



Holiday 2025 Newsletter



When the snow starts to fall, we sometimes dream of hosting black tie dinners with festive music, fancy food, in a manicured home that looks straight out of a movie. Remember that those images embedded in our minds of holiday cheer were manufactured from a movie set and are not real-life! If we don't throw a lavish get-together, we may think of it as a failure of sorts. Flip that thinking! This winter, surround yourself with people who lift you up and understand how hectic the bustling winter season is. Be kind to yourself and do things a new way.

Holiday wrapping get-togethers are increasing in popularity. Picture a multitasking gathering where you show up with a roll or two of wrapping paper under your arm, a few gifts that you need to wrap in secret, and a snack (the Dollarama has the best ones!). This type of gathering transforms a necessary holiday chore into a fun, social event.

Putting a new spin on holiday traditions can enhance your mental well-being by:

Focusing on the experience: Instead of hosting a grand dinner, a casual gathering prioritizes quality time and conversation. Often hosts go out of their way planning and undergo a large financial burden to please everyone. A casual gathering has the same effect of promoting connection without the pressure and cost.

Embracing comfort: Guests can be encouraged to wear cozy pajamas and plop on the living room floor or couch. Challenge the idea that holiday gatherings must be flawless. The relaxed atmosphere itself will make the season feel more manageable.

Encourage collaboration: By sharing wrapping paper, guests can achieve a fun, varied look for their gifts. It's a low-pressure way to be productive and creative together. Maybe nudge the craftiest of the group to be on bow duty for all the gifts.

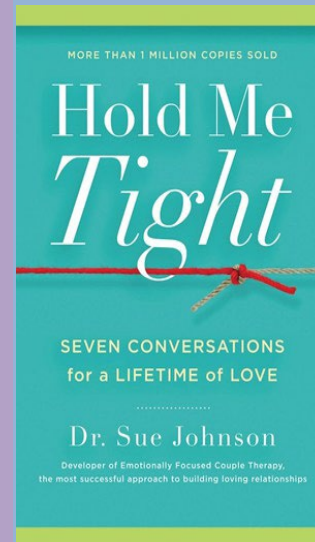
Reducing Holiday Stress: Encourage the host not to clean all day and keep to one or two areas of the house. This helps normalize the natural chaos of the holiday season. Reinforce that there is no need for extras that can be found scrolling on Pinterest. Simply good company and a few shared snacks are more than enough to feel connected and feed your soul.

Practicing understanding: Empathize sincerely with friends who can't attend. Instead of accidentally making them feel guilty, use their regrets to attend as a reminder that they could be struggling. Drop off a treat from the party on their doorstep or offer to help with a task. If they can't make it to a party this year, maybe this is your cue to find them at the rink or office for a coffee chat instead. Shift the focus from obligatory attendance to acts of understanding and support.



EAP's Winter Wellness Picks:

Inspiring Read:



****also available on audiobook****

In *Hold Me Tight*, Dr. Sue Johnson presents Emotionally Focused Therapy to the general public for the first time. Johnson teaches that the way to save and enrich a relationship is to reestablish safe emotional connection and preserve the attachment bond. With this in mind, she focuses on key moments in a relationship—from Recognizing the Demon Dialogue to Revisiting a Rocky Moment—and uses them as touchpoints for seven healing conversations. Through case studies from her practice, illuminating advice, and practical exercises, couples will learn how to nurture their relationships and ensure a lifetime of love.

Podcast:



Struggling to drift off? Tune in to sleep specialist and mindfulness instructor Kathryn Nicolai's soothing tales designed to ease you into slumber. These gentle narratives, where little of consequence occurs, aim to quiet your mind and guide you towards restful sleep. Consider them a tranquil oasis for your thoughts. Instead of your mind rehashing the day's concerns, this podcast will lead you on a journey to a serene and cozy mental space. Each tale is recounted twice, with the second telling adopting a more leisurely pace.

Gift yourself the time to consider which podcasts are best for you:

There are so many diverse podcasts to choose from including celebrity chat style, straight news, expert opinion and interview based. With so many options available, here are some things to consider when deciding what content to consume:

- What am I hoping for from this podcast? Do I want to be entertained or informed? Reflect on whether you have the bandwidth to take on new information. Perhaps you're looking for something to put on in the background while you complete other tasks.
- Consider the source. Anyone with a microphone can start a podcast and so it falls to listeners to do their own evaluating on the validity and reliability of the information you are consuming. Notice if the podcast is connected to a reputable organization that exists outside podcasting. Do a quick web search with the host or guests name to see if they have any credentials and expertise in the topic.
- Ask yourself: How does listening to this impact my nervous system? After you choose a podcast, engage in a quick self-check while you're listening to review how your nervous system is responding. Is it calm or activated? Sometimes, such as at bedtime, we might want a podcast that relaxes our nervous system. Other times, such as while doing housework or exercising, we might want something more energizing. Be cautious about returning to podcasts that leave your nervous system on edge or irritable.



Winter Celebration Spotlight: Kwanzaa

Kwanzaa is a week-long celebration of African communities in Canada and around the world observed annually from December 26 to January 1st. First created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, this event is a unique cultural celebration focused on families and communities where they come together and celebrate their rich culture. Kwanzaa also symbolizes distinct values of African cultures, unity, purpose, and collective responsibility. The term Kwanzaa means "first fruits" in Swahili, originates from African harvest traditions and centers around seven core principles known as the Nguzo Saba.

The seven beautiful principles of Kwanzaa:

- Unity (Umoja)
- Self-determination (Kujichagulia)
- Collective Work and Responsibility (Ujima)
- Cooperative Economics (Ujamaa)
- Purpose (Nia)
- Creativity (Kuumba)
- Faith (Imani)

Did You Know???

Confidentiality: EAP Counselling Records

As a part of counselling, clinical records are kept for your therapy sessions. These records include minimal information relevant to the treatment plan. These records are not connected to your health record and are not accessible to anyone other than the EAP treatment team. Records can be reviewed by the client at any time and are automatically deleted after 5 years. The records can also be deleted at the request of the client.



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