LEARN TO LIVE BULLETIN

Your guide in wellness & mental health

'Tis the season to be jolly!

One of the most wonderful messes in the world is the one created in our homes during the holidays – don't put too much pressure on yourself to clean up too quickly.

The holidays can be a time of joy and excitement. But for many, it can also be a time of stress – from spending money on gifts, dashing to decorate the house or juggling family gatherings. Stress is an integral part of everyone's life whether you are a kid or an adult.

Even though stress might be considered negatively, stress is not all bad. The stress that enables you to get your work done, exercise regularly, and stay motivated is actually good for you! It's when stress starts overwhelming you, that it can affect your mental wellbeing and can easily exhaust you emotionally and physically. It goes on to affect your work quality, maintaining relationships, and every other aspect of your life.

With some practical tips, you can minimize the stress that accompanies the holidays.

- **Make lists:** Put pen to paper and go "old school". Write down gift ideas before you go shopping. Plan Christmas recipes at least a few days in advance. Heck, you can even make a list of items that you're planning to wear.

- **Be realistic:** Guests may arrive late. Your mother may get on your nerves. The turkey may be dry. Real life isn't a holiday special. Don't expect perfect decorations, a perfect meal, or perfect people. Try to go with the flow and enjoy what you have.

- **Plan ahead:** Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, connecting with friends and other activities. Consider whether you can shop online for any of your items. Plan your menus and then make your shopping list. That'll help prevent last-minute scrambling to buy forgotten ingredients.

- **Take a break.** Make some time for yourself. Find an activity you enjoy. Take a break by yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing and restoring inner calm.

Make holidays a reason for yourself to be joyful inside – just because you want to, and not because everything must be "perfect". With a little planning and some positive thinking, you can find peace and joy during the holidays. You can also consider using Learn to Live's Stress, Anxiety & Worry program to learn tools that help you deal with daily stressors. Visit learntolive.com/partners and enter the code **MIIA** to start a program today.