



Note About NH:

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Holidays

The holidays are right around the corner. It seems like summer has flown by so quickly. For some survivors the holidays are a difficult time. Anniversary dates, holidays spent alone, bad memories of the them, feeling lonely and/or the struggle to find anything positive at this time of the year. For other survivors the holidays are a relief because they can spend them with family and/or friends and that can help in feeling safer due to being in a protective environment. It could also be a great distraction with all the events, gatherings and other activities that may be taking place can provide a relief from having to deal with the trauma.

Which ever experience you may find you can relate to best, the holidays may bring old or new stressors after trauma. It may be necessary to implement coping skills you already have, or to learn new ones. One of the big struggles people have in general with the holidays is the added stress. Whether an individual is a survivor of not, with added activities, responsibilities and financial stressors or challenges, it can be a bit tough period of the year. For survivors already struggling, this time of the year may be a more difficult time to manage on top of the normal holiday struggles.

Some things that you may want to consider with these holidays are ideas that may or may not work for you. As with anything, take what works for you and leave the rest. One thing to consider at this time of year, it's important to get adequate sleep, to eat healthy without over or under eating, and to take care of taking time to do stress relieving activities such as walking or other physical activities. Physical activity can help to reduce the stress that can accumulate in your muscles.

Planning time in your schedule to plan ahead for upcoming events and responsibilities is important. Added activities, needing time off from work, cooking, and getting other things in place that creates more time and energy can be helped by looking for or changing around your schedule. This can help you be able to do most if not all that you'd like or need to do during this time. Laying out a plan

that provides the ultimate goals, but broken down steps you can take as the time approaches for when you need your tasks completed by.

With eating disorders being a struggle, it's important to have plans on how you will accommodate the events and activities you are planning on attending and participating in. Going without food to make up for what you may eat later, usually creates more problems. So planning how to stick to and adjust your eating plan with your nutritionist, physician or counselor can be very beneficial during the holidays.

Remembering, there are no bad foods, it's okay to have a little bit of things you normally wouldn't have on your meal plan (please follow your eating disorder professional's guidance and direction on this point) is possible for most of us. You know you best, so use your self-care skills to make sure that you are able to take care of you during this time.

Most of all, during these last couple months of the year, remember that you are worth every ounce of investment you put into yourself. You are worth the kudos, the self-care, the self-kindness, and you deserve to enjoy this time as much as you possibly can.

Take Gentle Care of You,
Kristen

**You are
worth the
kudos, the
self-care, the
self-
kindness...**

So They Say

Food is not the enemy, so they say.
Yet it beckons me on, just one last time.

It calls my name, let's stay friends.
I won't be any pressure on you, but food just won't stop.

Day and night it calls, just one more bite.
How can I stop, I just don't know.

I'll try again tomorrow, maybe it'll be.
A new relationship with food, I'm not betting on it though.

Submitted by:
Frustrated

Slow Change

I struggle with binge eating disorder and have since I was 14 years old. I didn't know what it was back then. I do remember eating volumes of food until I was sick. All of my money went to buying junk food. I couldn't seem to get enough of it.

I gained so much weight my body began to shut down in multiple ways and I was on more medication than I thought imaginable. It wasn't until I nearly died from my health complications that I decided to get help for my eating disorder. That opened a door of hope for me! I never thought I'd ever eat normal or have any ability to find help for not only my eating but to have found a way to address my poor health.

It has been a very slow change, but by addressing my eating disorder, I've been able to lose weight and get off some of those added medications. I still have a long way to go, but I'm hopeful for the first time in my life, that I can eat healthy and meet both my nutritional needs and my pleasure for eating. I know I have much more work to do, but I can do it.

Submitted by
One Survivor

Intense Emotions

I know it's not easy to experience intense emotions. They can create some struggles whether internally or externally. For some survivors there can be thoughts of being bad for feeling the emotions—take anger for example. Rather than experiencing the emotion, they may attempt to stuff it. Some may take the emotions out on themselves, such as using self-injury. Yet others may use disordered eating to cope.

It's not uncommon to turn to food or avoid it when feeling out of control with emotions. It's also not bad by any means to have any feelings. Behaviors are what can create the problems, while feelings are just that—feelings.

When the feelings seem overwhelming, remember to breathe and experience it. It will pass. If it is getting too overwhelming, try to use something for distraction that won't cause you to feel worse or create negative consequences. Eating or starving away the emotions really don't create a positive response. Even if it feels better initially, later the results generally feel worse, or even induce shame.

Try to experience your emotions without judgment upon yourself. It's okay to have them!

**When the
feelings seem
overwhelming,
remember to
breathe...**

How I Changed My Holidays

My life was falling apart. I was so lonely and wasn't willing to disturb any of my friends during their family holidays. I felt like I was in the way and like I was an obligation. So I stocked up on junk food for the holidays. I was miserable.

I had spent several years volunteering for a website that discussed multiple topics and had hundreds of blogs on just as many topics. One year I decided to spend time on there on an actual holiday. During that time I hosted a fellowship thread. It was amazing how much better I felt spending my time sharing with others, even though it was just writing in a thread that was "real time."

Sure, it would be nice to be around family and friends, but as that has not been an option, I've enjoyed spending my time fellowshipping online with others in similar situations.

Over time, I've added to that and I've cooked meals and treats for those working emergency services on Thanksgiving and Christmas shifts to let them know they are appreciated. In the process, I've started eating better as I wouldn't give them what I used to eat.

Not only did I create new holidays for me, I feel like I've made a difference in others lives during these times. If I were going to do it all over again, I would do the same thing because it has given me new life and good changes.

*Not only did I
create new
holidays for
me, I feel like
I've made a
difference...*

Submitted by:
Me





*Happy
Thanksgiving*

Christmas Confusion

For some survivors Christmas can be particularly stressful. It can be challenging and/or confusing spiritually. When raised in a Christian home where family discussed and said they loved God, but were abusive, confusion and questions of the trustworthiness of God is to be expected.

Let me start by saying that God is not like any human we know. Humans can say they are this or that, but what is in their heart and soul can be hidden to everyone except God. Add to that, God is a divine being who allows us to make choices about what we do. Evil is precipitated by Satan. I'm not talking about making mistakes. I'm talking about the evil of abuse, of torture, of child molestation, and so on. God is the opposite of evil. He doesn't condone it in any manner. Why doesn't He stop it? I can't answer why He does or doesn't answer the way we ask, except that in the outcome, we'll know why.

God's original plan was for us humans to love and take care of all of His creation—the animals, family, nature, and all that was given to us. Fast forward to today, the celebration of Christmas in the birth of Jesus, sent to save us, but yet our family member, preacher or other Christian hurt us. It's easy to see where there is confusion or even anger at God. And that's okay. God totally understands the anger. He is more than capable of handling any anger we feel at anything or anyone. That includes at Him.

It can be difficult to celebrate the birth of Jesus and the salvation He brought to us beginning with His birth. Perhaps you prayed to be rescued or for the abuse to stop. When it didn't, lacking understanding as to why He didn't help, it's understandable how this is confusion and breeds lack of trust in Him and His willingness to protect us. It's even understandable to see why some survivors turn away and want nothing to do with God or those who call themselves Christians.

I have no clue why God didn't intervene in the way we prayed. I have no clue why He allowed the abuse to happen in the first place. I do know that He loves His creation. We can see His love in the Psalms. David was called a friend of God. Yet when we look at David's life, it was filled with almost a bipolar image. He would be downhearted and angry and then happy and upbeat. He committed adultery, murdered someone to be with that soldier's wife, and in the midst of it all, still found hope in forgiveness and God.

I don't know where you are today spiritually, but God never wanted nor wished for abuse to take place in your life. He would have preferred that your parents or husband or that stranger or neighbor be loving and supportive. One day, they will be judged and receive the justice they deserve for what they did. It's possible to find Hope in Jesus as the man child born over 2000 years ago. I encourage you to think about the difference between people who call themselves "Christians" and those who model their life after Christ, with every intention of mirroring the life of Christ as He modeled for us when He was born on this earth. Just because someone calls themselves Christian, doesn't mean they are Christ-like in their words and deeds. I wish you a blessed Christmas and New Year's day.

It's even understandable to see why some survivors turn away and...

Pain & Food

My heart hurt. I grieved the loss of my child. It happened a long time ago but it felt like yesterday. My husband and I wanted that child for so long. We had experienced a long period of not being able to get pregnant, and then we received the news we had waited for, for so long, we were pregnant. I hadn't come from a great family, so I was looking forward to giving all the love I had inside to this life that was growing inside of me.

I was devastated when I miscarried 9 weeks into my pregnancy. I just stop feeling, stopped eating, and stopped caring. I went into a horrible depression and had no desire to live any longer. It was a few months later when I wouldn't even get out of bed that my husband took me to see my doctor who said I was experiencing depression and needed medication.

I reluctantly began to take the medication because my husband was so concerned. At some point then, I started to care about life again. But rather than going back to normal, I became angry. I was so angry about my loss, about not being able to carry a child, and I started blaming myself. It's at that point I turned to food for comfort. Over time, that created new problems and I found myself gaining weight and unable to find peace even with the pain.

Eventually my husband again took me to see my doctor who suggested that I see a counselor about how I was feeling since the loss of my child. I did start seeing that counselor and it took quite a while, but I was able to sort out my emotions, the pain from not only the miscarriage but from my dysfunctional and neglectful family. I never realized how much they had impacted my life until then.

It was then that I began to find my way free of the comfort of the food I was eating. It was then that I was able to stop punishing myself for something I had no control of, and blaming myself for something that wasn't my fault.

I don't know if you've ever experienced a loss in your life like my husband and I did, but if you have, please consider seeing a counselor. That is one of the best things I've ever done to help myself in more ways than one.

Submitted by:
Sarah

***It was then
that I began
to find my
way free of the
comfort of the
food I was
eating.***



Helping Me

It's been a struggle to deal with my eating. My thinking has really been negative and a challenge to get under control with my eating. It's hard to challenge the thoughts that have led to my eating disorder. If eating less has helped me lose weight, exercising more will make that happen faster. If I cut back eating more that will continue to help. Before long I knew every calorie that went into my body. I had it down to a science and water became my best friend. I started skipping breakfast so I could exercise longer before class started.

I don't know where I crossed the line, but I didn't need to eat any more. If I did, I ate a bite of lettuce or a carrot without dressing. I calculated how much exercise I would need to do to make up for eating during those times. All I thought about was food and calories and exercise.

My friends who initially told me how well I was doing and how great I looked started telling me I needed to eat more. I felt pressured and started withdrawing from them. I came up with excuses to avoid going out of my home. One day I passed out in my living room. When I woke up, I was in pain and I was scared. It was the start of making a change.

I called my doctor's office and made an appointment. I have never had that happen before. When I had to get on the scale, I heard the nurse gasp from behind. When I saw the weight I felt both proud and terrified. Needless to say my doctor was quite upset and told me so. He had been my doctor for quite a while. He said he was putting me in the hospital for tests. While I was there I had a visit from a woman who came to talk to me and told me that I have anorexia nervosa, and that my body was dying. She said it wasn't functioning correctly because it didn't have any food in it to give it energy. She said that my body was feeding on my muscles. I felt a mixture of fear and relieved. If my body died, there would be no more pain. If I didn't eat, I would die and I honestly considered choosing to die. But ultimately I decided I really didn't want to die, but I just couldn't eat. I didn't know what to do.

After much discussion with that woman and my doctor, I agreed to go into an eating disorder program. I was terrified of going. I had never been in a hospital before this point, and I certainly had never been in a hospital that focused on my health, coping and trauma.

I was there about three months. After my weight had stabilized enough, I joined the trauma group that was available. I learned so much about me. I think what stood out to me most was that the assault I went through was not my fault. My beliefs about what happened to me were that it was all my fault. If I had just not been in that place, it wouldn't have happened. Another thing that stood out to me was how much better I started feeling both physically and emotionally as I started to slowly eat regular meals. It didn't fix the memories of being assaulted, but it did help me to look at it differently.

*Thankfully,
today I'm in
recovery.*

Thankfully, today I'm in recovery. It's still a challenge to eat, but I follow my meal plan and continue with my group for support and with the counselor they referred me to when I left the inpatient and residential program.

If you are where I was, help yourself and seek help. You don't necessarily need to go into a program, but counseling and support groups have really helped me to help myself. It wasn't easy to get help, but I'm certainly glad I did.

Submitted by:
Tiffany



*If you are
where I was,
help yourself
and seek help.*

Extra Holiday Support

If you struggle with the holidays, please know that we are offering extra support for survivors in the form of an online platform to just touch base with someone for a little bit. All online support is by Zoom (a free download). Holiday support is available on these dates/times.

Wednesday, November 27th, 8:30—10:30 pm Eastern
Thursday (Thanksgiving), November 28th, 7:00—9:00 pm Eastern
Tuesday, December 24th, 8:00—10:00 pm Eastern
Wednesday (Christmas), December 25th, 7:00—9:00 pm Eastern

To receive extra support, please email recovery@hope4-recovery.org and share the date and time you would like to join. This is small group support. Other times may be available by request if needed.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Psalm 147:3 He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds.

MISSION

The mission of Hope Recovery is to provide Christian-based support in the lives of adult survivors of abuse and sexual trauma.

VISION

To offer support and compassion as survivors make their way on the journey of recovery and healing.

Hope Recovery

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We're on the Web

www.hope4-recovery.org



When all seems like a struggle, there is hope.

Subscribing to Nourishing Hearts

Fees:

Free to Survivors of Trauma with a Binge Eating Disorder.

\$4 donations from supporters and professionals is requested to cover the costs of the website.

Donations may be sent to our PO Box, or online via PayPal.

You Are Not Alone!