



## Winter can seem like a long season for some...

After many challenging months of COVID, many of us may experience a sense of loss for what winter used to look like before COVID-19.

Anticipating that it may be difficult to get through winter may not make the season easier, but acknowledging feelings and problems in advance can help you have a more positive winter.



[NYProjectHope.org](https://www.nyprojecthope.org)

**Talk with a trained crisis counselor  
COVID Emotional Support Helpline**

**1-844-863-9314**

8am-10pm / 7 days

**Confidential | Anonymous | Free**



**NY Project Hope**

A program of the NYS Office of Mental Health  
Funded by FEMA



# Tips for Winter...



**NY Project Hope**  
Coping with COVID





## Tips for Caregivers & Parents to Help Themselves...

- Be gentle with yourself during the holidays. Take a few minutes to relax by yourself with activities.
- Keep your meal, sleep, and exercise routines as close to normal as possible. On busy days, plan easy meals such as using a frozen casserole.
- Expect young children to misbehave occasionally. Encourage them to express their feelings and frustrations through play and exercise.
- Think about what you would like to do rather than what you should do. If there are activities or traditions you do each year but do not enjoy, consider not doing them or plan to do them in a different way.
- Draw on your faith and spirituality to seek consolation and support.
- Accept the kindness and support of others. Reach out to people who will listen and understand.
- If you are having trouble managing your emotions, speak to a friend or professional or consider recording your thoughts and feelings in a journal. Whatever you do, try to work out your feelings in private so your children do not become worried. Remember that your child's well-being is tied to your well-being.



- Reach out to help others. Consider small ways to help someone else in need such as taking cookies to an elderly neighbor.

Children often follow the example of the adults around them. The following tips are designed to assist parents and caregivers of children during this holiday season.



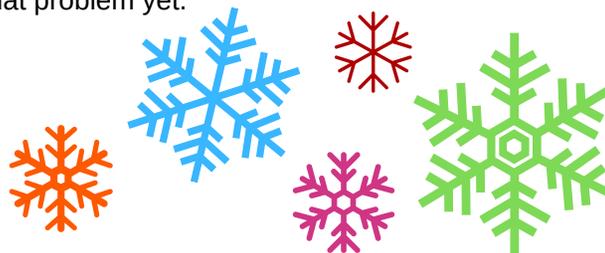
## Tips for Parents & Caregivers to Help Children...

### If your child is...

missing seeing people...talk with your child about these important people and acknowledge the sadness of not being able to see them. Help your child stay in touch with these individuals by making and sending cards and pictures to them.

### Worried...

Create a "worry box" and have your child put messages, pictures or drawings in it that express their worries. Set aside some time to look over these items with your child and discuss possible solutions to some of the worries. Help your child feel hopeful about the future by being realistic and giving simple explanations and honest answers. It is alright to say, "We don't have an answer for that problem yet."



### Silent or having difficulty expressing feelings...

Draw simple faces on paper showing different feelings such as anger, sadness and worry. Tell a brief story about each one. Help your child describe their feelings and concerns by using the drawings and asking questions such as "This face looks worried. Why?"

### Dealing with the loss of a loved one...

Holidays often increase feelings of loss of a loved one or pet. Acknowledge to your child that you also miss the person or pet and set time aside for the family to reminisce. Preschoolers may not understand that death is irreversible and may think their thoughts or behaviors caused the death. Reassure them they are not to blame. To help children cope and look to the future with hope, consider having a ceremony during which you plant a tree in memory of your loved one.

### Anxious or distressed...

Lead your child through a breathing exercise. Demonstrate how to put one hand on your stomach and breathe in through the nose and out slowly through the mouth. Show your child how your chest expands when you breathe in and how it contracts when you breathe out. Make a game of this breathing exercise by blowing paper wads across a table or blowing bubbles with a bubble wand.

### Not interested in playing...

Your child needs you. Plan a special hands-on activity together, such as making homemade wrapping paper or small crafts for gift giving.

**Children are resilient. Reassurance, guidance and thoughtful listening will play an important role in helping them develop coping skills that will stay with them in the years to come**