

Caregivers: Finding Peace During the Holidays

Podcast Transcript

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Holiday stress seems to begin earlier every year, along with the rushed appearance of the retail store displays. As caregivers with many daily responsibilities, the holiday season can add a lot of chaos to your to-do list. Let's take a minute to remove the panic from the holidays and replace it with peace of mind and body.

Just as you would trim the fat off your dinner meat, it's time to trim the stress off of your holiday plans. If you are looking to enjoy quality time with your family and friends this holiday season, start by adjusting your expectations. Overcommitting to too many activities causes stress, especially during this time of year. It's OK to say no when someone asks you to bring a dish, host a party or help in other ways. You choose a workload that is manageable for you, so that you can continue to care for your loved ones.

Caregiving takes a lot of energy and you need to replenish all that you are giving out to others. Losing sleep, neglecting your nutrition, skipping regular exercise and not giving yourself a chance to relax can lead to panic. Military OneSource health and wellness coaches are available, by phone or online, to help you find time for regular exercise, manage stress and focus on nutrition. Call Military OneSource at 800-342-9647, and ask to schedule a session with a health and wellness coach to start relieving the stress before it starts.

Asking for help can be very difficult to do. Often, we feel that we should be able to balance everything by ourselves, but that simply isn't true. Everyone needs help from time to time and your family and friends want to help, but they don't always know how. Enlist your children or other family members to help with cleaning and cooking duties. Ask friends and family to visit with your wounded, ill or injured service member while you run errands and take some personal time. If that isn't possible, seek respite care, which is short-term professional care for your service member or veteran, either in-home or site-based, that gives you a break.

For more information on respite care resources, read the article, "What to Do When You Need a Break From Caregiving" on Military OneSource. The article is located under the Caring for an Injured Service Member section at <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/wounded-warrior>.

We all have dreams of the perfect family get-togethers; we imagine all the memories we'll make while visiting with relatives and friends we haven't seen in a long time. Trade the panic and stress of all the to-do lists for the peace you will find when you make time to care for yourself. Asking for and accepting help will allow you to live in the moment this holiday season.

For more information, visit Military OneSource at <http://www.militaryonesource.mil>, an official Department of Defense website.