





HOLIDAY HUSTLE & BUSTLE

Disability Guide

Whether you or your loved one have a disability, here are some tips and tricks to make the holidays more accessible for everyone!



Tip #1

Recognize your and/or your loved one's triggers.

“Triggers” are anything that can immediately set off strong emotions, such as bright lights, loud noises, uncomfortable situations, or new foods.

Knowing what things are triggers for you or your loved one are essential to navigating the holiday season. Here are some tips and tricks to help make triggering situations feel more comfortable.

- If in-store shopping is difficult, try online shopping.
- If bright lights are too much, try decorating your own home in adaptable lights instead of going to view public light shows.
- If some foods are scary, try packing safe foods before attending any food-focused events.



Tip #2

Keep yourself/your loved one comfortable

While holiday events can sometimes include getting dressed in your finest, this might add to the stress rather than maintain the holiday spirit.

If particular fabrics or articles of clothing make you or your loved one uncomfortable, don't include them in the holiday wardrobe.

If it is required or tradition for some events to dress up, have a conversation with the event planners about you or your loved ones needs. With a mutual understanding, you may be able to balance the requirement with what works best for you.




Tip #3

Keep your schedule

Being thrown off schedule can cause stress and frustration. No matter what you or your loved one's day-to-day routine entails, try to maintain the same core activities throughout the day.

For example, if a mid-day nap is something you/your loved one take every day, try not to schedule anything during that time. While it may seem like an easy thing to go without, straying from routine can affect your mental health and your immune system.




Tip #4

Look into Community Events

There are tons of community events going on during the holiday season. You can utilize a variety of resources to find accessible and inclusive events near you.

If you're looking for accessible events check out:

- Your local news outlet,
- Facebook events page,
- Social media platforms of your favorite accessible and inclusive organizations,
- [Eventbrite](#).



Tip #5

Have a plan for sensory overload

Overstimulation can come out of nowhere and it is important to recognize when you need a step back. Having a plan in place so that you or your loved one know what to do if overstimulation occurs can help to avoid anxiousness, exhaustion, or outbursts.

Some examples of a how to manage sensory overload include

- Packing noise cancelling headphones,
- Finding a quiet space to retreat,
- Packing sensory friendly activities.



Resources

<https://psychcentral.com/lib/what-is-a-trigger>



<https://www.ameridisability.com/holiday-tips-for-individuals-with-disabilities/>

<https://www.understood.org/en/winter-holidays>



<https://ablelight.org/blog/9-holiday-tips-for-people-with-disabilities-and-loved-ones/>

<https://brightnomad.net/how-to-find-local-events-when-you-travel/>

<https://therapist.com/brain-and-body/overstimulation/>



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