



NEWPORT
HEALTHCARE

Empowering Lives. Restoring Families.™

Your Guide to *Sleighing* Holiday Anxiety

Take our quiz to find your personalized
holiday stress reliever.



The holiday conundrum. **Either you're ripe with anticipation** **or ridden with anxiety—or maybe both.**

If this time of year spikes your cortisol levels, know you're not alone. In fact, 89 percent of US adults say the holidays cause stress and overwhelm.

Whether you're navigating tricky family situations, feeling the pressure of holiday shopping, or struggling to find the magic in the season, we've got tips and strategies to support you.

Take our quiz on the next page to find personalized support to relieve your holiday anxiety.





**START
HERE**

Family
relationships
are the biggest
holiday
stressor for me.

Yes

No

The toughest
part about
family is

We're close,
but it's
complicated

We're not
close at all

The biggest thing
that makes it so
complicated is...

Divorce

Family
expectations

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divorce during
the holidays**

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The biggest
stressor for
me is:

I'm just not
into the
holidays

There's too
much to do

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Shopping for
gifts makes me
anxious
because:

I'm spending
so much
money

I have to find
that one special
thing for
everyone

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I'm super busy...

Shopping
for gifts

Trying to make
everything
perfect

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Strategies for Surviving Family Interrogation



Picture it. Your Hallmark fantasy family dinner has become a scene straight out of *Law & Order*.

Suddenly aunt Mildred is grilling you on your life choices: “So, when are you getting married?” “Have you found a real job yet?” “You do cover up that tattoo for job interviews, don’t you?”

But with a little prep and some established boundaries, you can glide through the interrogations as easily as a knife through Grandma Jane’s mystery green jello salad.

Tips for Maintaining Healthy Boundaries

* **Shift the focus**

Politely shift the conversation by saying, “Oh, I’m not ready to discuss that. I’m much more interested in your upcoming trip! Tell me all about it!”

* **Inject humor**

Try responding with a playful remark or joke, which can lighten the mood and give that subtle hint you’d rather not discuss this.

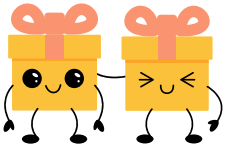
* **Be direct**

If someone is persistent and not picking up on your diversions, it’s perfectly okay to use a courteous yet assertive approach like, “I’d rather not discuss that right now, but thanks for your concern!”

* **Enlist a helper**

Ask a family member ahead of time to help divert uncomfortable conversations in a group setting or to bail you out during a one-on-one chat.





How to Embrace a Chosen Family

We often envision the holidays as a wholesome, perfectly put-together family portrait. Instead, 22 percent of adults feel stressed about the anticipation of family conflict.

If gatherings with your family of origin are more draining than fulfilling, consider making holiday plans with your chosen family instead. These are the people in your life who love, support, and respect you—just as you are.

Ways to Find Your Chosen Family

* Join supportive communities

Making true connection takes time, but it's worth the investment. Seek out others who share your interests by joining clubs or classes, and attending events like music concerts or art shows.

* Reflect on your values and interests

Being around like-minded people is comforting. Ask yourself, “What do I believe in? What makes me, me?” “What are my goals for the future?” These answers will point you to spaces that draw similar people.

* Build on existing relationships

Ask your friend circle to introduce you to others who share similar interests. You could host a dinner party and ask each friend to bring someone you don't know.





Navigating Divorce in the Holiday Season



Facing the first holiday as a family after divorce is an emotionally challenging time. Both parents and children are often grieving the separation and their beloved holiday traditions.

It's easy for kids to feel torn between two parents, two homes, and multiple families as you plan festivities. But with a commitment from both parents to put your differences aside and your children's welfare above all, you can start building new holiday traditions and memories.

How to Support Children of Divorce During the Holidays

* **Plan ahead**

Divorce can complicate holiday plans and leave a trail of hurt feelings. Set boundaries with extended family to prioritize your kids' mental health—maybe this year you cozy up at home and heal together.

* **Encourage open communication**

Let your kids express their feelings about the new holiday routine or about missing their other parent, without judgment. They may have worries, questions, or even suggestions for new ways to celebrate the season.

* **Maintain treasured traditions (but make some new ones too!)**

Keep the beloved holiday traditions alive while sprinkling in new ones, like movie nights, making holiday cards, or baking treats for neighbors.

* **Focus on new beginnings**

Put the difficulties of the previous year in the rear view and embrace fresh starts. Resolve to co-parent respectfully, with your kids' best interests at heart.





How to Find the Awe Without the Stress



A recent poll found that 43 percent of people say that holiday stress interferes with their ability to enjoy the season. If you can relate to that, it's time to look at the holidays through a different lens.

Here are five ways to focus less on the hustle and bustle and more on the little things that make the holidays—no matter what you celebrate—special.

Ways to Tap Into Awe-someness

* **Spread kindness**

Brighten someone's day with random acts of kindness, like leaving a treat for your mail carrier or picking up a stranger's tab.

* **Rediscover traditions**

Bring back the magic of your childhood by sharing beloved traditions with your family, whether it's baking special recipes or enjoying classic holiday movies.

* **Volunteer together**

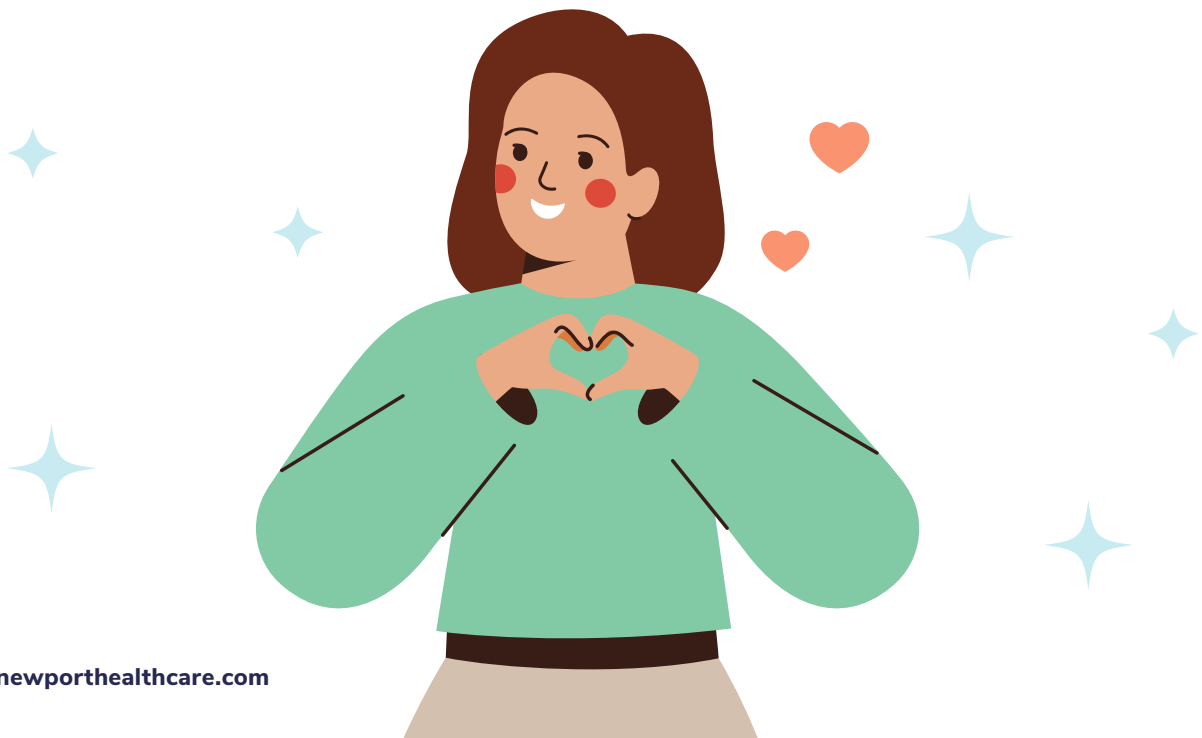
Helping those in need can be incredibly fulfilling and instills the values of compassion and gratitude—the true reason for the season.

* **Get crafty**

Unleash your inner creative with fun holiday crafting sessions! Making DIY decorations or gifts together is cost effective and provides great bonding time.

* **Seek community joy**

Explore local holiday events like tree lightings, markets, or parades to soak in the festive spirit.





A Guide to Overcoming Gift-Giving Perfectionism



This year, return perfectionism to sender, and shift your focus to intention. Does your gift reflect effort within the time, budget, and energy you realistically have?

What matters most is the care behind the gesture, not how picture-perfect it appears. Here are some ways to bring the focus back to meaningful connection.

How to Give “Good Enough” Gifts

* **Shift the spotlight to the unwrapping experience**

Make a gift a bigger surprise by wrapping it in multiple boxes, a giant ball of plastic wrap, or layers of wrapping paper. Or plan a gift-giving game that everyone can join, like the classic dice game with mystery gifts or a white elephant gift exchange. The laughter and togetherness become the true gift.

* **Wrap your gift idea in a festive theme**

If you'd like to give a more traditional gift but feel stuck, go with a theme that ties into their life. A stressed-out loved one might appreciate a self-care kit filled with cozy comforts.

A bookworm will light up when they unwrap a basket with a cute bookmark, a candle, and a seasonal drink mix. When you build a themed gift, you're giving your loved one not just items, but an experience.

* **Listen for little hints**

The best gifts often come from the little details we pick up in a casual conversation.

Maybe they've mentioned a hobby they'd like to revisit, admired something in passing, or hinted at a challenge they're facing.

These breadcrumbs can lead you to a gift that feels personal and thoughtful.





Ways to Reduce the Financial Stress of Gift-Giving



Nearly 60 percent of US adults say their most significant holiday stress is spending too much or not having enough money to spend.

Setting personal limits can help you step into the season with a clear path and less financial anxiety. Start by setting a realistic budget, and then try these out-of-the-box ways to stick to it.

Out-of-the-Box Ways to Give a Meaningful Gift

- * Bake their favorite holiday cookies, and include a beautifully printed copy of the recipe.
- * Pass down a treasured family heirloom with a handwritten story of its legacy tucked inside.
- * Make an agreement with loved ones to skip the presents entirely and pool your resources for a meal out, tickets to a holiday event, or even planning a future trip.
- * Arrange a volunteering opportunity that speaks to your loved one's heart, followed by coffee at their favorite spot.
- * Curate a playlist just for them—and test it out with a dance party after the unwrapping.
- * Give them a gift certificate they can redeem for their favorite meal at your place.
- * Craft a piece of art to brighten their home.
- * Gift them something of yours that they've always admired, or something from your closet that you know they'll love—it'll be even more special to them because it was yours.





Tips for Not Being a Scrooge



Not all of us resonate with the seasonal vibe, whether it's for religious, cultural, or personal reasons. You shouldn't feel pressured to embrace the holidays just because others are—but being on the outside looking in can leave you feeling isolated and Grinch-like.

Here are some ways to let go of negative holiday associations and craft your own celebratory experiences.

How to Get Over Your Holiday Resistance

* **Create get-togethers that are on your terms**

Exchange holiday get-togethers for a movie marathon or book club with a holiday-free theme, like road trips or first love.

* **Focus on the season, not the holiday**

If you hate holidays but love fall and winter, lean into that. Whether it's skiing, snowy walks, hot cocoa and a cozy mystery, pumpkin carving, or putting up fall decorations, let nature guide your activities.

* **Get out of town**

Feeling irritated by the holiday music and blow-up Santas everywhere? Try a location change. Spend the weekend with an out-of-town friend or take a day trip with a non-holiday focus.

* **Look more closely at your aversion**

Do the holidays bring up tough memories or trigger feelings of FOMO? A conversation with a loved one or with a therapist could help you uncover and let go of your holiday resistance.





Mental Health Support During the Holidays

If you or a loved one need support with anxiety, depression, trauma, or other mental health issues that tend to surface during the holidays, Newport Healthcare can help.

Our nationwide residential and outpatient programs provide compassionate, evidence-based treatment for ages 7–11, 12–18, and 18–35.

Contact us today to schedule a mental health assessment at no charge, discuss treatment options, and verify your insurance. We're here for you 24/7, during the holiday season and all year round.



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