



# HOLIDAY GUIDE

## Let's Get Through It Together

THINGS MAY SEEM DAUNTING  
UNTIL YOU REALIZE YOU'RE NOT  
ALONE

### The Holiday Season Post Concussion

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The Holidays! My absolute favourite and least favourite time of the year. Now how can that be? It's a bright, filled time with family and friends. BUT that bright filled time comes on with a lot of extra obligations.

Going to stores can be overwhelming if you suffer from overstimulation as stores are much more crowded. Ordering presents online might seem like a great idea unless you have difficulty with screens, and the scrolling often brings on symptoms.

Work, family, and friend obligations like extra dinners and parties can be overstimulating.

The Holidays can seem like a daunting, stressful time, but they don't have to be! Take a look through this guide to help you get through the Holidays!



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# A Little More Sparkle A Little Less Stress

## A SHORT STORY

An emotional family BBQ this past summer involved close and extended family. This BBQ was a get-together before a funeral the next day for my grandfather, who I was very close with. It had been a very emotional and stressful time.

My headaches certainly increase when I'm stressed. For years during these large family events, I've needed to take a mental and physical break. My siblings, parents, and a few others understand this. They are used to me simply disappearing for an hour or two and then rejoining everyone when I'm ready.

During this BBQ, when I took a break, it happened to be during family photos. My Mom came to see if I was up to joining, but I was extremely dizzy, so I chose to stay in bed. She, of course, understood, telling me not to worry and to come back when I felt better!

When I rejoined the BBQ, I was not prepared for the multiple comments I received.

***"How could you be so selfish and disappear?"***

***"You couldn't just come out for one photo?"***

I was taken aback, my family knows about my health, and the idea that individuals felt it necessary to comment was hurtful! Of course, a few comments were not intended to be hurtful such as ***"I'm so sad you missed photos; hopefully next time you'll be up for it!"***

I love to share this story because I have been dealing with post-concussion life for nearly 9 years, and it's still essential that I put me first despite what others may say.



## Gifts For You



The product that I never leave the house without! These small ear plugs help filter out certain frequencies so you can still carry on a normal conversation with those around you, but they can barely be seen.

## AWARENESS HOODIE



Be comfy and cozy this winter while promoting concussion awareness!

Find our podcast on any of  
your favourite streaming  
services!



## Communicating with Loved Ones

### STEP ONE

The most important thing to note is the goal of your communication. Are you trying to get your loved ones to understand what you're going through? Do you need space for yourself? Do you need help?

### STEP TWO

Who are you communicating with? Do you want to communicate with everyone in your family or choose one close person to talk to everyone else for you. This can make a world of difference with your approach.

### STEP THREE

Take the leap! Communicating your needs when they're invisible can be extremely difficult, but you must try to put your health first.

### REMINDERS

- Communication can be done through a variety of forms.
- You're not alone: your family and friends can only be there for you if you communicate with them.
- Tell the truth; keeping things to yourself only hurts you in the end.

### *Switch the way you think*

**I'm too broken to do this = I am healing and that's ok**

**I can't stay here = I am putting my health first**

**I want to give up = I am doing my best**

## Handling Holiday Stress

The most essential requirement of handling holiday stress is to **be realistic**. It's a very busy time of the year with a lot of emotions, which means putting too much pressure on ourselves can make it that much harder.

Consider setting a **plan** in place for the holidays. Don't forgo your routines if they are allowing you to function. Remember the triggers that you've learned. If you need alone **time**, then take it! If alone time is going to make these times harder, call up a friend to spend time with.

**Be honest** with yourself. If you want to go out all day and know you'll get increased symptoms tomorrow, that's okay! Just don't be angry with yourself when those symptoms appear.

The holidays are a wonderful tough time of year so do your best!

*Remember what you're going through is invisible*

## NEW YEARS TIPS

**It doesn't have to matter.**

**Why put so much pressure on one day of the year?**

First parties! New Years' parties have always been one of my favourites which used to lead to a few days in bed due to symptoms, but the time spent with family and friends always felt worth it. Decide what's worth it for you!

We often use the New Year to reflect on how far we've come, which can be a great exercise but depending on where you are at in your recovery, this may seem daunting. There is no need to reflect simply because the calendar changes. Carry on with your recovery pace, and be happy that you made it another year despite any struggles you may have had!

## TIPS FOR LEAVING THE HOUSE



**Go to stores early in the morning or late at night!**



**Bring Ear Peaces and a hat!**



**Go with a friend!**



**Don't be hard on yourself if you don't finish everything on your to do list!**