

Well Now



A Hall Ambulance Periodical Dedicated to Your Wellness, Well-Being, and the HAS Employee Experience

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Seasonal Thriving in the "Big Three"



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As soon as Thanksgiving rolls around, it seems like it's go, go, go throughout the holiday season and that can be overwhelming. For a first responder, like yourself, you're constantly on the go during your work life, and it's incredibly easy to lose balance amidst the slew of holidays that occupy our time and mental capacity. As a public safety professional, working through the holidays while maintaining a family life, personal health, and social life may feel like juggling more than you can manage. As a result, you may start to feel a loss of balance.

Gatherings

Sharing the warmth of the season in the company of those we love and care about is a joyous occasion...right? Sometimes, that isn't the case. For some, the thought of getting together with family causes immense stress and dread, often for good reason. Just because you are related to someone doesn't necessarily mean you must spend time with them, even during the holidays. Truth be told, some people and families are simply not healthy to

be around. Forcing yourself to share the holidays, out of guilt or some false sense of obligation, with those who make you miserable is a recipe for disaster. More than that, it can be bad for your mental health. Many reading this won't have the holidays off work to begin with. And even if you do, do you want to spend it feeling miserable or like you're walking on eggshells?

If you have healthy relationships and boundaries within your family, take the holidays as opportunities strengthen those bonds. Healthy family support is incredibly beneficial to many first responders. In many cases, family is your first line of defense when things get tricky. Celebrate and give thanks for that. But if getting together with family makes you think twice, just remember: It's ok to say "No" if a particular person or gathering doesn't align with your personal priorities and self-care goals. Even if you already agreed to something, you're not beholden to that commitment; you are allowed to change your mind.

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Stress Busters

Here are fifteen quickie de-stressing techniques – try them out! December can be a busy month with holiday celebrations and preparing for the new year. Do yourself a favor and practice one of these daily:

1. Listen to your favorite song
2. Spend 10 minutes outside (bundle up!)
3. Stretch your body starting with your neck to your toes
4. Read a pleasure book for six minutes
5. Count to ten in a different language (try Duolingo!)
6. Draw a bird
7. Call a friend
8. Squeeze a stress ball
9. Do twenty jumping jacks
10. Pray or meditate
11. Write down ten things you are grateful for
12. Dance break!
13. Look at happy photos
14. Practice intentional breathing
15. Make and drink a cup of hot tea



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Do Something Different

Even though the weather is cooler, outdoor time is still essential for good mental and physical balance. Do something different with these outside activities!



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- Kick a soccer ball around in the backyard
- Clean up dead vegetation and plan your spring garden
- Eat dinner on the patio
- Walk around your block every evening after dinner
- Star gaze
- Set up a (safe) backyard firepit
- Go fishing – Lake Ming, Buena Vista

Lake, Lake Isabella

- Ride your bike to a friend's house
- Attend an outdoor concert
- Hang a bird or hummingbird feeder

Seasonal Thriving

Continued from page 1

Time Constraints

The holidays always seem to be here before we know it. Getting things done according to the calendar is an ever-present challenge this season seems to exacerbate. On top of the heightened anxiety in the air as the holidays approach, first responders also deal with increased work schedule conflicts, and many can't get time off to spend with chosen family and friends. Trying to balance these commitments can lead to an elevation in mental strain among first responders. It can be helpful to determine your priorities, schedule them to the best of your ability, maintain healthy habits (healthy eating, staying hydrated, exercise, spend time in nature, meditation/prayer, adequate and restful sleep), and communicate the emotions you find difficult to handle.

Cut yourself some slack. Holidays come every year; there's no need to put unreasonable expectations upon yourself. The holiday does not need to be perfect (Reality check: It won't be!), and it's okay if you make some changes to traditions or expectations. If you enjoy extravagant planning and preparation, indulge yourself. But if you don't, if you can never seem to cram it all in, remember there's time after the holidays as well. What matters most is that you enjoy your down time, even if that means celebrating differently and at alternate times.

Emotions

It can feel overwhelming to process your emotions when you have so much going on. But, avoiding your emotions or withholding them could disrupt your balance and end up leading to worse problems down the line. Allowing yourself to be open to the people you trust can help alleviate the stress and turmoil that you may feel. Once you're able to get a handle on emotions that are weighing you down, you can begin to make room for positive feelings instead.

Don't avoid or minimize your emotions. Instead of suppressing how you feel, which can worsen anxiety and depression, identify and validate your emotions. Recognize that it is normal to feel a variety of emotions during this season. Remember to give yourself a little compassion, too. Talk to yourself and treat yourself like you would a best friend. If you're feeling lonely, depressed, or overwhelmed, don't hesitate to reach out to a friend or loved one. Talk to your doctor or a mental health professional if you feel you need additional support. You can't carry the weight all by yourself and you don't have to.

(Adapted from: <https://www.ems1.com/ems-products/fitness-mental-health-wellness/articles/holiday-survival-a-first-responders-primer-LZQnGWxZOiywRs9q6/>)

DECEMBER AWARENESS

National HIV/AIDS Awareness Month (RED)
National Universal Human Rights Month
1: World AIDS Day (RED)
4: Wildlife Conservation Day
10: Human Rights Day

DECEMBER COMMUNITY EVENTS

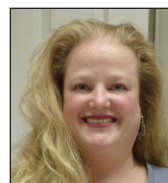
Nov 30-Jan 04: Holiday Lights @ CALM
5: Bakersfield Holiday Parade @ Downtown Bakersfield
6: Bak Symphony Orchestra "Home for the Holidays" @ Mechanics Bank
7: Wild Kidz @ Wind Wolves Preserve
7: Holiday Pop Up Shop @ 4605 Buena Vista Road
8: 7th Annual Mental Health Awareness Ugly Sweater Bash @ The Well
8: Hanukkah 8 Krazy Kilometers and 2K Latke Loop Fun Run @ Panorama Vista Preserve
13-15: The Nutcracker Ballet @ Mechanics Bank
14: North of the River Christmas Parade @ North Chester Ave
14: Craft and Vendor Show @ 4015 Scenic River Lane
14: Bakersfield Rudolph Run @ Lake Ming
14: The Nutcracker Ballet @ Fox Theatre
14: Candlelight – Holiday Special @ CSUB Dore Theatre
16: Cults & Classics – "The Polar Express" @ Fox Theatre
21: Bakersfield Jingle Bell Run for Toys for Tots @ The Park at Riverwalk
23: Cults & Classics – "It's a Wonderful Life" @ Fox Theatre

DECEMBER FARMERS MARKETS

1, 8, 15, 22, 29 (Sun): Haggin Oaks Hen's Roost Farmer's Market @ 8800 Ming Ave
7, 14, 21, 28 (Sat): From the Farmhouse Farmer's Market @ 3201 'F' St.; Downtown Hen's Roost Farmer's Market @ 1916 'G' St.; Riverlakes Farmer's Market @ 3825 Riverlakes Drive

The HR Spot

Thank you everyone that completed their open enrollment on time, we appreciate everyone's cooperation. Remember benefits renew on Jan 1st, 2025.



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988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

Well Now

WellNow is published monthly for Hall Ambulance employees and their families.