



DART Prevention Coalition
Taking Aim at Substance Use in Ocean County

'Tis the Season for Self-Care



The holidays can be a time of excitement and joy, but the season can also quickly become overwhelming. Along with good tidings for the season come increased obligations, financial pressures, uprooting of routines and high emotions, which can all lead to holiday stress.

Stress can impact all of us differently. Some of us experience physical symptoms such as headaches, muscle tension, weakened immune system, poor sleep or digestive issues. Whereas with others, mental and emotional symptoms like anxiety, irritability, feelings of sadness or disappointment or overall burnout, may be key signs you are feeling stressed. Whether it is physical, emotional or mental, stress can lead us to rely on poor coping skills or turn to risky behaviors, such as increased alcohol intake, overspending, overeating, increased use of caffeine or isolation.

While much of the season is focused on giving to others, we want to remind you that taking care of and giving back to yourself is also important!

The Meaning of the Season

This holiday season, we invite you to try and shift your mindset from “doing it all” to “enjoying more.” We hope you can honor and prioritize what matters most to you and those you love by creating meaningful moments with the people you love that focus on being present, maintaining old traditions or creating new traditions!

Ways to Combat Holiday Stress

- **Set realistic expectations:** Prioritize what is most important to you to commit to this holiday season and set healthy boundaries.
- **Maintain sleeping habits:** Try to keep a sleep routine that makes you feel rested and rejuvenated for the day.
- **Create a budget:** Try to remind yourself that it truly is the thought that counts! Be intentional with your gift giving and don't put too much pressure on yourself.
- **Move your body:** With routines being uprooted during the holidays, try to be mindful about getting your body moving. Things getting stressful around the family dinner table? Suggest a walk after the meal so everyone can get some fresh air and move!
- **Be mindful of your alcohol and food intake:** The holidays are a time of indulgence, and we all deserve to enjoy ourselves. However, be mindful of how alcohol and sugary treats will make you feel the following day. We also recommend identifying a designated driver or preferred rideshare beforehand.

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