

# COPING WITH EATING DISORDERS DURING THE HOLIDAYS



## TIPS FOR STAYING ON TRACK IN YOUR EATING DISORDER RECOVERY



- **Create a holiday coping plan**
  - It's important to continue to meet with your therapist, dietitian, mentor, recovery coach, or any other members of your treatment team prior to the holidays.
  - Work to decide what foods you plan to have and any "fear foods" you might include.
  - Ask your therapist to help come up with ways to cope with triggering situations.
- **Remember, your eating disorder is a liar**
  - It can distort how you feel about your body, about food, and your perception of how others see you to keep you sick.
- **Build your support system**
  - Identify a friend or family member to give you support, help manage a difficult interaction with someone, or attend events with you.
- **Know that all foods are OK**
  - There are no rules for which foods to eat and which foods to avoid.
  - All foods fit - write this down if you need a reminder.
- **Do not follow any diet, fitness, or weight loss sites, pages or people on social media**
  - Limit notifications from these sites, or unfollow them altogether.
  - Diet and weight loss promotion may trigger the disease, especially over the holidays.
- **Set healthy boundaries**
  - Prepare in advance for how you can set healthy boundaries with friends or family if diet or weight-related talk comes up.
  - Think of a few statements or strategies you could say if this comes up.
- **Practice self-compassion**
  - Practice kind and mindful self talk.
  - Practice self-care in the days leading up to holiday events.



**THIS TIME OF YEAR CAN BE TOUGH, BUT IT CAN ALSO BE A JOYFUL AND POWERFUL TIME IN YOUR RECOVERY!**



KENTUCKY  
EATING DISORDER  
COUNCIL



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# HOW TO RESPOND TO DIET-TALK

## If someone brings up diet talk, try

- Using a neutral transition: "I'm really thankful to have food to eat and share with my friends and family."
- Using humor: "You're feeling guilty about eating that brownie. Why? Did you steal it?"
- Acting as if the topic is a reminder: "I hear that you're into your new diet, but speaking of new starts, how's the job?"
- Be direct: "I'm declaring this table a diet-talk and guilt free zone."
- Gently educate: "No food is 'good' or 'bad', all foods can fit into a healthy diet."

Diet and weight-related talk has potential to be harmful. It is okay to remove yourself from a conversation that is toxic for you or to change the subject.

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# HOW TO SUPPORT SOMEONE WITH AN EATING DISORDER

## Create Balance

- It's important for anyone with an eating disorder to prioritize how their energy is spent. This means supporting them in deciding which parties, events or activities to attend, and supporting them if and when they report feeling triggered.

## Maintain Routines

- Helping your loved one develop structure is key. Encourage them to continue meeting with their treatment team. Help them plan activities for self-care during the holidays.

## Discuss Meal Plans & Support

- If possible, be an active participant in your loved one's treatment plan over the holidays to ensure they continue regular meals and help them feel more comfortable with holiday meals.

## Establish Boundaries

- Your loved one may feel increased anxiety with approaching social gatherings as they anticipate conversations about eating disorders and recovery. . Help them establish and maintain boundaries by advocating for them and supporting their decisions around how they spend time with friends and family.

References:

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