

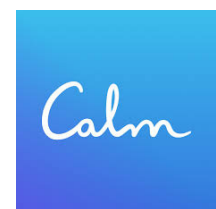
HOLIDAY CARE PACKAGE

The Virginia Tech Cook Counseling Center recognizes that the holiday season may be a stressful time for many. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the holidays may not look the same as they have in the past. With students and their families attempting to make accommodations to keep everyone safe, we would like to offer some strategies and resources to students for preserving mental health during this holiday season.

Mind Your ZZZs

A tired body makes for a tired mind. Too little sleep leaves you in a funk. If you are struggling with sleep during the holiday season, try some of these strategies:

- **Unplug at bedtime.** Try out app blockers like [Freedom](#) and [Offtime](#) to help limit your screen time.
- **Keep a consistent sleep and wake schedule.** This can be challenging when you no longer have work or classes, but keeping a regular sleep schedule programs the body to know when it's ready for sleep.
- **Relax.** Do something to help unwind before bed. Try mindfulness apps like [Calm](#) and [Headspace](#) to help you relax and fall asleep.
- Check out [Hokie Wellness](#) for more resources on sleep hygiene.



Prepare for Family Differences & Disagreements

Differences between family members are inevitable. Couple those differences with the events of 2020, and you are likely to find yourself in some uncomfortable conversations with friends and family this holiday season. Conversations like these may be a significant source of stress and create tension with loved ones. Plan out what to say and know when to walk away.

To help reduce stress and prevent conflict, think about your response to the following topics in advance:

- 2020 Election Results
- COVID-19 Beliefs
- School Progress/grades
- Post-grad plans
- Relationship status
- Health/Fitness/Wellness
- Old Family Conflict
- Generational Differences

Check out this article on [strategies for responding to intrusive or awkward questions](#) for more help.



Engage in Creative Connection

Due to COVID-19, you may not be able to visit face-to-face with loved ones during this holiday season. This does not mean you cannot still connect with them in other ways. Pick up the phone and give them a call or use virtual tools like Zoom to connect while practicing social distancing.

Try out one of these ways to creatively connect with your family members:

- Zoom holiday party
- Holiday Movie [Netflix Party](#)
- [House Party Apps](#)
- [TikTok Challenge](#)



Manage Expectations

Buying the perfect gift. Decorating the house. Catching up with all of the loved ones you haven't seen. The list of to-dos feels never ending. And the pressure to create the perfect holiday experience and please everyone may feel overwhelming and stressful. Create reasonable expectations to prevent disappointment and holiday burnout.

Explore these strategies for setting realistic holiday expectations:

- [Set boundaries](#). Give yourself permission to say "No" to certain activities.
- [Focus on what you can control](#), and drop the perfectionism at the door.
- [Focus on what is important](#). Identify the traditions and activities that make you happy. Do these. Leave the rest.
- [Take time for self-care](#). Walk, read, paint. Do what ever makes you happy. Take time to reward yourself for the things you complete.

Check out this article on [managing holiday expectations](#) for additional tips and strategies.

Maintain Healthy Habits

Don't let the cold weather stop you from being active. Exercise is a great way to boost both your mood and your immune system.

- Layer up and go for a walk outside.
- Try out a winter sport or activity like skiing, sledding, iceskating, or snow shoeing.
- Exercise at home. Explore free at home workouts from [Popsugar fitness](#) or try out a free virtual group fitness program from [VT Rec Sports](#).



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Additional Resources

If you need immediate help use the resources below:

National Suicide Prevention Hotline:
1-800-273-8255

The Trevor Project has a free app called Trevor Space:
<https://www.trevorspace.org>:

Text "STEVE" to 741741 if you are a person of color in need of support.

Financial Assistance:
<https://dos.vt.edu/emergencyfund.html>

SOAR: Emergency Financial Assistance:
<https://www.inclusive.vt.edu/Programs/SOAR.html>

Dean of Students: Basic Needs and Services:
<https://dos.vt.edu/basicneeds.html>

Virginia Suicide Prevention:
https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/

CDC Stigma & Resilience:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/related-stigma.html>

Contact Us:

2475 Oak Lane (0108)
Blacksburg, VA 24061

540-231-6557

Monday–Thursday: 8 AM–5PM | Friday: 9AM– 5PM
(for after-hours contact the on-call counselor at the number above)

<https://ucc.vt.edu/>



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