

Holiday Stress When You're a Party of One

The holidays are a stressful time of year for many of us, but it can be an especially difficult time of year for people who are alone – either by circumstance or as a result of a recent loss. Throughout the weeks and months leading up to the holiday season, we are bombarded with the message that the holidays are a time for togetherness and family. While this may be true, and in fact a nice sentiment, it can be a difficult message to hear over and over again should you find yourself at a time in your life when you are for the most part by yourself.

The good news is that the holidays don't *have* to be something you must endure. While no amount of self-care or fun activities can make up for the loss of a loved one, or the pain of a recent separation, we can do ourselves a favor by doing little things for ourselves, allowing ourselves small pleasures, and above all *not* holding ourselves to some impossible standard or ideal of what the holidays "should" be like.

Here are some low- to no-cost ways you can get started enjoying your holiday season, be it with friends and family, or not:



Volunteer – not just on the holiday.

Some individuals and families make it a point to volunteer on the holiday itself – help serve meals at a food kitchen on Thanksgiving, or help out at a shelter on Christmas Day. While that is wonderful service, remember that food banks, shelters, and other community resources need volunteers *year-round*, not just a couple days a year.

Consider making a longer-term volunteer commitment – see if the community organization you'd like to volunteer at has a committee you could join, or at least a need for a recurring weekly commitment. Giving to others is a fantastic way to get out of your own head and feel like you've done something worthwhile and valuable with your time. Plus, your community needs you! And probably a lot more than you think.

Go to the movies!

Some folks see moviegoing as a group activity and something which would be awkward to do by yourself. To this point of view, we would ask, "Why?" If you're watching a movie on the big screen, you aren't – or at least you shouldn't be – chatting with the people sitting next to you. Watching a movie in a theater is a solitary experience to begin with, even if you are going as part of a group, so why not check out the local multiplex or arthouse cinema by yourself next time you get a hankering to go to the movies? Film studios typically release a lot of their best features during the holiday season, in hopes of getting awards attention in the early part of the following year. So December is a great time to be at the movies – chances are, you'll catch something really good.

It's okay to be by yourself.

So long as you aren't isolating, and so long as being by yourself doesn't make you feel sad or hopeless, it's okay to spend some time alone if that's your preference – even if it is during a time of year we often associate with togetherness and companionship. But if that's not your way, and some relaxing time by yourself feels like just the ticket, go for it.

If you'd rather be around others – or if you just need to talk to someone – you can.

You may have to be the one to make the first move, but you'd be surprised how open and accommodating people are if you ask if they'd like to spend some time together. Holiday invitations tend to be easy to come by, but even if they aren't, and you feel alone, we are here for you. Ulliance Life Advisor consultants are available 24/7/365 if you're ever in need of emotional support. Even if it's New Year's Eve, or after midnight, a live person is available if you are in a difficult place and just need to talk. We're ready to listen.



Join us for a **FREE** Life Advisor Webinar, a service of your Life Advisor EAP.

Financial Fitness for 2020

January 29th at 12:00 p.m.

To Reserve Your Spot, Visit: <https://bit.ly/2OXd999>