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Top 5 Ways for an ADD Adult to Have a Happy Holiday

By Jennifer Koretsky

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by: **Jennifer Koretsky**

Holidays have the potential to send an adult with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) into overload. Too many details to plan, kids to manage, and family to cope with can turn a good day into a stressful one. The following suggestion can help adults manage ADD during the holidays.

1. Know Your Own ADD and Plan Ahead to Deal with It

You know yourself better than anyone, so ask yourself "How does my ADD affect me on the holidays?" Make a list of all the things that tend to stress you out on the holidays, and make a plan to deal with them.

Do you tend to say impulsive things that you later regret? Plan to take a deep breath before answering questions, so that you can think about your words before you speak them.

Do hyper kids overwhelm? Plan to excuse yourself and take a brief walk when the kids are so noisy that you can't think straight.

Does a family member really make you mad when s/he starts nagging or becomes critical? Plan a simple response that won't fuel the fire, like "I'm sorry you feel that way. I'd rather talk about a great book I'm reading right now."

Do you get antsy after a long day? Plan to end the day early, so that you don't reach the point of irritability.

2. Don't Expect Perfection

Accept that the day won't be perfect. Nothing is! Whether you are hosting the holiday, going to a friend or family member's, or visiting a restaurant, realize that something is bound to go wrong. That's

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life. Don't hold it against yourself, or the people around you. Whatever it is, do your best to move on and let it go.

3. Ask For Help/Accept Help

If you're hosting the holiday, ask for help in the kitchen. This is perfectly acceptable, and most people are happy to help out where they can. If you're offered help, accept it with gratitude! You don't have to do it all on your own.

If you're a guest, offer to take over a task that you're good at or don't mind doing. That doesn't necessarily mean offering to cook or serve, it can mean keeping the kids occupied! (Or, in my family, keeping the dogs out of the kitchen!)

4. Remember That People Do The Best They Can

Long days with family members can often end in frustration and hurt feelings. Try to remember that people do the best they can with the skills and tools they have. Hurtful comments probably aren't meant to be hurtful. If someone says something to you that you find hurtful or offensive, ask yourself "What is this person's intention?" The answer will most likely be "to be helpful." Don't hold it against friends and family members who may not have the necessary skills to express themselves effectively.

5. Smile!

Set the tone for those around you by being positive, smiling often, and enjoying yourself!

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Jennifer Koretsky is a Professional ADD Management Coach who helps adults manage their ADD and move forward in life. She offers a 90-day intensive skill-building program, workshops, and private coaching. Her work has been featured in numerous media, including The New York Times Magazine and The Times (UK). To subscribe to Jennifer's free email newsletter, The ADD Management Guide, please visit

Plan To Manage Holiday Stress

By ADD Coach Jennifer Koretsky

Everyone finds themselves stressed out during the holiday season. But for adults with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), November through January can feel like a whirlwind of tasks and responsibilities. Lack of time management will result in undue pressure and overwhelm for the ADD adult.

One way to take the stress out of the holidays is to plan for them. These simple steps can help the

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ADD adults manage their time and tasks during the holiday season, thereby relieving unnecessary stress.

Create one hour this week to plan your holiday preparation schedule, and follow these steps:

Step 1 – Make a List of all the Things You Need to Do to Prepare for the Holiday

This probably includes gift shopping, writing and mailing holiday cards, decorating your home, planning your travel, etc. After you have made this list, put a star next to each of the items that you don't like to do. (Maybe you get bored writing out the holiday cards, or maybe you detest shopping.)

Step 2 – Use a Calendar or Planner

Use something that gives you ample space to write for each day. This could be a wall calendar, a daily planner, or planning software. Begin by writing in all your holiday appointments, such as parties and scheduled shopping trips. Next, write in all the other activities that you have going on during the month, like meetings and appointments. When you're done, you should have a good idea of where your free time is.

Now, take a look at the items on your holiday to-do list that are not marked with a star, and schedule them in. Do you have a free evening next week in which you can write out your cards? Schedule it on your calendar! Do you have a free Saturday to get your shopping done? Schedule it on your calendar!

Step 3 – Make the Dreaded Tasks Easier

Take a look at all those tasks you marked with a star. These are the tasks that you hate to do for one reason or another. Take a moment to look at each one, and figure out how to make that task a little easier or more bearable. If you hate writing cards because it's a tedious and boring task, you can make it easier on yourself by inviting a friend over to chat, catch up, and write out cards with you. Hate decorating? Perhaps you can buy a new CD you've been wanting and allow yourself to crank it up while you put up the holiday decorations.

Investing just a small amount of time in planning can save you from undue stress and overwhelm during this holiday season.

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Jennifer Koretsky is an ADD Management Coach who helps adults learn how to manage their ADD and move forward in life. She offers individual and group coaching, workshops, and skill-building programs. Her work has been featured in various media, including *The New York Times Magazine*. Subscribe to Jennifer's free email newsletter, *The ADD Management Guide*, by visiting

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