Navigating the Holiday Season

Emotional support, practical assistance, and community resources for associates and household members.



There is no “right” way to experience the holidays.

For some, this season brings joy; for others, stress, grief, financial pressure, or loneliness. All of these experiences deserve care and support.

Start with what matters most to you

Check in with yourself

Identify what feels most difficult right now: emotions, money, relationships, caregiving, or time.

Choose manageable expectations

Prioritize what is meaningful. It is okay to change plans, simplify traditions, or decline invitations.

Keep everyday routines

Make space for sleep, meals, movement, connection, and breaks when possible.

Ask for support early

Reach out to a trusted person, a local community organization, or a qualified professional when needed.

Contact Carelon Wellbeing 24/7 for support

Call: 888-275-0021 | TTY 711

Visit: livetheorangelife.com/carelon

Finding support in this guide

2 Grief, family & wellbeing

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The holiday season looks different for everyone. Whether you celebrate, observe different traditions, or do not participate in holidays, your wellbeing matters.

Carelon Wellbeing is here to support you 24/7 and offers six free counseling sessions per situation, per year, per household member.

Grief, Family Dynamics & Emotional Wellbeing

Navigate loss, challenging relationships, and seasonal expectations with care and flexibility.



The holidays may bring feelings of grief, loneliness, or stress related to complicated family relationships and gatherings.

It's okay to honor meaningful traditions, set boundaries, or choose different ways to spend the season.

Practical approaches

Honor grief and changing traditions

Acknowledge feelings of loss, remember loved ones in meaningful ways, or create new traditions that feel comfortable.

Set healthy boundaries

Decide which gatherings, conversations, and commitments feel manageable. It's okay to decline invitations or leave early.

Navigate difficult interactions

Plan ways to redirect uncomfortable conversations, take breaks, or seek support when family tensions arise.

Connect in ways that feel right

Consider a phone call, time with supportive friends, a community activity, or a quieter celebration instead of a stressful gathering.

Helpful information & support

Carelon Wellbeing

Connect with a Support Specialist 24/7 at **888-275-0021 | TTY 711** or visit livetheorangelife.com/carelon

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Call or text 988 for free, confidential crisis support, including when you feel overwhelmed.

Website

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

Guidance for coping with grief, finding support groups, and connecting with community resources when loss affects emotional wellbeing.

Website

Holiday Budgeting & Smart Spending

Plan your spending, shop wisely, and use financial support that may be available to you.



Make a Holiday Budget

Start with what you can comfortably spend, then decide how you want to use it.

- CFPB: Five-step holiday spending plan
- CFPB: Assess your spending

Gifts & Smart Shopping

Make a list, compare prices, and know the terms before you buy.

- CFPB: Enjoy the holidays without going into debt
- FTC: Online shopping guidance
- FTC: Gift card scam guidance

Small steps that can help

- Set one total holiday spending amount.
- Include gifts, food, travel, decorations, shipping, and events.
- Decide on gift limits or a name exchange before shopping.
- Track purchases as you make them.
- Pause before unplanned purchases – a sale is still spending.

Your Carelon Wellbeing Benefit: Financial Support

Carelon Wellbeing is available 24/7 to connect you with no cost financial guidance, educational resources, and tools to help with holiday budgeting and money management.

Call: 888-275-0021 | TTY 711

Visit: https://livetheorangelife.com/carelon



Holiday Meals, Traditions & Local Support

Find meal-planning ideas, low-cost ways to celebrate, and community help when costs are tight.

Tip: Look early

Seasonal programs may have application deadlines or limited availability. Local nonprofits, schools, faith-based organizations, food banks, and community agencies may also offer holiday meals or gift assistance.



Holiday meals & fun

Holiday Meals & Groceries

Plan meals around what you already have, make a list, compare unit prices, and plan for leftovers.

- Nutrition.gov: Food Shopping and Meal Planning
- Nutrition.gov: Nutrition on a Budget

Free & Low-Cost Holiday Fun

Meaningful traditions do not have to be expensive. Consider:

- Neighborhood light walks
- Holiday movie or game night at home
- Library and community-center events
- Baking or cooking together
- Homemade decorations or crafts
- Volunteering together

Connect with community support

Food Assistance

Local food banks and meal programs can help when grocery costs are difficult to manage.

- Carelon: Find community resources
- Feeding America: Find your local food bank
- USAGov: Emergency food assistance

Community Support

211 can connect households with local assistance. Availability and eligibility vary by location.

- Carelon: Find community resources
- 211: Find local help
- 211: Utility assistance

Family, Caregiving & Work-Life Balance

Navigate overlapping responsibilities with practical planning and flexibility.



School breaks, caregiving, work schedules, travel, and family expectations may all compete for time.

Small changes and shared planning can help.

Helpful planning ideas

Map out care needs

Identify days when children, older adults, or other family members may need additional support.

Share responsibilities

Ask family, friends, or trusted community supports to help with meals, transportation, or care where possible.

Make time for yourself

Set aside time to rest, recharge, and care for your own needs while balancing family responsibilities.

Plan for interruptions

Keep key contacts, medication details, travel information, and backup arrangements accessible.

Caregiving and family resources

Carelon: Find community resources

Community resources including childcare, eldercare, caregiver support, and other services to help individuals and families.

Carelon: Work/Life resources

Call 888-275-0021 | TTY 711 24/7 to receive unlimited Work/Life consultations and resources in the areas of childcare, elder care, housing, transportation and more.

Support Beyond the Holiday Season

Choose one practical next step, and explore additional tools as needed.

Finding Ongoing Support

Contact Carelon Wellbeing
Carelon Wellbeing is here 24/7 to provide confidential support, guidance and resources for you and your household members.

Call: 888-275-0021 | TTY 711

Visit: livetheorangelife.com/carelon

Access self-paced digital tools and resources
Explore digital tools and resources to help manage stress, build resilience, and support your wellbeing (Use access code THEHOMEDEPOT for Learn to Live and eM Life).

Wellbeing Resources | Learn to Live | eM Life

Connect with community resources

If you need help with food, housing, utilities, or other essentials, search and contact local assistance programs about eligibility and available services.

Carelon: Find community resources

Small Steps Moving Forward



What would make this week more manageable?

Choose one realistic action, such as contacting a community organization, exploring a support program, or making time for connection.

Support is available, and taking even one small step toward getting help can make a difference.

The resource listings provided are for informational purposes only and are not intended as endorsements, referrals, or recommendations of any programs, providers, or services. Carelon makes no representations or warranties regarding the quality, suitability, or outcomes of the listed resources. It is the sole responsibility of the individual to evaluate and select any providers or programs based on their own judgment and due diligence.