



THE INSTITUTE FOR HEALTHY FAMILIES OF NORTH TEXAS

"helping achieve small miracles!"

IHF Newsletter, Vol. 2, No. 1

January 15, 2010

After the Holidays: Finding Balance and Wellness *By Sandra W. Froese, Ed.D, LPC-S; © 2009*

During the month of January we will focus on “recovery” from the holidays. Here are some practical things to do to get your body, mind, spirit, finances, house and family back in shape.

1. **Start with your house.** Begin storing all those holiday decorations after the last guest leaves by the mid January. The longer you leave your decorations up, the more you are going to feel “behind.” After the stuff has been cleared away, give your house a thorough cleaning.
2. **Clear your closets** of unwanted clothing and items. If you have winter clothes, Goodwill or the Salvation Army may be able to use them.
3. **Return or exchange gifts** that do not fit or you are unable to use. You do not need to notify the giver of the exchange, but tell the truth if the giver inquires.
4. **Balance and reconcile your checkbook** and match your credit card receipts with your statements. If you have “overspent” your budget, make a plan to hold back additional purchases until you have adequate funds.
5. **Resolve to make credit card payments** to reduce the balance as quickly as possible. Check to see if your credit card fees and interest rate payments have increased and your credit limit has been reduced. If you belong to a credit union, the interest rates for personal loans are generally lower than credit card rates.
6. **Attend services at your church** during the “low season” after the holidays. Yes, I know you are tired and worn out, but it is important to nurture your faith throughout the entire year.
7. **If you packed on extra pounds** during the holidays, resolve to renew your exercise program and cut back on rich foods. Planning winter meals around hot soups and leftover turkey casseroles are a good way to reduce calories and maintain good nutrition. Walking is also great exercise and inexpensive.
8. **Begin tax planning.** If you made donations to charities, had medical expenses, received extra income and paid your property taxes at the end of the year, this is the time to put all those receipts in a folder. In January, you will begin receiving statements from your employer, social security, investments, and they need to be saved for your annual federal tax return.
9. **Cold winter days or “snow days”** are good times to reconnect with your family. Get out the game boards, jigsaw puzzles or playing cards (electronic games are OK as long as they are interactive); listen to some great music, and sip hot chocolate or hot apple cider.
10. **Learn something new**, improve your skills, or just enjoy a good book by visiting your local library to select something to read during the cold winter months.

As Cognitive Behavioral Therapists, we assist our clients to learn new methods and ways to change old thinking patterns and habits to lead to better mental health. We work with you to become more focused and listen to your inner self-talk to stop procrastination and negative self-talk. If you expect the worst, then you will continue to suffer! However, if you are willing to re-train your mind to think and respond differently, then you can be conditioned to think in positive, healthy ways that lead to better mental health and happiness.

If you or anyone in your family needs marriage and family counseling or personal counseling to address changes in your life, check out our web site at www.texasicounselors.com. Our rates are affordable.