

“Handling the Holiday Ho-Hums”

The holiday season is usually a stressful time for most people; it can be even worse for those with mental illnesses. However, there are ways to effectively eliminate or reduce some of the stressful times that surround the holiday season. Following are a few tips to help you survive the “Seasonal Stress” Most of these tips can be used all year long!

- Remember you can always say “NO” and do things more simply even if they have not been done that way in the past.
- Sleep is a very important part of being able deal with those extra relatives and guests that tend to pop up unexpectedly during the holiday season.
- If you are by yourself during this season remember to stay active. Get out and get moving a simple walk around the block can make all the difference in your attitude and energy.
- Take a breather. Make some time for yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Take a walk at night and stargaze. Listen to soothing music. Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing and restoring inner calm.
- Seek professional help if you need it. Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, plagued by physical complaints, unable to sleep, irritable and hopeless, and unable to face routine chores. If these feelings last for a while, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.

Don't let the holidays become something you dread. Instead, take steps to prevent the stress and depression that can descend during the holidays. With a little planning and some positive thinking, you may find that you enjoy the holidays this year more than you thought you could.

**To submit questions to our experts
on behavioral health, please
e-mail: northstarinfo@uhsinc.com**

**For more information, please call our Intake Department
258-7575 or toll free in Alaska, 800-478-7575**