

THE 5 DO'S

ENJOY THE HOLIDAYS WITH YOUR FAMILY

1 Do I know when I need a break?

Holidays can be stressful, with so many different pressures and responsibilities. If that's the case, the last thing we are likely to have is a happy or safe holidays with the people we care about. So it's important to have things to pick us up. But first we need to learn the signs you need a break.

Examples: lack of patience, angrier or more frustrated than usual, feeling over it, lack of motivation, tired all the time, everything is an effort, tension in head, jaw, chest or shoulders, your skin feels hot or clammy, struggling to do things the way you usually can etc.

2 Do I have something calming to help me de-stress or put a smile on my face?

So you need a break, but what then? It's important to have something that works for you, to help with the stress, or that puts a smile on your face. Something that helps you to come back to the situation in a better headspace, not detached from it. So, what are at least three things that are helpful for you?

Examples: reading a book, enjoying some food, listening to music, spending time with friends, walking dogs, working on a car, gardening, spending time with kids, watching sports, watching a movie etc.

3 Do I have somewhere to go to get some space?

Sometimes you might need to step back and get some space to get a better handle on things or to stop things from getting worse. So, it's important to have somewhere to go and put into practise your calming strategies from #2. So, where's somewhere you can go?

Examples: your bedroom, the kitchen, the shed, the garden, a friend or family members house/shed/garden/kitchen, the gym, the car (maybe for a drive?), a walk outside etc.

4 Do I have a plan with my partner/loved ones to manage stressful situations?

Great, so you've got the first three DOs. Well done. Now let's think about your partner and loved ones. They need to understand your strategies and need for space, otherwise they may be impacted negatively. It's important, especially when tensions are high, for partners to know what they can do support each other so that they can be a team working together instead of working against each other. So, how can you have that conversation?

Examples: use "I" statements about what might cause stress (i.e. I am worried xxxx might happen and want things to be as okay as then can be when it does), work with them (i.e. ask questions like what they think will be helpful?), actively listen (acknowledge you've heard what they have said and consider it), be open about why you might need these DO's in place (i.e. what you do and don't want to happen) etc.

5 Do I have someone to talk to when I need it?

You may be used to doing things on your own, but problems are easier to carry and work through together. Who is a trusted person in your life you can reach out to when you need?

Examples: partner, parents, siblings, cousins, friends, psychologist or counsellor.

Here are also some free 24/7 services if you need a third party to talk with or just someone else to call:

- Mensline (mental health, relationship, drugs/alcohol and grief counselling for men) 1300 78 99 78
- MATES in Construction (suicide concerns for you or a loved one) 1300 642 111
- Beyond Blue (general mental health counselling and support) 1300 22 4636
- ADIS (drugs and alcohol support for you or a loved one) 1800 177 833
- 1800RESPECT (domestic, family and sexual violence counselling) 1800 737 732

