

# NAVIGATING THE HOLIDAYS WHILE IN RECOVERY

There is no singular path to recovery. All journeys come with unique challenges and strategies for healing. We asked pregnant, parenting, and people from the LGBTQIA+ communities how they successfully navigate the holidays while struggling with substance use or while in recovery.



**Q** How can people who are pregnant and exploring recovery/in recovery prepare for challenging times in the holiday season?

**A** **"Reach out for help when needed.** Holidays can bring up many different feelings along with tough situations with family, friends, and lack of supports. Having support groups, recovery supports and a sober network set up before the holidays come worked for me."



**Q** As someone who is part of the LGBTQIA+ community, what is the hardest part about getting through the holidays and how do you practice self-care or cope with the challenges?

**A** "I am part of the LGBTQ+ community and the hardest part I've witnessed others go through was how they were outcast by their non-supportive family. So, in that case a **"Friendsgiving day"** party would happen where anyone who doesn't have family/friends or support would gather and become family so the individual would know they are important, loved, and respected of who they are."



**Q** Is there anything specific you would like to tell people about your journey?

**A** **"Recovery is a process and what works for one may not work for another,** we all must find our place in this process. Don't give up because you tried something, and it did not work, or you did not like it. Keep trying new things this is where [it] begins and healing starts."



**Q** What supports do/did you access as a pregnant person who is exploring recovery or is in recovery?

**A** *Having a variety of supports on hand can be very beneficial, including:*  
**"Food pantries, meetings, recovery coaches, WIC, 12-step, outpatient groups, and other methods helpful to your unique recovery."**



**Q** What are some things that family/friends/support systems can do to help their loved one who is exploring and/or in recovery this holiday season?

**A** "Some things family/friends/support systems could do to help their loved ones during this holiday season is to **embrace and support their recovery, encourage and empower** them to continue doing the best they can without judgement and with love."

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE.**  
**CT has many resources that can support your recovery throughout the holidays.**

CT DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

CT COMMUNITY FOR ADDICTION RECOVERY

CT 24/7 TREATMENT ACCESS LINE:  
1-800-563-4086

DMHAS ADDICTION SERVICES BED AVAILABILITY

PROUD PROGRAM

SAFE-Family Recovery

WOMEN'S REACH PROGRAM

# SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS IN RECOVERY DURING THE HOLIDAYS

The holidays can be a challenging time for those in recovery. This time may bring up painful memories or trigger feelings of loneliness, financial worries, or social pressures.

But it can also be a time to connect, provide much needed resources, and celebrate recovery and strategies for healing.

## SCREENING

If you are a provider, incorporating screening for substance use and substance use disorders into every encounter gives all patients the opportunity to receive support for their individual needs and challenges.

**Consider validated screening tools such as 4 Ps, 5 Ps, ASSIST, T-ACE, or AUDIT.**

## BE NON- JUDGMENTAL

**Use nonjudgmental, nonmoralistic, and nonthreatening language when asking individuals about substance use.**

It is important to recognize personal attitudes that may influence a person's response. Stress harm reduction and meet them where they are at.

## HARM REDUCTION

**Harm reduction saves lives.**

If they are not ready to stop using substances, do not shame or judge them. Be compassionate and offer them resources that can help them use substances more safely.

**Talk to them about:**

- **Decreasing their substance use.**
- **Narcan / Naloxone.**
- **Accessing safe injection resources through a local harm reduction organization.**
- **The dangers of fentanyl. Promote use of fentanyl test strips on any substance they use.**
- **Safe storage of medication. Offer a lockbox if you can.**
- **Not using substances alone and the symptoms of a potential drug overdose.**
- **Call 911 in the event of an emergency.**
- **The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is now 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. Dial 988.**

## NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT?

**ACCESS Mental Health for Moms** offers psychiatric expertise and consultation to medical providers treating perinatal women presenting with mental health and/or substance use concerns. For obstetric, pediatric and adult primary care, and psychiatric providers treating women up to one-year post delivery.

Monday through Friday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm  
833-978-MOMS (6667)

## INCLUSIVE CARE

**Providing affirming and respectful care makes a difference.**

- Avoid assumptions about gender, sexual orientation, or family structure. People who are assigned female at birth may identify as trans, non-binary, or may be intersex.
- Introduce yourself with your pronouns to create a welcoming environment.
- Consider trauma informed care in your approach.
- Update your agency's paperwork to be gender inclusive.

**CT has many resources that can help support individuals that are in recovery or exploring recovery during the holidays.**

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