

## Making Seasonal Family Gatherings More Joyous



Family holiday gatherings and celebrations may be more popular this year. Indeed, many people seek to make up for time lost because of their inability to make close and personal visits because of the pandemic. Relatives often stress each other out at such gatherings, and volumes have been written that offer advice on coping with annoying spats. Practically speaking, helpful intervention suggestions boil down to a few

key ideas. Consider the following if conflict is on the horizon this season. 1) Preempting: Before a visit, ask that certain subjects (like politics or “Are you dating someone yet?”) remain off-limits. 2) Stay cool: Triggers happen, but with a bit of practice, you’ll avoid reacting to them. Practice role-plays with a friend that test your triggers and build resilience to difficult topics you wish to avoid. 3) Assertiveness 101: Be direct and respectful but clear about your wants and needs. “Rise above” your trigger with a well-practiced request: “Aunt Sally, I’d like to talk about something else. Let’s discuss . . .”

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## How to Be Energized (Not Paralyzed) by Stress

Better diet, journaling, sleep, meditation, exercise—they’re ways of managing stress. But have you considered altering your mindset as a stress management tactic? Begin with this question: “How much anxiety will I accept in this stressful situation?” Surprisingly, this question prompts awareness, and it decreases the likelihood you will respond to a stressor in an unhealthy way. Rather than panicking, fleeing, or escaping the stress, you challenge it. You make it a launching pad for higher productivity. The goal: overcome rather than succumb to it. Successful stress management is when you actively are directing a desired outcome. You make stress work for you rather than on you. No stress management tactic works in every situation, but this one demonstrates that mindset matters, and you can direct stress away from taking its toll on your health.

## Recapture Your Energy after Work

Consider dozens of ways to recapture your energy if you’re frustrated by being too tired after coming home from work. A quick search will locate many energizing strategies, but experiment with a combination of the following, which are frequently mentioned in workplace wellness articles: 1) Drink a glass of water and exercise for ten minutes or more. 2) Try a healthy, low-glycemic snack. 3) Take a short 20-minute power nap (set a timer so you don’t nap longer). 4) Meet up or exercise with positive people (they’ll energize you). 5) Meditate—no, it won’t put you to sleep. Engage in rejuvenation activities immediately upon arrival at home. See a doctor if you feel chronically tired and fatigued or get a consult if you struggle with getting proper sleep.

## Helping Someone Seek Help for a Mental Illness

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the most common untreated mental illness affecting those in the workplace is depression. Depression can make it difficult for a person to finish tasks, and it can interfere with their ability to process information and think clearly on the job. Only 57% of employees who are diagnosed with moderate depression receive treatment, and only 40% of employees reporting severe depression get help, says the CDC. This makes it likely that you will interact with a worker who suffers from untreated depressive illness. You can’t make a diagnosis, but you can encourage a coworker to visit the EAP or a community-based mental health provider when you hear statements of hopelessness or feeling trapped or you witness isolating behaviors and withdrawal from social connection with others at work.

Source: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).