

Coping with Holiday Stress (*Interview Transcripts*)

Marybeth Evans, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, OSF HealthCare Little Company of Mary Medical Center

“I think there is a lot of pressure on families – kind of a cultural pressure – to have great holidays and high expectations, and I think that’s overblown. Simplify the holidays so that everybody can actually enjoy the company of one another and not worry about the menu or the gifts. And maybe if you really do want to do those things, still find a way to simplify it.” (:28)

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“Discuss it far enough ahead of time so that you aren’t caught off guard. For example, if your mom usually has Thanksgiving dinner and she doesn’t feel up to it this year, you can approach her and ask what she is thinking and perhaps she is hoping someone else will step up this year or may just want to gather with immediate family.” (:22)

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“A lot of people suffer from SAD (seasonal affective disorder) and I think symptoms for people who have depression are more difficult in the winter time. It’s harder to get up in the morning, it’s harder to feel good when there is no sunshine. The holidays come at a time of year that is difficult anyway. You’re trudging through the snow, your car might not start. There are a lot of things to frustrate you during the winter that can also interfere with enjoying the holidays.” (:28)

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“I think there are always things to be grateful for – even in sad or stressful times. So if the best thing you can be grateful for is that you still can get together with your family or that you have a roof over your head, then that’s something to be grateful for.” (:13)