

Cope during the holidays.

Under normal circumstances, the holiday season can be a joyful, but overwhelming and stressful season. Coupled with an unrelenting, ever-changing pandemic, however, we are all experiencing new territory, having to adjust and forgo some of our annual traditions.

Even though our holidays will look and feel different this year, there are things that we can do to continue to adjust to current circumstances while still celebrating the season.

PAST HOLIDAYS

- Acknowledge the grief and loss you may be experiencing with the change of routine and normalcy this year. With any loss, be it a person, job, or routine, you need to acknowledge and give yourself permission to be sad. For both children and adults, it is normal to feel disappointed especially when holiday rituals need to change – just don't let it consume you or ruin your time.
- Don't romanticize past holiday traditions. Even though you may be giving up past traditions, think of the stress you may be leaving behind too!

PLANNING AHEAD

- Plan ahead and establish rules ahead of time that you are comfortable with and communicate these with your family/friends. For example: Will you hug or shake hands? Have you set time limits on how long you are comfortable staying? Should everyone be tested first? Is it safer to stay home this year?
- Be flexible and realistic. Just like family sizes grow and change, traditions and rituals change as well. Humans are made to adapt and adjust to their environments. It can initially be uncomfortable, but it is possible.
- Practicing gratitude, even in the face of multiple losses, can seem difficult. However, there is always something to be thankful for! Even if it is something broad like the weather, there is always something. Focusing on the positive, even in a dark time, can increase your resiliency.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR KIDS

- Involve your children in decision making with holiday plans. By involving your children and keeping them informed, you are likely to decrease their own holiday anxiety and increase self esteem in the decision making process.
- Santa can still come to town! Starting November 27, Macy's will be launching a "Virtual Santa Claus" to offer a festive alternative to visit Santa. Visit [macys.com/social/santa-land/](https://www.macys.com/social/santa-land/) to learn more.

DON'T FORGET!

"Opportunities to find deeper powers within ourselves come when life seems most challenging."
– Joseph Campbell, author



We're here to help! If you'd like to speak with someone more about the stressors of the holiday season, contact (716) 338-1586.