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10 Holiday Sober Savers

By Connie Carpenter

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by: **Connie Carpenter**

Holidays are loaded with triggers. Memories, family situations, and extra demands for your time are all difficult to manage. While at the same time, living in recovery, especially when your newly sober, has its own assortment of challenges..

Keep the following 10 Sobriety Savers close by as the holidays draw near. Hopefully they will be helpful as tools to assist you in keeping things on track and also when you become overwhelmed ..shall we say??

1. Start preparing NOW

Don't save your shopping, decorating, cooking, wrapping, and cleaning for the last minute. That is too much pressure for anyone. This is the year to be organized, so you'll have time to enjoy the season in sobriety. If you can't get something done, just let it go with no regrets.

2. Attend your meetings

TIS the season! Don't let social invitations distract you from recovery. You'll find a meeting invaluable when you happen to come up against a trigger or some craving. If you start feeling down, or really don't feel like going to a meeting—THIS, is when you really do need to go. That hour of your time may save your life.

3. Don't take on new commitments

just isn't a good idea. Let someone take care of you this year. If asked to do something you may find too stressful simply say, "I'm sorry. I'm doing some developmental work and I'm just too busy to give the attention it deserves.." Making Christmas dinner for 50 people or example, will not help you relax and stay focused on your recovery.

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4. Before planning the family reunions

To be sure you can count on understanding from your family, express your need to celebrate Christmas quietly at home this year. Perhaps you could visit with family and friends before or after the holiday party to share a dessert and catch up on the family news together.

5. Honor the day

Be aware that emotions are more sensitive during holidays. We all have high expectations that can't be met. Family reunions stir up old feelings like jealousy, resentment. Don't let them creep thru—even when you see cousin Pete who still owes you \$500. handing out 20\$ dollar bills. You've waited this long, what's 1 more day? Enjoy your family, enjoy feeling gratitude for your life, and the sobriety to enjoy it.

6. When you must attend

Select carefully the events you will attend. Use your own transportation Consider the location, people who will be there and the how much a part they are of your problem. Bring someone who supports your sobriety Work out a signal, just in case, you start getting a familiar feeling in your gut. (you know that means trouble) Pull on your ear 'ala Carol Burnett or fold your arms and wink. Thank your host say goodnight and get the heck out of there

7. Count your blessings

Take the time to compare how your life changed from last year, what you thought this year was going to be (if you didn't get sober) and just take a moment to dream what next year will be , if you stay on the path Count your blessings ,say a prayer of gratitude and tell the people on your list how thankful you are they are in your life. (this not only reinforces your commitment, but also makes them feel great .)

8. Use phone numbers you have

When someone is newly sober ,they can only benefit by being in the company of others also in recovery. Sometimes just being in contact will serve to reinforce the determination you have to remain sober. Use the phone numbers you have collected from the people in the rooms.They won't be bothered ,in fact it's more then likely you will provide reinforcement for them also. Especially when they don't know they need it !!

9. Have a plan

Don't leave large blocks of time unaccounted for ,take a look at your planner now , if you see any potential chunks of time when you will be alone plan ahead ,try a new meeting , phone a friend or relative with children , offer to sit them for a few hours ,you'll be a godsend and time with the children will refresh your outlook. While some time alone is a good thing too much alone time is not healthy.

10. Savor the moment.

Congratulations !!!! You have made it , you've come all this way. Get yourself something , you deserve the best Enjoy the thrill of your victory. Share it with someone special , spend it with your SELF. Simply , acknowledge it This is your moment , you have earned it .,It doesn't matter if you have a year or 24 hours , your sober and no matter what happens next , This moment will always be exactly what is is now... Your moment to shine

This piece was originally submitted by Connie Carpenter, founder , Carpenter Coaching Services, Life Coach , who can be reached at

, or visited on the web. Connie

Carpenter wants you to know: I know the guilt and self-loathing that comes with being a woman in recovery—especially with a family depending on you for the day to day responsibilities a mom, housewife and woman are expected to perform. These are the insights I bring to my clients.my passion is specializing in personalized relapse prevention programs allowing the confidence to claim their lives.

Here, Now

Ten Ways to Make It Through the Holidays Sober

By nne Dibala, M.D., The Recovery Coach™

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1. Plan to stay sober.

Every day plan to stay sober and work your plan.

2. Have a support system.

If you're going to a party where you know there will be alcoholic beverages served, and you're afraid you may be tempted to drink, bring a buddy who encourages you to stay sober.

3. Associate with people who know you are trying to stay sober and want you to stay sober.

4. Avoid the "cues" to your old drinking habits.

If you always drink at Joe's Bar, there's no need to go there just to meet with your old friends.

5. Be careful about drinking from punch bowls.

It's always safer to drink a beverage when you get it directly poured from the container.

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6. Get enough rest.

At this time of year, many of us over-commit. If you're stressed out, you are more vulnerable and may feel entitled to have "just one."

7. Maintain good nutrition, and stay hydrated.

You'll be less likely to binge out on food and alcohol.

8. Talk to friends you know who are sober and don't drink, and ask for tips on how they do it.

9. If you live alone, don't keep alcohol in your house.

If alcohol is not in your house, it will be at least harder to get.

10. If you had a favorite chair where you always drank, consider giving yourself a holiday present and replace the chair, or change the covering.

The same goes if you had a favorite drinking glass. Get rid of the old reminders.

Bottom line: Plan for a sober holiday, and follow through with all the supports you can get. Remember, there are people who do not drink alcohol at holiday functions -- you probably weren't aware of them!

People are more concerned about what's in their glass, than in what's in yours.

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