

## MENTAL HEALTH TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Manila Bulletin · 16 Dec 2020 · B-7 · By RONALD R. CATACUTAN

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'T is the season to be jolly starts the song "Deck the Halls." Although the ongoing pandemic and recent calamities might dampen spirits, here are some tips for maintaining well-being and enhancing effectiveness and functionality during the holiday season.

1

Make an effort to normalize feelings of anxiety.

It is normal to be anxious during the pandemic or whenever you are subjected to any stressful situation, especially during this holiday season. It becomes harmful when you "catastrophize" it, conjuring the worst-case scenarios, which do not happen more often than not. Be more realistic in the way you look at things. Focus on the bright side.

2

Reach out to family and friends.

When people get stressed, they have the tendency to avoid others or even isolate. Our brain is wired in such a way that we do not want to be a burden to other people. If you find yourself with this mindset, reach out to others. Christmas is a wonderful opportunity to connect with your family, friends, and people you love.

3

Establish a routine.

Having been confined in our own homes for almost a year now, our concept of time may have been disrupted or boundaries have disappeared. It is very likely that you will bring this along with you during yuletide and it might even worsen. Establish a daily routine and schedule to maintain a semblance of order and a sense of normalcy.

4

Take care of your bodily health.

Having a healthy body helps maintain a healthy mind. If you get sick, you will worry all the more.

a. Eat healthy food and hydrate yourself.

Be mindful of the food you eat. As much as possible, you should consume those, which are good for the body or are not hazardous to your health. Drink a lot of water.

b. Get enough sleep.

Use the holidays to catch up on your sleep. A regular bedtime routine is a good step toward a better night's sleep. Switch off gadgets or devices or put them in silent mode and put them away at least 30 minutes before bedtime.

c. Exercise.

Be active while having a bit of fun. Exercise releases endorphins, chemicals that relieve stress and pain in the body. Thus, the more you exercise, the happier you may become.

5

Engage in self-care.

Take time to unwind and remind yourself that strong feelings will fade. Be kind to yourself through regular self-care, which helps you become stronger and more resilient when you deal with stress.

Engage in activities you really enjoy, find meaningful or relaxing, such as gardening, massage, yoga, playing with your pets, fixing your room, or making art.

6

Adopt a gratitude mindset.

Due to recent events, it is possible that some of us might have become less hopeful or optimistic, thinking that there is nothing much to anticipate. Try to look at the brighter side and be grateful even for little things and accomplishments. It makes you affirm the goodness around you and helps you turn your attention to things that make life worth living.

These tips were presented during the general assembly for Benilde School of Hotel, Restaurant, and Institution Management. The inputs were a consolidation of the insights of Dr. Jose

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