that of giving "moments". Our greatest loss during the pandemic has been one of literal "Life". We have lost loved ones, time, relationships, moments, and a sense of our "normalcy". This holiday season, I encourage all to prioritize your mental health and practice being mindful in experiencing moments with loved ones. Whether you feel excited, nervous, anxious or stressed (or all of these!) about this holiday season, you are not alone. By taking small actions each day, you can make your mental wellbeing a priority which is a gift!

If you are struggling this holiday season, EASE is available for confidential support 24/7. Reach out for support if needed.



TAKE CARE OF YOU THIS HOLIDAY SEASON



Ready or not, the holiday season is here. The holidays are a time for celebration, traditions, hope, love and joy. For many, this time of year may also lead to feelings of stress, anxiety and dread. This season brings shorter days, colder nights and some may experience feelings of sadness, lack of motivation and even depression. This is known as the “holiday blues”, even people who love the holidays could experience this due to the high demands this busy season brings. We must also reflect on the changes the pandemic has caused for many of us and our families. With some experiencing grief and loss, and changes in traditions, let's take a moment to acknowledge how we are feeling and learn how to manage the difficult emotions during this holiday season.

It's important to know that these feelings are normal and as we connect with loved ones we can create support for one another and allow ourselves to slow down to enjoy the wonderful things this season actually brings. Let's actively turn those holiday blues around and use the holidays to celebrate all the challenges we have overcome this year, create new traditions and rejoice in all of the things we value the most. Some activities we can do to take advantage of the shorter days includes visiting tree lightings, festivals of lights in your area or star gazing. As the weather gets colder we can indulge in some hot chocolate or tea, bundle up and watch our favorite movies with loved ones or have a game night.

Here are a few things you can do to nurture your mental health this holiday season:

- Focus on what is most meaningful for you this season and intentionally engage in that.
- Get enough sleep. Schedule changes can cause you to lose sleep hours which increases stress.
- Exercise, go for a walk in nature, or do yoga, getting your body moving provides an energy and mood boost.
- Limit your alcohol use. At times we may turn to unhealthy coping and this may lead to feeling worse in the long run.
- Set realistic expectations. The holidays do not need to be perfect or exactly like they were in the past to be as meaningful and memorable.
- Find time for you. Engage in self care, plan some time everyday to do an activity that replenishes your mind and body
- Say 'No' when you feel overwhelmed by other people who are making demands on your time or resources. Know your limits and boundaries.
- Do not spend time worrying about things you cannot control. Do your best and give yourself credit for it.
- Slow down when feeling overwhelmed, take a break, slow deep breathes and address what is causing the stress. Write it down and prioritize what you could do to better the situation.



<https://www.verywellmind.com/holiday-blues-4771716>
<https://iuhhealth.org/thrive/how-to-cope-with-holiday-and-covid-19-stress>



WE ARE HERE...

EASE has counselors if you want to talk.
(800) 882-1341