

## Message from the Parish Nurses

Lynn Dunlevy, BSN, RN, Faith Community Nurse

Barbara Mueller, RN, Faith Community Nurse

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### LESS HOLIDAY STRESS

### MORE JOY!!!

The holiday season can be a time of joy, wonder, and personal renewal. Or it can leave you drained: emotionally, physically, and even financially. Stress and depression can be detrimental to your health and well-being. But with using these coping tips, you can minimize your stress and ensure a worry-free holiday season that can be “a joyful time” for you and your family.

### STRESS POINTS & COPING TIPS

#### OVEREXPECTIONS

This is the single biggest cause of holiday stress. Unrealistic hopes that everything and everyone will suddenly be perfect can only lead to disappointment, frustration and depression. This is the exact opposite of what you and your family hope for.

- The holiday celebration doesn't have to be perfect or like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well.
- Choose a few to hold on to, and be open to creating new ones.
- A lopsided tree or a burned brisket won't ruin your holiday. It just might create a great family memory.
- Good relationships with family and friends are important. So, view the holiday season as a time to reconnect.
- Set aside differences and grievances. Accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to your expectations.
- Be realistic and enjoy the true meaning of the holiday season, which is about celebration and togetherness – not perfection.

#### OVERSCHEDULING

Most of our lives are already overscheduled, even before adding in visits from relatives, religious events, your children or grandchildren's holiday programs, and travel.

- Make plans carefully in advance and don't be afraid to say “no” when you and your children are overscheduled.
- Allow time for yourself and do the things that you enjoy.
- Avoid time crunches by making plans to visit some friends and family after the holidays.
- Tell family members about your commitments so you are not struggling against their expectations.
- When traveling long distances, give yourself time to stop and rest. Travel after rush hours if possible.

#### OVERINDULGING

Eat, drink and be merry - within reason. Over eating and overdrinking, especially alcoholic beverages can worsen certain health problems and cause unneeded guilt over extra pounds.

- Avoid starving yourself in anticipation of eating at a holiday party. This approach can lead to eating to much of the wrong foods.
- Alcohol is caloric-heavy and is a natural depressant.
- Continue exercising and watching your diet.

#### OVERPAYING

In a world of expensive electronics and holiday TV commercials bombarding our children, it's easy for financial stresses to drain your enthusiasm and your wallet. Don't confuse “stuff” with love.

- Make a budget for gifts and food and stick to it.
- Ask people what they want instead of scouring the earth to find the perfect gift.
- Most of all, remember to give the gift of time to children. Long after the \$100 video game is forgotten, kids will remember sledding down hills with you.

#### OVEREXERTION

Don't wait until the last minute to shop for food and presents. Make preparations and the events family occasions.

- Take the time you need to finish tasks that are important to you. Don't try to complete everything at once.
- Involve the children in the planning, shopping, and decorating.
- Getting the children to help with meals and baking cookies can be memorable and fun.
- Ask your guest to bring their favorite dish.
- Rest when your body tells you to.

#### OVERSTRESSED CHILDREN

Children are sensitive and can be the first to feel tensions. With schedule changes and family stresses, keep an eye out for signs of discomfort among children.

- Signs of discomfort can be: unusual headaches, backaches, nightmares, irritability or other out-of-character behaviors.
- Talk to your children when you see any of these changes in behavior.
- Listen to their concerns and anxieties.

By Barbara Mueller, RN, Faith Community Nurse

More information can be found at:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress>

Visit: [www.StAgnesShepherdstown.org](http://www.StAgnesShepherdstown.org) for “Christmas Greeting from the Parish Nurses Team.” Click on: Parish Health Newsletter.

## CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM THE PARISH NURSES TEAM



*May the Spirit of Wholeness  
be with you, awakening  
healing power within.*

*May the Spirit of Harmony  
restore rhythms of  
body, mind and spirit.*

*May Love touch you,  
strengthen you and  
give you Peace.*

*Many Blessings,  
Barbara, Lynn, Gabriele, Joyce,  
Kathryn, Jeanne, Rose, Jo-Ann,  
Margaret, Michele, Dr. Dave*