



Los Angeles County
Office of Education
**Employee Assistance
Service for Education**

CONNECT WITH EASE

Employee Assistance Service for Education

Overview:

Monthly Article:

Managing Change This
Holiday Season

Meaningful Ways to Celebrate
the Holidays This Year

Supporting Children and
Teens This Holiday Season

EASE CAN HELP DURING DIFFICULT TIMES

CONNECT WITH EASE:

(800) 882-1341

**Free confidential professional
help for
district employees and family
members:**

Family troubles. Emotional distress.
Stress. Anxiety.
Drug/alcohol use.
Grief. Loss.
Life transitions.

Professional counselors are ready
to help.

Call the EASE Hotline for 24/7
assistance.



MESSAGE FROM EASE

This holiday season is a time for reflection, celebration, and gratitude. We have endured through an unimaginable time with many changes and challenges this year due to the pandemic. Setting aside time for reflection is an essential part of living and important for growth. Reflecting takes time. It means we need to pause long enough to look within us first to see what is there, sit with it, then look outwards for a full understanding of where we are in connection to others. A sense of self awareness is so important for experiencing full and meaningful relationships and for being fully present during special times. Reflection is also taking the time to ponder on the strengths, challenges, and opportunities in our lives. During difficult times, the tendency can be to focus on the negative. When we reflect on the positive, we can see that sometimes there is more to our experience than our current emotion. Emotions are just that, feelings that can come and go. Our thoughts can feed our emotions. Balanced reflection can help to experience a more balanced range of emotions and help one to feel more in control and centered. Despite the pandemic, this year has brought many opportunities. For one, it has taught us to be even more thankful for family, friends, colleagues and for health and safety. We've learned the importance of connection and relationships and how important these are to our well-being. We have learned to be more intentional with others by staying in touch more frequently and offering reassurance and love to those we can't physically be with. While the holidays will certainly look different this year, that doesn't mean they have to feel different. The key to safe and healthy holiday plans is to keep them as intimate as possible. We encourage you to celebrate the holidays by slowing down, finding meaning in the little things, and taking time each day to pause and reflect.

***May the magic of the holiday season fill your home
with joy and peace!***

MANAGING CHANGE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Many aspects of our life have changed this year, and the upcoming holiday season is just another one of those aspects. As we continue through the holiday season this month, our celebrations and traditions will continue to look different. For many, this means learning new ways of celebrating the holidays with loved ones from afar. The holiday season can create a number of stressors as we experience the uncertainty and challenges created by the pandemic. We may be experiencing increased feelings of worry, stress, loneliness and concern. Knowing how to care for your family and yourself can enable your family to make changes that allow for successful functioning during this difficult time. Change is hard, especially around traditions, but being open to change can create new opportunities for celebrating. There are several ways we can find balance, be aware of our needs and still make meaningful connections this holiday season.

Meaningful Ways to Celebrate the Holidays This Year



- Host a virtual holiday party with fun activities like holiday dress-up, holiday bingo, holiday scavenger hunt, holiday crafts, cookie or gingerbread house competition.
- Send holiday gift boxes to family, friends or colleagues. The gift boxes can include mugs, snacks, holiday accessories, holiday activities, and hot cocoa mix.
- Create stocking stuffers for family, friends or colleagues!
- Host a virtual Secret Santa! You can pick names using a gift exchange generator, send presents and wait to open them together via video call.
- Make a holiday playlist!
- Sing songs with Holiday Karaoke!
- Have a movie night and watch holiday classics!
- Play silent night charades (e.g., holiday traditions, seasonal traditions, Christmas characters)
- Craft festive ornaments!
- Host a holiday dinner with loved ones who are not present through video call.
- Plan a special holiday breakfast.
- Create a lovely light display and transform your home into a festive winter wonderland!
- Organize an ornament exchange and send homemade decorations to friends and family.
- Send handmade Holiday cards!
- Host a virtual Ugly Sweater Party.



Supporting Children and Teens This Holiday Season



Through all the changes that we've made this year and this holiday season, children, teens, and adults may be experiencing a variety of feelings. Feelings such as sadness, disappointment, loss, loneliness and anger. It's important that as we experience these feelings, we feel supported, validated, and connected to others so that we can create moments of hope, joy and connection.

Strategies and Ideas For This Holiday Season:

Start a Family Conversation: Acknowledge What Has Changed and How Family Members are Feeling

- Talk with your children about this holiday season. Help your children to understand why things are different, and that you're doing things differently to keep everyone safe and healthy.
- Let your children talk about their feelings, what they are sad about, and what makes them upset.
- If a loved one has passed away, honor their memory this holiday season and find a way to share your feelings as a family.
- Think about your family values and traditions related to the holidays (your tradition may change but the meaning doesn't).

Find Ways To Make Connections

- Discuss how your family will stay connected with loved ones during this season.
- Find out about activities happening in your community to celebrate different holidays.
- Send a special card or bake goods for someone you know who is alone or may need some cheer.
- Ask your children one thing they'd like to do this holiday season.
- Start a new tradition (e.g., homemade decorations, cook a holiday dish).
- Practice gratitude and encourage your family to share things they appreciate about each family member.
- Reinforce your children's positive behavior and offer words of encouragement and praise them.
- The new year is around the corner! Talk about things you're happy you accomplished in this challenging year.

<https://teambuilding.com/blog/virtual-holiday-party>
<https://www.tasteofhome.com/collection/ways-to-celebrate-christmas-this-year/>
https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/supporting_children_and_teen_during_this_holiday_season.pdf
<https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/spotlight/1120.html>

TALK TO US

EASE has counselors if you want to talk.
(800) 882-1341