

# YOUR Winter Mental Wellness GUIDE

Winter brings a lot of things — like special outings, pressure to see people, loneliness, even setbacks to progress you've been making. It can be an isolating and overwhelming season.

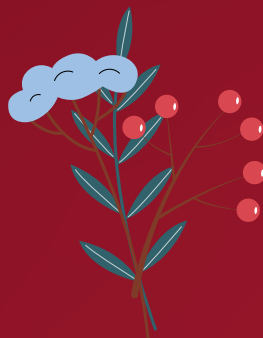
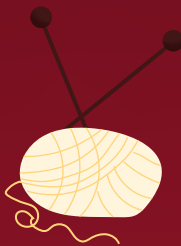
This Winter Mental Wellness Guide can help you cope. Here are tips for supporting mental well-being for yourself and those you care about — in this moment and throughout the season.

Write down your responses or record them out loud, whichever works best for you!

**1. Plan early and prioritize.** While the holidays can be joyful, they can also be tough to handle. So we recommend planning ahead. Start by making lists of:

- **What activities do you want to do this winter?** *Examples: enjoying old traditions and making new ones (e.g. baking, crafts, spending time outdoors), connecting with community online.*
- **How do you want to give back to others?** *Examples: volunteering (solo, remotely, or with a community), sharing uplifting moments on social media, donating, reaching out to friends/coworkers.*
- **What self-care activities might help?** *Examples: a gratitude journal, rest/downtime, gentle movement, nourishment, exercise, therapy/counseling, meditation, soothing music.*

**Next, prioritize** by putting a star next to items from each list that are most important to you.





## 2. Set healthy boundaries before the hustle and bustle.

If it's safe to do so, remember it's okay to say NO, even when there's an expectation to say YES. Plan ahead: Know your triggers (like food, family, and/or substances) so you can keep yourself safe. For example, decide in advance what you'll say or do when you need to leave a situation.

- **What makes you overwhelmed?** *Examples: events, social media, certain relatives, spending money, food/drinks, using substances, the pressure of New Year's resolutions.*
- **How do you want to be supported by family/friends? How do you want to provide support to those you care about?** *Examples: limiting discussions of upsetting topics, telling someone about your triggers, safely asking for help.*
- **Looking at these lists, how can you create healthy boundaries?** *Examples: going to just one holiday party, limiting time with family, not feeling obligated to buy gifts, connecting with a recovery sponsor/mentor before an outing.*

**3. Decide if you want to share.** This guide is for your personal use — but if you choose to share, here are some next steps:

- **Figure out who needs to know.** Pair specific winter priorities with people who can support them. *Examples: friends, family, coworkers, a therapist/counselor.*
- **Share the plan with them, as appropriate.**
  - Try these conversation starters:

*I have some things on my mind — when can we talk?*

*I'm planning NOT to be overwhelmed this winter.  
I'm starting by...*

*Here's how I'm protecting my mental health this season...*

- Encourage others to create a Winter Mental Wellness Plan!
- If available, have someone you can call if you need support. Remember, you can always **call or text 988 to speak with a kind, helpful mental health specialist.** It's free, confidential, and available 24/7.

