



The Holiday's May Look Different This Year



Tips to help your kids cope

This has been a stressful year for kids and families. The holidays may be especially challenging because of changes to long held family traditions. Here are some ways to help your kids cope.

- **0-3 years old.** Focus on quality time during the holidays and don't worry about the details. It's okay to keep things simple. All children benefit from love and attention from parents.

- **4-6 years old.** Create new, quarantine approved holiday traditions within your immediate family: make homemade gifts and holiday decorations, cook a special meal. Try fun ways to have a video interaction, write letters or make cards. Tell them its okay to feel sad, disappointed or angry.

- **7-12 years old.** At this age, children understand the precautions needed to be taken due to Covid. Validate their feelings of disappointment. *It's normal and OK to feel angry, frustrated or sad.* Ask them for their ideas about how to make the holiday special. Teach fun relaxation strategies: try yoga for the first time or practice slow breathing exercises.

- **13-18 years old.** Ask teens how they are feeling. Let them know you are there if they need to talk. Listen! Often teens just want someone to listen and not solve problems for them. Offer perspective on the situation by looking at the big picture.

Share a meal remotely. Use a video platform like Zoom or FaceTime to share a meal and good conversation with friends and family members. Plan ahead and set up a time that works for everyone.

Play games. If you have a tradition of playing games, you can still do many activities remotely.

Host an ugly sweater contest. Have someone pick a well-known holiday movie and have them give hints until someone guesses the title.

Consider volunteering. Explore activities to honor the holiday, such as virtual volunteering, a way to lend your time and support to those in need without leaving your house. It's common to feel lonely this time of year, even more so with stressors like physical distancing and Covid-19. If you normally celebrate with friends and family but won't be able to because of travel restrictions, here are some tips to help you feel more connected and minimize stress.

Acknowledge your feelings. If you can't be with loved ones, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. It's okay to cry or express your feelings.

Plan ahead. Don't wait until the actual holiday to make a plan. Come up with something you'll do on the day—bake cookies, order takeout, watch your favorite movie.

Reach out. Maybe ask a friend to join you on a socially distanced coffee date, or invite a relative to share a glass of wine during a 15-minute Zoom call. Many community and religious organizations have online support groups, social media sites or virtual events that can offer companionship and support.

Get help if you need it. If feelings of sadness or loneliness persist, or if you're feeling overwhelmed and stress is interfering with your everyday life, consider contacting your Employee Assistance Program at 603-271-4336.