

## STAYING SOBER THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS



**The Holidays are approaching. I do want my team to enjoy family, friends and the traditions that are a grand part of the celebration. However I overhear comments that make me worry about abuse of alcohol and other chemicals. Others on our team work hard to maintain sobriety. What can I do to optimize the best of the celebrations for my team?**

Yours is a great question! We will turn to an anonymous friend who, facing her seventh holiday season in recovery, shared these tips. You may consider sharing them as well:

1. Be realistic and have a plan ahead of time. If you know time with family stresses you out, be prepared. Don't let it catch you off guard. Think through the possibilities and rehearse your own reactions. If you are feeling overwhelmed, craving a drink or challenged for choosing to abstain what will you do instead? Think through these scenarios and you can have responses prepared and the whole occasion is more manageable.
2. Take Ownership of the Word "No." Want to know a secret? You're not required to do anything during the holiday season, no matter what some people may think. If you feel like a certain party or celebration may put your recovery at risk, don't agree to go.

If a certain family member isn't supportive of your decisions, don't engage with them.

3. Create a List of Things You Enjoy About the Holiday Season without Chemicals. At the end of the day, the holiday season isn't really about parties and drinking. There's much more to it... Some of my favorites are watching the snow fall, wrapping myself in a warm blanket and lighting a seasonal candle. Spur your creative side. Is it cookies? a long lost hobby? Decorating? Soak in the redeeming facts and stories of Christmas. Plan now to call on family, friends or acquaintances who don't stress you out. Jot down your list of favorites this season!

4. Communicate with the People Around You. Often we can be self-conscious and worried about what others will think about our recovery. Give folks the chance to respond positively and be and will support your wise choice. supportive. Many

When feeling alone and unsure, take a risk and let someone close to you know what is going on and why you are choosing not to drink. If you encounter an unhelpful or scornful person, thank them for their opinion and move on to someone else.

5. Take time for yourself. Often, the holidays can feel like they're go, go, go with no downtime. When you're making plans, be sure to carve out time for yourself. Maybe time to be at home with no plans, or time to do the things you love and make you happy. In the RUSH it's easy to begin to feel worn down and drained, generating feelings that could put your recovery at risk. Put yourself and your well-being first. Give yourself permission to leave early or cancel something stressful. As you head into this holiday season, hold your head high and don't let anyone sway you. It will be worth it in the end.

### **ATTENTION: SUPERVISORS, MANAGERS, ADMINISTRATORS:**

Session A: "Leadership Orientation to the EAP", is always available on the website.

Please check your wallet cards or contact your HR department for your username and password.

Website Information – Webinars and skill builders are available in the Work/Life Services site. Log in on Connections website go to Employee or Leadership Resources tab to access webinars, continue to scroll down on the Work/Life Services opening page. (All webinars are archived for later viewing.)

**Information provided in this newsletter is for general information purposes only and is not intended to be specific guidance for any particular supervisor or human resource management concern. For specific guidance on handling individual employee concerns, consult with an EAP counselor. Copyright 1998, FHG.**