



Tis the Season to be Jolly...

As the holiday season approaches, many of us begin to look forward to spending time with family and friends, and to sharing the joys of the season. However, for people who have been exposed to a traumatic event, the holiday season may bring up negative feelings especially at this time of year.

Even for people who have not been exposed to trauma, the holidays can be a stressful time. Besides the stressors of buying gifts, travel expenses and hassles, and family interactions, the short days and lack of sunlight in winter can trigger bouts of depression, anxiety, and sadness.

Here are some tools to get through the holiday season happily...as well as ways to prevent problems and misery for yourself and your love ones.

Priorities and stick to them. Organize your time. Be reasonable with your schedule. Do not overbook yourself into a state of exhaustion. This makes people cranky, irritable, and depressed.

Don't isolate. If you feel left out, then get out of the house and find some way to join in.

Don't overspend. Create a reasonable budget and stick to it. Remember it's not about the presents, it's about the presence.

Do not let the holidays become a reason for over-indulging in food and drink and create unnecessary weight gain and hangovers for yourself. This will exacerbate your depression and anxiety. Contrary to popular opinion, alcohol is a depressant.

It's appropriate to mourn if you have lost loved ones or separated. The holidays do not automatically take away feelings of aloneness, sadness, frustration, anger, and fear.

Give yourself a break; create time for yourself to do the things you love to do.

To help people cope with grief, stress, and depression during the holidays season

Keep these numbers handy!

Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD: 713-741-5000

Northwest Family Resource Center: 713-970-8448

Houston Area Community Services: 713-426-0027

Crisis Intervention of Houston, Inc.: 713-468-5463

