



The ABCs of Managing Holiday Substance Use and Stress December 2022

Happy Holidays is a phrase we hear often during this time of year, but for many, this is a challenging time filled with stress, worry, sadness, and fatigue. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the months of December and January can be very challenging, even dangerous, for some as there is also an increase in alcohol and drug related deaths during this time.

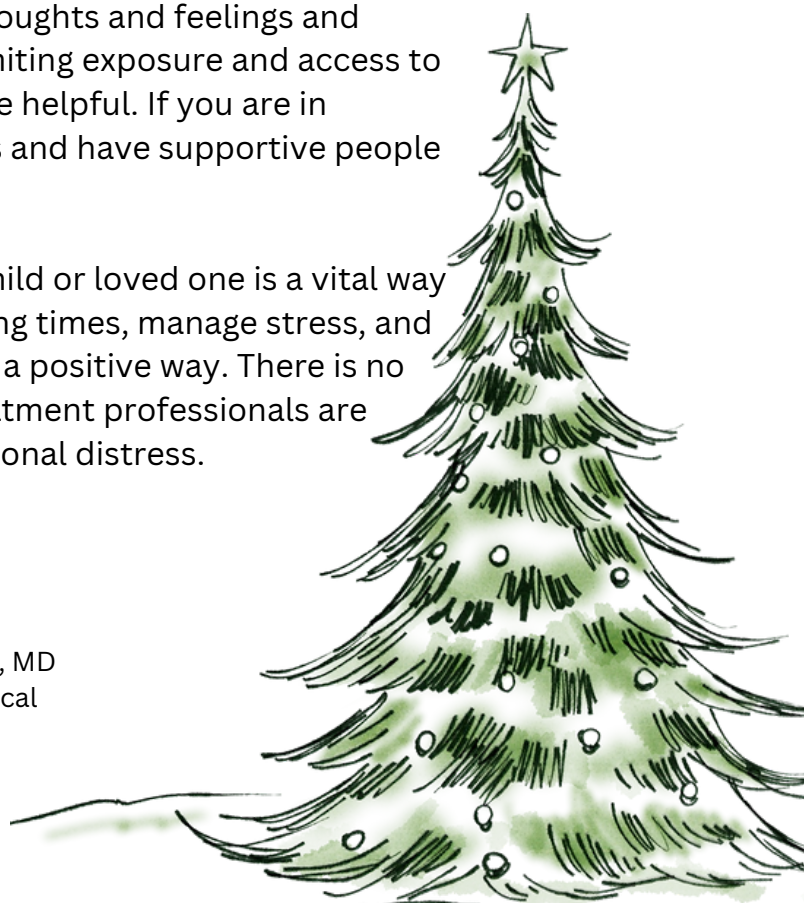
Those who are in recovery or working towards ending their use can find it difficult to do so when alcohol related advertisements seem to be more frequent. Substance use in general is increased by many during the holiday season which can be a trigger. Children, adolescents, and young adults are not immune to this phenomenon and also often resort to increased substance use, including vaping e-cigarettes, during this time.

While striving to ***Always Be in Control***, may be easier said than done, it is helpful to remember a few tips to manage holiday stress and substance use. The good news is that these strategies can help with both stress management and limiting substance use for adults and young people alike.

- Plan ahead! Anticipating potential issues and recognizing triggers can help to create a plan to address difficult thoughts and feelings and urges to drink or use before they occur. Limiting exposure and access to substances for you and/or your child can be helpful. If you are in recovery, plan to attend recovery meetings and have supportive people around you.
- Seek Help! Seeking support for you, your child or loved one is a vital way to learn strategies to get through challenging times, manage stress, and combat urges to drink or use substances in a positive way. There is no shame in getting professional help and treatment professionals are skilled at helping address all types of emotional distress.



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Striving to Always Be in Control, continued...

- Practice self-care! Engaging in self-care and staying connected with positive supports are great ways to establish and maintain healthy habits. Self-care activities such as mindfulness, physical activity, eating healthy, getting enough rest, being grateful (and others) are key components to improve wellness and help decrease stress and improve recovery efforts. These activities can be done alone, with your child, or with family and friends if you choose.

In Other Words, Practice the ABCs:

- Acknowledge the need to plan ahead.
- Be open to getting professional help.
- Care for yourself.

These strategies can help manage holiday stress and minimize substance use for a safer, more enjoyable holiday season!

Helpful Resources:

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline/Crisis Line: Dial 988
- Crisis Text Line: Text **TALK** to 741741
- NAMI Helpline 1-800-950-NAMI (6264)
- Call 911 or go to your local BH Urgent Care or Emergency Dept. if emergent care is needed.

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