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Tips for handling the holidays

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Tips for handling the holidays

By Dan Jarboe

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For more information, contact Ouachita's Office of Communications & Marketing at comm-mark@obu.edu or (870) 245-5206.

While the holidays can be a wonderful time as we get together with family celebrating the arrival of our Lord and Savior, the activities and demands can leave us feeling stressed and depleted. It's important to care well for ourselves as we care for others. To support you and enhance your family harmony during the holidays, the Counseling Center staff offers the following tips. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas!

Getting Along with Family

- Adjust to home dynamics, acknowledging that longstanding patterns tend to change slowly.
- You'll maintain better emotional control if you prepare a few thoughtful, calm, kind responses to the difficult comments you might hear from family members.
- Embrace imperfections; adjust expectations for a stress-free atmosphere.
- Participate in or suggest new family traditions for a sense of togetherness.
- Be a respectful "guest" at home, communicate your plans, and say "thank you" often. Always communicate needs for personal space openly, kindly and respectfully.
- Manage anxiety with brief breaks during family gatherings but avoid excessive self-isolation.

Self-Care and Support

- Establish a self-care routine, including walks, reading or hobbies; for example, to nurture your well-being, read a book you couldn't get to during the semester.
- Connect with your most supportive friends or family to alleviate holiday stress.
- Follow a schedule of sorts. Don't sleep all day and stay up all night; get outside – find a balance that includes rest and physical activity.

Life Skills for Better Well-being

- Reflect on strengths, growth areas and academic goals from the past semester.
- Prioritize consistent nutrition and hydration for overall well-being.
- Dedicate daily screen-free time away from social media to reduce stress and unhelpful “my life vs. their life” comparisons.
- Serve others; offer to assist family members with holiday tasks, for example.
- Consider starting and finishing a shared/group puzzle for enjoyment.