



# LIGHTING THE WAY FOR LESS HOLIDAY STRESS

A WEBINAR FOR EMPLOYEES FROM YOUR  
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

November 10, 2021

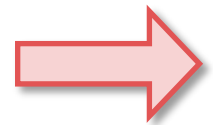


Federal  
Occupational  
Health

# POLL 1

*Which best describes your initial feeling when you think about the upcoming holiday season?*

Select an answer from the polling panel, then click **Submit**.



# INTRODUCTION



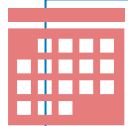
# OBJECTIVES

- Review the causes and effects of seasonal stress
- Develop strategies to decrease holiday stress and celebrate in meaningful ways
- Offer resources to light your way over the river and through the woods

SECTION 1

# CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF SEASONAL STRESS

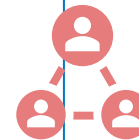
# ADDED PRESSURES AND EXPECTATIONS



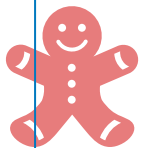
Schedule fatigue



Increased financial burden



Conflictual relationships



Upholding traditions



Giving and receiving gifts



Influence from media/social media



Grief/sadness



*“Our expectations can create significant stress when they don't match up to reality.”*



# SCHEDULE FATIGUE

Meeting work deadlines

Attending events

Visiting friends

Cooking

Decorating

Volunteering



*“...nearly 69% of people are stressed by the feeling of having a ‘lack of time’ and perceiving a ‘lack of money.’*

*And over 50% are stressed about the ‘pressure to give or get gifts.’”*



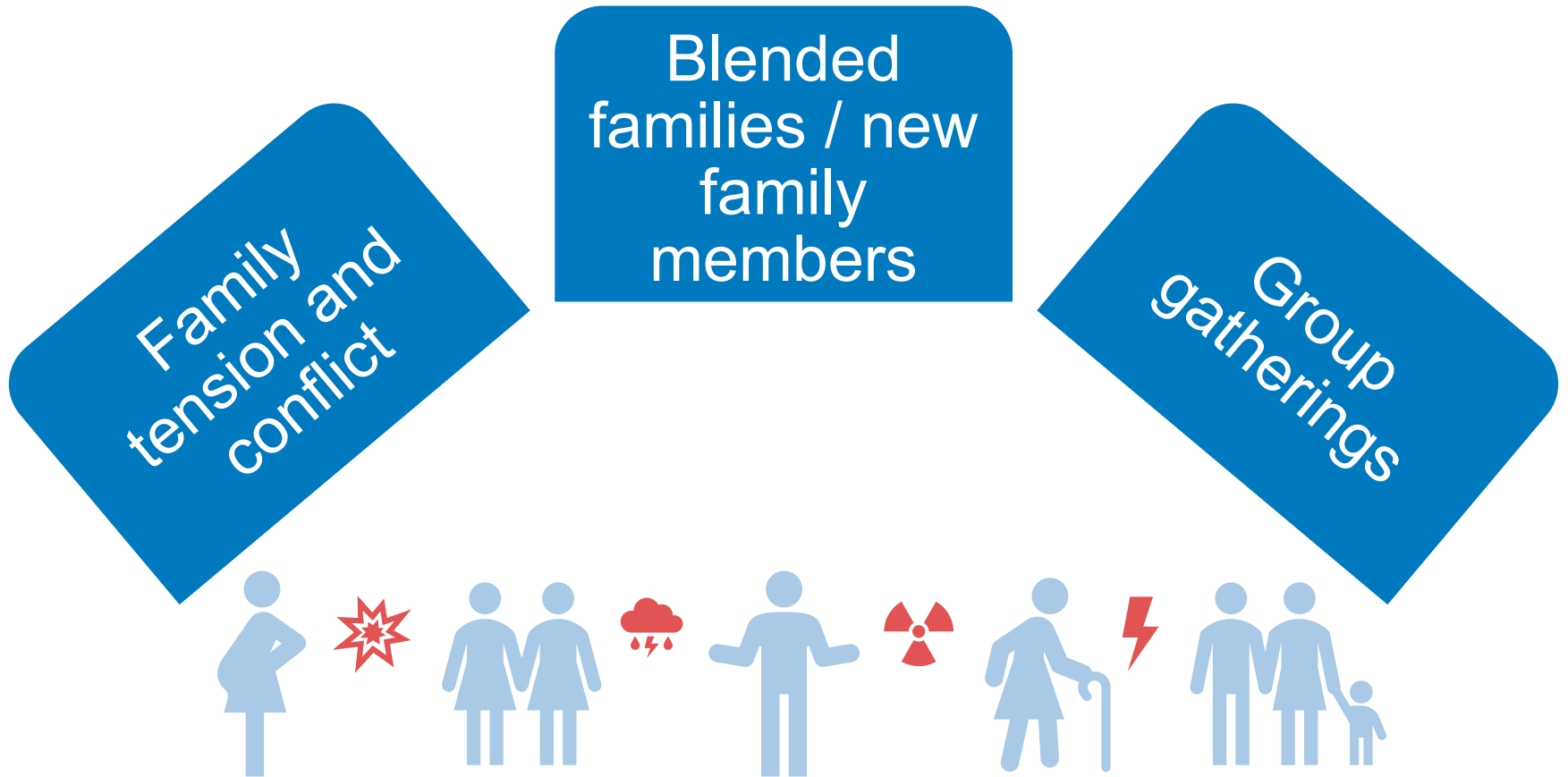
# INCREASED FINANCIAL BURDEN





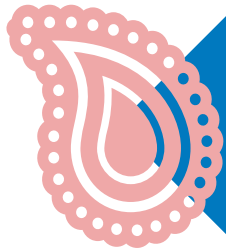


# CONFLICTUAL RELATIONSHIPS

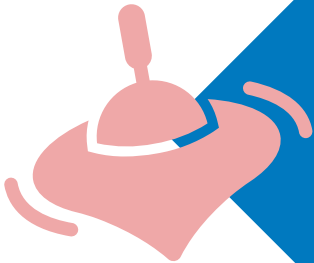




# UPHOLDING TRADITIONS



Religious, cultural,  
and family customs



Making others  
happy



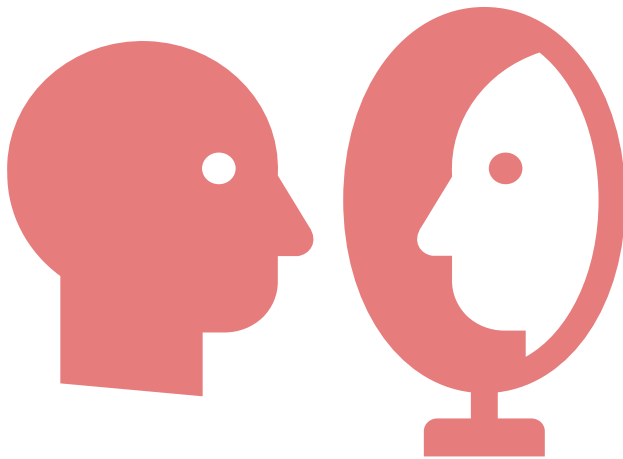
# GIVING AND RECEIVING GIFTS

- Feeling pressure to find just the right gift can be exhausting
- Receiving gifts can be just as stressful
  - Feeling obligated to return the gesture or when an agreement to not do presents wasn't upheld
- Having the expectation that you need to buy/receive expensive gifts
- Shopping itself can be a source of stress and anxiety
  - Crowded stores, fears of COVID19 exposure, parking, etc.





# INFLUENCE FROM MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA



Feeling other than



Feeling less than



# GRIEF AND SADNESS

Spending  
holidays without  
a loved one

Declining health  
of a loved one

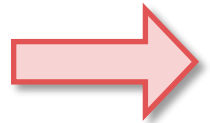


*“Although grief is something that's experienced daily, **holidays** tend to amplify feelings of **loss**, especially in the first holiday season since the loss.”*

## POLL 2

*How does it make you feel  
when your holiday  
expectations aren't met?*

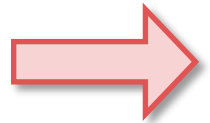
Select an answer from the  
polling panel, then click **Submit**.




## POLL 3

*Which methods do you use to cope with or manage your unmet expectations?*

Select an answer from the polling panel, then click **Submit**.



# EFFECTS OF HOLIDAY STRESS




**Mentally**

- Withdrawal/isolation
- Depression
- Feeling stressed, anxious, overwhelmed, distracted
- Guilt



**Emotionally**

- Anger
- Frustration
- Irritability



**Physically**

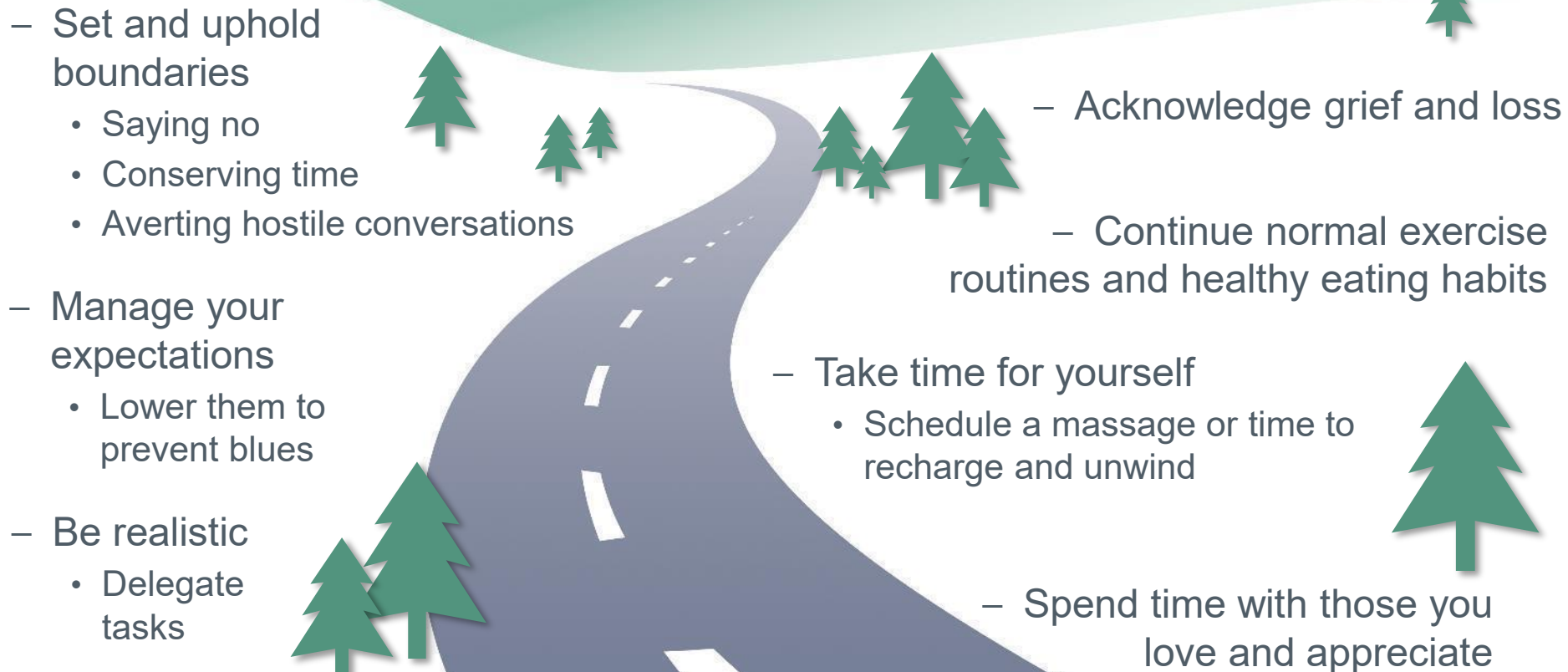
- Fatigue
- Increased susceptibility to illness



SECTION 2

# STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING HOLIDAY STRESS

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- 
- Set and uphold boundaries
    - Saying no
    - Conserving time
    - Averting hostile conversations
  - Manage your expectations
    - Lower them to prevent blues
  - Be realistic
    - Delegate tasks
  - Acknowledge grief and loss
  - Continue normal exercise routines and healthy eating habits
  - Take time for yourself
    - Schedule a massage or time to recharge and unwind
  - Spend time with those you love and appreciate

# MAKE A BUDGET AND STICK TO IT

- Examine your relationship with money
- Determine what you can afford before you begin shopping
- Set aside money just for holiday spending, if possible
- Hold on to receipts or keep track of expenses
- Use apps or coupons to find bargain deals



*“The CPI\* for ‘all-items,’ (such as food, housing, transportation), has increased 3.2 percent so far in 2021 compared to 2020.”*

*For context, annual all-items inflation has averaged 2.0 percent over the past 20 years.”*

# STAY MINDFUL AND GRATEFUL

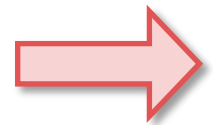
Deep breathing exercise



# POLL 4

*How do you feel, or what do you notice, after doing the exercise?*

Select an answer from the polling panel, then click **Submit**.



# TIPS FOR CELEBRATING WITH MEANING

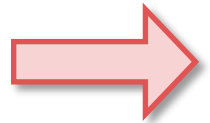


- Reflect on and memorialize loved ones
  - Share memories with family/friends
  - Light a candle in their memory
- Connect with family/friends
  - Have dinner together through video chat if traveling is not an option
  - Have an outdoor feast, weather permitting
- Volunteer your time or resources to those less fortunate or in need
- Create new traditions for yourself, your family, or with friends
  - Draw names instead of buying every family member a gift
  - Incorporate a new food or fun activity
  - Keep old traditions, but make room for new or more meaningful ones

## POLL 5

*Which new strategies for managing holiday stress will you try this year?*

Select an answer from the polling panel, then click **Submit**.



# SUMMARY



- The holidays can be stressful for a myriad of reasons
- Early identification of stressors can better equip us with the tools to navigate sadness and other feelings of overwhelm
- Explore new ways to connect with loved ones and/or your community
- Incorporate stress reduction activities
- Reach out to EAP to speak with a professional



# RESOURCES

## Book

- *Surviving the Holidays Without You: Navigating Grief During Special Seasons*
  - G. Roe, 2013

## Web Articles

- 14 Health Benefits of Practicing Gratitude According To Science
  - [positivepsychology.com/benefits-of-gratitude](https://positivepsychology.com/benefits-of-gratitude)
- Holiday stress resource center
  - [apa.org/topics/stress/holiday](https://apa.org/topics/stress/holiday)

## Apps

- Mindfulness/ Meditation
  - Calm
  - Headspace
- Budgeting
  - EveryDollar
  - Goodbudget
- Journaling
  - Jour
- Scheduling/ Planning
  - Calendly
  - Santa's Bag

## Podcast

- In Life Kit: How to Set Boundaries with Family and Stick to Them
  - [npr.org/transcripts/960423678](https://npr.org/transcripts/960423678)

# THANK YOU



## Behavioral Health Services Employee Assistance and WorkLife Programs

24 HOURS A DAY

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TTY: 888-262-7848

**[foh4you.com](http://foh4you.com)**

