

# Getting Through the Holidays During a Pandemic: Strategies for Families

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In partnership with *City of Leduc Family & Community Support Services*  
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## Learning Objectives

- Understand how mindfulness can help you cope with painful emotions during the holidays
- Learn how accepting reality can lead to greater sense of freedom and peace
- Plan ahead for difficult times
- Start building your emotional resiliency today

## Psychological Impacts of COVID-19

- Anger, irritability, or frustration
- Boredom
- Depression, hopelessness, or desperation
- Suicidal thoughts
- Fatigue or exhaustion
- Fear, anxiety, or panic
- Insomnia
- Loneliness
- Traumatic stress symptoms

## Mindfulness

- “Paying attention in a particular way: On purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally” (Jon Kabat-Zinn)
- Can be practiced any time, anywhere, while doing anything
- Benefits include:
  - Reduced pain, suffering, tension, and stress
  - Increased happiness
  - Being more in control of your own mind
  - Ability to experience reality as it really is, with eyes wide open
- “Teflon Mind” -- the opposite of “Velcro Mind”

## Acceptance

- Choosing to accept reality as it is, not how you think it should be
  - Helpful when a problem or difficulty is unlikely to change or be resolved in the short-term
- *Radical Acceptance*: Making the choice to accept *all the way*, completely and totally, with your mind, heart, and body
- Letting go of the “tug-o-war rope”
- Allows you to move from “This is impossible” to “This is really hard”

## How to Practice Radical Acceptance

1. Notice that you aren’t accepting.
2. Remind yourself that reality is just as it is.
3. Remind yourself that reality was caused by whatever history led up to it.
4. Practice accepting with your whole self: Mind, body, and heart/spirit.
5. Allow painful emotions to arise within you.
6. Act opposite to unhelpful emotion urges.
7. Cope ahead with difficult situations that you might find hard to accept.

### **Coping Ahead with Difficult times**

1. What can I do? → games, movies, baking, crafts, volunteering...
2. Where can I go? → take a walk, take a drive, 24hr drive-thru...
3. Who can I talk to? → family, friends, crisis line...
4. How will I manage painful or uncomfortable emotions if/when they arise? → mindfulness, relaxation, self-soothing, radical acceptance...

### **Increase resiliency to stay STRONG**

- Sleep
- Take care of physical and mental health
- Resist mind-altering substances (moderation)
- One thing a day to build mastery
- Nutrition
- Get some exercise

### **Community Resources**

- **Access 24/7:** Single point of access for adult addiction and mental health community-based programs, including crisis support.  
Phone: 780-424-2424
- **City of Leduc Family & Community Support Services:** Free, confidential support and resources for residents of the City of Leduc.  
Phone: 780-980-7109  
Web: [leduc.ca/fcss](http://leduc.ca/fcss)
- **The Family Centre:** Low-fee or no-fee counselling and community support services for adults, youth, and families.  
Phone: 780-900-6129  
Web: [familycentre.org](http://familycentre.org)

### **Mindfulness Resources**

- **Jon Kabat-Zinn: 9 Powerful Meditation Tips**  
A series of short videos by Jon Kabat-Zinn, founder of The Center for Mindfulness, where he shares the nine attitudes he believes create a strong foundation for mindfulness practice.  
[themindfulnesssummit.com/sessions/9-powerful-meditation-tips-jon-kabat-zinn/](http://themindfulnesssummit.com/sessions/9-powerful-meditation-tips-jon-kabat-zinn/)
- **UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Centre**  
Main website: <https://www.uclahealth.org/marc>  
Free guided meditation sessions: <https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/mindful-meditations>
- **Mindful.org**  
Provides content, training, courses, and directories to help people live more mindfully.  
Website: <https://www.mindful.org>

*If you have questions or feedback, please contact Karen Lemke at 780-908-2376 or [karen@eropsych.com](mailto:karen@eropsych.com)*