

Maintain your health. Don't neglect self care. Overeating and drinking, together with changes in your daily schedule and sleep routine can leave you feeling irritable, depressed and moody. After a *sugar high* from all the holiday treats, you should expect a crash. This is predictable. Try to avoid overindulging if you can.

Remember that *you have a right to be healthier than those around you.* Maintain your personal wellness goals by planning in advance to avoid relapse.

Don't be surprised by the *Holiday Blues*. Some holiday crankiness is normal. It is less about the people and the situation and more about the body's response to overstimulation. Try to focus on maintaining moderation and balance.

Holiday stress can, however, exacerbate preexisting mood and anxiety disorders. In addition, grief from the past often resurfaces during the holidays. Be mindful of extreme changes in your mental health.

Get help if you need it. Talk to a trusted family member or friend. Call a help line. Contact a local counselor. Visit your primary care physician if necessary.

The ETSU Counseling Center remains open during break, except for official University holidays, including the week after Christmas.

(423) 439-3333
counselingcenter@etsu.edu
www.etsu.edu/students/counseling/

BUCS Press 2
24/7 Mental Health Helpline
(423) 439-4841



THE COUNSELING CENTER
Division of Student Affairs
EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Home for the Holidays

ETSU Student Edition



Plan ahead
Communicate your needs
Manage conflict
Stay healthy



Plan ahead. Let your parents know what your holiday plans are *before you arrive* at home. Give fair warning about how often you plan to be away from home. Expect to make compromises in order to meet your parent's reasonable expectations for family time. You may need to negotiate in order to accommodate everyone's needs. But make sure to leave room for activities that are important to you!

Be mindful of family drama. If your home life is particularly stressful or dysfunctional, be realistic about ongoing problems when you return home. Beware of relationship triangles—when one family member wants to draw you into the drama of another. Focus on common interests and activities instead.

It may help to stay in touch with some of your college friends. If necessary take a *time out* from difficult family members, or make plans to stay somewhere else and visit your family during the day.

Recognize that change happens. Be open to new things in your self and at home. Change creates both opportunities and challenges. Some families have a harder time adjusting to change, and some conflict is normal.

It is usually a good idea to discuss any drastic physical changes in your appearance (piercings, tattoos, etc...) before you head home. You are trying new things. Your parents may or may not be pleased, and will need time to adjust.

Communicate. You are more independent now. Your parents, however, may still see you as a child. Make an effort to talk about what is going on in your life at school—what is exciting

Stress Busting Tips

Consider the holiday traditions you really like and make them happen:

Parties	Food
Spa retreats	Shopping
Family games	Decorating/Crafts
Stocking stuffers	Holiday movies & concerts
Outdoor activities	Visiting family & friends
Charitable giving	Religious activities
Gift games	Travel
	Sports

you; where you might be less sure of yourself. You may want to set aside additional time to talk about difficult topics: money and grades.

Don't make your family ask everything. You may feel like they are prying. They may feel like you are withholding something.

Respect household boundaries. It is still your home, but it's your parents' house. Respect their space. You and your parents may need to renegotiate some house rules—chores, use of the car, guests, sleeping late, etc. Work out compromises that best suit your family.

With regard to a curfew, at school you are used to being out late as you wish. Depending on your family rules, this may not be so easy at home. Talk it over with your parents. They might agree to drop a curfew if you agree to let them know where you are.