



Hanley's *Holiday* Guide

Here at Hanley Foundation, we believe that family time is time well-spent, and there's no better time than the holidays! However, we understand that this may be a difficult season for many, and the emotional strain of the holidays may take a grave toll. According to the CDC, alcohol and drug-related deaths also spike during the months of December through March. This can be a very trying time to maintain sobriety.

We want our recovery community to know that they are not alone during this season, and to be aware of emotional and environmental stressors that may trigger consumption. We have created Hanley's Holiday Guide to provide general tips, tools for overcoming anxiety, and help for family and friends looking to support loved ones on their long-term recovery journey.

Stay in Contact With Your Community

Emotional and mental support are vital during times of stress, such as the holidays. For those with access to a phone or other smart device, be sure to stay in regular contact with friends, sponsors, mental health professionals, physicians, and trusted family members. If you choose to spend the season away from home, look up local AA or NA meeting times and plan to attend. Remember, even if you're unable to physically make it to a meeting, many programs offer virtual meeting options.

Common Triggers for Holiday Substance Use

- ★ Feeling pressured into or forced to attend family gatherings and social events
- ★ Straining your financial budget with gift-buying
- ★ Being expected to plan and prepare extravagant meals, parties, and celebrations
- ★ Traveling to visit family and friends
- ★ Spending time with relatives you don't get along with
- ★ Attempting to reunite with estranged family and friends
- ★ Feeling pressured to take part in cultural or family traditions involving alcohol

Know Where to Find Help

SAMHSA's National Helpline is a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service (in English and Spanish) for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders.

SAMHSA's National Helpline

1-800-662-HELP (4357)



Tips for Avoiding Consumption During the Holidays

- ★ Maintain realistic expectations of yourself and those around you during the holidays.
- ★ Plan for parties and celebrations ahead of time, as not to overdo it.
- ★ Stick to a holiday spending budget for gifts, food, events, etc.
- ★ Create new holiday traditions that don't include drugs and alcohol.
- ★ Communicate your desire to limit or avoid the use of drugs and alcohol with loved ones.
- ★ Attend daily or weekly support group meetings to stay on track with recovery if overcoming drug or alcohol addiction.
- ★ Seek medical detox, counseling, therapy, and other treatments if you return to use.

Advice for Family Members and Friends

- ★ Do not pressure loved ones to participate in holiday functions or stay through events.
- ★ Include non-alcoholic options at holiday parties.
- ★ Offer words of encouragement and congratulate loved ones on their recovery journey.
- ★ Do not allow family and friends to drive under the influence of alcohol and other substances.