

Coping & Wellness: Holiday Activities



The Mecca of Black Wellness

Updated December 2018

The holiday season can be difficult for a number of reasons, including distance from loved ones, coping with grief and loss, and stress associated with shopping and gift giving. While it is common for people to isolate and detach from others during the holiday season and avoid activities they used to enjoy prior to having a difficult time, that behavior tends to increase feelings of sadness and loneliness. As a psychologist, we recommend engaging in Behavioral Activation, which is the identification of and consistent engagement in pleasurable activities to improve your mood.

If the holidays are difficult for you, consider brainstorming and/or writing down a few pleasurable activities that you can commit to engaging in to improve your mood. We also invite you to review the activities listed below that can help you begin to develop a list of Holiday Activities that you can implement to help you survive the holiday season. "Remember, seasons change and so will you."

1. **Volunteer.** This holiday season consider hosting a toy drive or canned food collection, serving meals at a homeless shelter, building homes with Habitat for Humanity, and/or adopting a family. Volunteering can increase enjoyment and life satisfaction as well as increase opportunities for socializing with others and building life long friendships.
2. **Take a trip.** Do something different this year. Take that trip you always wanted to go on. Go by yourself, with a travel group, or take family and friends. Trips and vacations can be relaxing and enjoyable.
3. **Decorate your house.** Get in the holiday spirit by decorating your home or door. Start by adding lights, ornaments, wreaths, and candles. Decorating your home can be fun and enjoyable for the whole family. You can even start your own decorating traditions (e.g., have everyone decorate their own ornament).
4. **Host a holiday game night.** Invite friends, family, and/or co-workers over for a game night at your house. During the cold holiday season everyone will enjoy a cozy, fun night indoors.
5. **Bake a special treat.** The holidays are a perfect time for baking cookies, cakes, pies, and pudding. While you can enjoy a special treat by yourself, baking is also a perfect opportunity for bringing family and friends together.
6. **Exercise with family and friends.** Ask family and friends to join you on that hike or bike trail. Exercising has many benefits during the holiday season, which include reducing holiday weight gain and stress.
7. **Create a vision board.** Get a posterboard, stack of magazines, scissors, and glue and either create a vision board by yourself or host a vision board party. Remember, the New Year is a perfect time to create a vision board, which can be a useful tool with motivating and inspiring you towards achieving your life goals.

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