



# Living Well with PI: Mental Health at the Holidays

Presented by:

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# Disclaimer

- This presentation is for informational purposes only and should not replace professional medical or mental health advice. Always consult your healthcare provider for guidance specific to your needs.



# Presenter Introduction

- Mental health therapist and business owner
- Lover of all things rainbow and glittery
- Starbucks aficionado
- Mom of three adult kiddos and three fur kiddos
- Elf is my favorite Christmas movie



# My Connection to PI

# Learning Objectives

## Understand

- Attendees will understand how the unique demands and expectations of the holiday season can exacerbate mental health challenges, particularly for those in the PI community.

## Learn

- Attendees will learn about evidence-based strategies for maintaining good mental health and emotional well-being during the holidays.

## Develop

- Attendees will develop strategies to balance social obligations and set healthy boundaries with loved ones in a way that minimizes burnout and overwhelm.

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**Which holiday movie features a young boy named Kevin who is left home alone?**

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# PI-Related Holiday Stressors

"You don't  
look sick"

Increased  
social and  
family  
obligations

Financial  
pressures and  
gift-giving  
stress

Navigating  
cold/flu  
season risks

Family  
dynamics and  
expectations





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What stresses you out most about the holidays?

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# How Holiday Stress Impacts Mental Health



- **Key effects:**

- Heightened anxiety
- Feelings of guilt or inadequacy
- Amplified loneliness or isolation
- Fatigue and burnout

# How Holiday Stress Impacts Mental Health

- **Physical and emotional impacts:**
  - Stress can weaken the immune system
  - Emotional distress can lead to irritability, frustration, and anger



# Why It's Important to Manage Stress



## **Impact on mental health:**

Chronic stress can exacerbate symptoms of anxiety and depression



## **Impact on physical health:**

Stress hormones like cortisol can suppress the immune system

# Why It's Important to Manage Stress



**Impact on relationships:** Unmanaged stress can strain relationships, leading to conflicts or feelings of disconnection during a season meant for connection.



**Long-term implications:** Prolonged stress can contribute to chronic health conditions, making it essential to develop coping mechanisms to protect overall health.

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**Overall, I am good at managing my stress.**

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# Evidence-Based Strategies for Staying Well

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Mindfulness

A graphic element consisting of a dark green rounded rectangle behind a white rounded rectangle with a thin dark border. The text 'Self-Compassion' is centered in the white area.

Self-  
Compassion

A graphic element consisting of a dark green rounded rectangle behind a white rounded rectangle with a thin dark border. The text 'Stress Management' is centered in the white area.

Stress  
Management

# Mindfulness

- *A mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations*

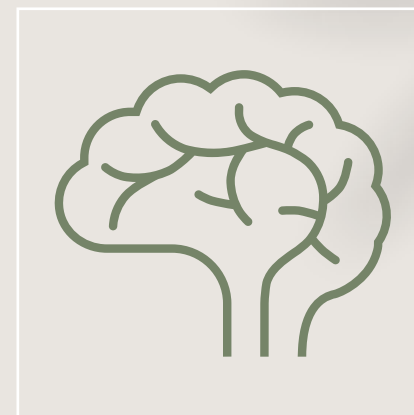




# Practice: Mindfulness



Focus on your five senses



[Try a guided meditation](#)



# Self-Compassion

*The practice of treating oneself with kindness and understanding, especially when faced with challenges or difficulties*

# Practice: Self-Compassion

Be gentle with yourself;  
perfection isn't the goal

Practical example:  
Instead of 'I should  
have...' try 'I did my best  
given the circumstances.'

# Stress Management: Things Out of My Control

- The actions of others
- The future
- The opinions of others
- What happens around me
- The outcome of my efforts
- Past mistakes
- Other people's boundaries
- What others think of me

# Stress Management: Things Within My Control

- Being present in the moment
- My words
- My mindset
- How I spend my free time
- The boundaries I set
- How I speak to myself
- How I move on from failure
- What I give my energy to

# Practice: Stress Management



- Create a stress inventory list of what you can and cannot control
- "I just don't want that in my life anymore."

# Setting Healthy Boundaries

- Definition: *The limits and rules we set for ourselves within relationships that helps to prevent burnout and protects physical and emotional health*

# Practice: Setting Healthy Boundaries



- **Simple phrases to try:**
  - "I'd love to, but I need to rest."
  - "I can't host this year, but I'd love to help in other ways."
  - "I think it's best you don't come over since you've been ill."
  - "I'm not feeling up to it."



## Choose

Choose quality over quantity—it's okay to say no.

## Prioritize

Prioritize events where you feel supported and safe.

## Remember

Your presence matters more than a perfect performance.

# Quick Wellness Practices

## 1-Minute Reset:

- Close your eyes, deep breathe for four counts in, hold for four, exhale for four.

## Gratitude check-in:

- Name three things you're grateful for today.

## Movement:

- Simple stretch—reach arms up, roll shoulders, neck tilt.

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**I have learned at least one new way to manage my stress tonight.**

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# Key Takeaways

Holidays don't  
have to be  
perfect to be  
meaningful.

Boundaries and  
self-care are  
acts of strength.

You are not  
alone—support  
is available.

# Resources

- [www.primaryimmune.org](http://www.primaryimmune.org)
- YouTube - guided meditations
- [www.mentalhealthfirstaid.com](http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.com)
- *Call or text 988*
- *Chat 988lifeline.org*



# Contact Information

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