Maintain your health. Don’t neglect self care. Overeating and drinking, together with changes in your daily schedule and sleep routine can leave you feeling irritable, depressed and moody. After a sugar high from all the holiday treats, you should expect a crash. This is predictable. Try to avoid overindulging if you can.

Remember that you have a right to be healthier than those around you. Maintain your personal wellness goals by planning in advance to avoid relapse.

Don’t be surprised by the Holiday Blues. Some holiday crankiness is normal. It is less about the people and the situation and more about the body’s response to overstimulation. Try to focus on maintaining moderation and balance.

Holiday stress can, however, exacerbate preexisting mood and anxiety disorders. In addition, grief from the past often resurfaces during the holidays. Be mindful of extreme changes in your mental health.

Get help if you need it. Talk to a trusted family member or friend. Call a help line. Contact a local counselor. Visit your primary care physician if necessary.

The ETSU Counseling Center remains open during break, except for official University holidays, including the week after Christmas.

(423) 439-3333
counselingcenter@etsu.edu
www.etsu.edu/students/counseling/

BUCS Press 2
24/7 Mental Health Helpline
(423) 439-4841

Home for the Holidays
ETSU Student Edition

Plan ahead
Communicate your needs
Manage conflict
Stay healthy
Communicate. You are more independent now. Your parents, however, may still see you as a child. Make an effort to talk about what is going on in your life at school—what is exciting you; where you might be less sure of yourself. You may want to set aside additional time to talk about difficult topics: money and grades.

Recognize that change happens. Be open to new things in your plans to stay somewhere else and visit your family during the day. It may help to step in touch with some of your college friends. If you are struggling with family drama, be mindful of family drama. If your home life is particularly stressful or dysfunctional, be realistic about ongoing problems when you return home. Avoid hot topics. Be aware of relational triangles—when one family member wants to draw you into the fray. Be open to new things at home to accommodate your parent’s needs.

Respect household rules—your parents’ house, your home, your parents’ house. It is still your family. Make the best use of the car, guests, sleeping arrangements, etc. Work out some house rules—chores, use of the car, guests, sleeping late, etc. Respect your parents’ house. It is still your home, but it’s your parents’ house. Respect their space.

Plan ahead. Let your parents know what your holiday plans are before you arrive at home. Give them fair warning about how often you plan to be away from home. Expect to make compromises in order to meet your parent’s reasonable expectations for family time. You may need to negotiate in order to accommodate everyone’s needs. You need to negotiate in order to accommodate everyone’s needs. Your appearance (hair, clothes, etc.) before you head home. It is usually a good idea to discuss any drastic physical changes in your appearance (hair, clothes, etc.) before you head home.

Stress busting tips

Consider the holiday traditions YOU really like and make them happen:

- Family games
- Outdoor activities
- Shopping/Crafts
- Religious activities
- Snack ideas
- Sports
- Travel
- Vacations
- Volunteer work

Don’t make your family ask everything. You may feel like they are prying. They may feel like you are withholding something. Respect household rules—your parents’ house, your home, your parents’ house. It is still your family. Make the best use of the car, guests, sleeping arrangements, etc. Work out some house rules—chores, use of the car, guests, sleeping late, etc. Respect your parents’ house. It is still your home, but it’s your parents’ house. Respect their space.

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