

UNWRAPPING HOLIDAY STRESS





Holiday Stress Scale



One		No Stress/Minimal Stress: Feeling mostly happy and excited about the holidays. Full of holiday cheer, relaxed, and positive.
Two		Mild Stress: Holiday-related stress is subtle. Mild tension in the shoulders. Worrying over your mental checklist.
Three		Moderate Stress: Feeling the stress. Physical tension is more evident. Maybe headaches & having trouble sleeping. Feeling overwhelmed for large periods of time.
Four		Severe Stress: High levels of stress. Physical symptoms like fatigue, anxiety, muscle cramps, headaches, & trouble sleeping. Emotional ups and downs and crankiness.
Five		Extreme Stress: Constant stress and overwhelm. Possible emotional meltdowns or panic attacks. Hard to function. Intense physical symptoms. Feeling frozen. Time to reach out for help/support.



You Are Not Alone

70% of Americans report feeling stressed during the holiday season.

- 64% said financial pressure
- 50% identified *family gatherings*
- 30% expectation of a “perfect holiday”
- 25% travel
- 25% work obligations

[The American Institute of Stress](#)





Recognizing the Signs

- Irritability or mood changes
- Headaches or aching
- Dry skin
- Lack of appetite
- Fatigue or trouble sleeping
- Feeling overwhelmed or withdrawn
- Increased anxiety



Proactively Protect Your Mental Health

- About **30%** of adults say the holiday season triggers mental health challenges (anxiety, depression, isolation)
- **51%** of Americans said it takes weeks to feel less stressed after the holidays. [American Heart Association Newsroom](#)
- Among moms, **over 25%** say it takes a month or more after the holidays to recover from the stress.

Financial Stress: Get Creative with Budgets

- Establish a holiday savings plan
- Choose meaningful, low-cost gift options
- Encourage home made gifts
- Presence over presents.
Consider experiences or gifts of time.



Family Stress: Set Boundaries

- Set time limits, prepare boundaries, and have an exit strategy.
- Be transparent about your needs.
- Prepare conversation diffusers.
- Have stories to share
- Give yourself time to decompress



Perfection Stress: Plan & Prioritize

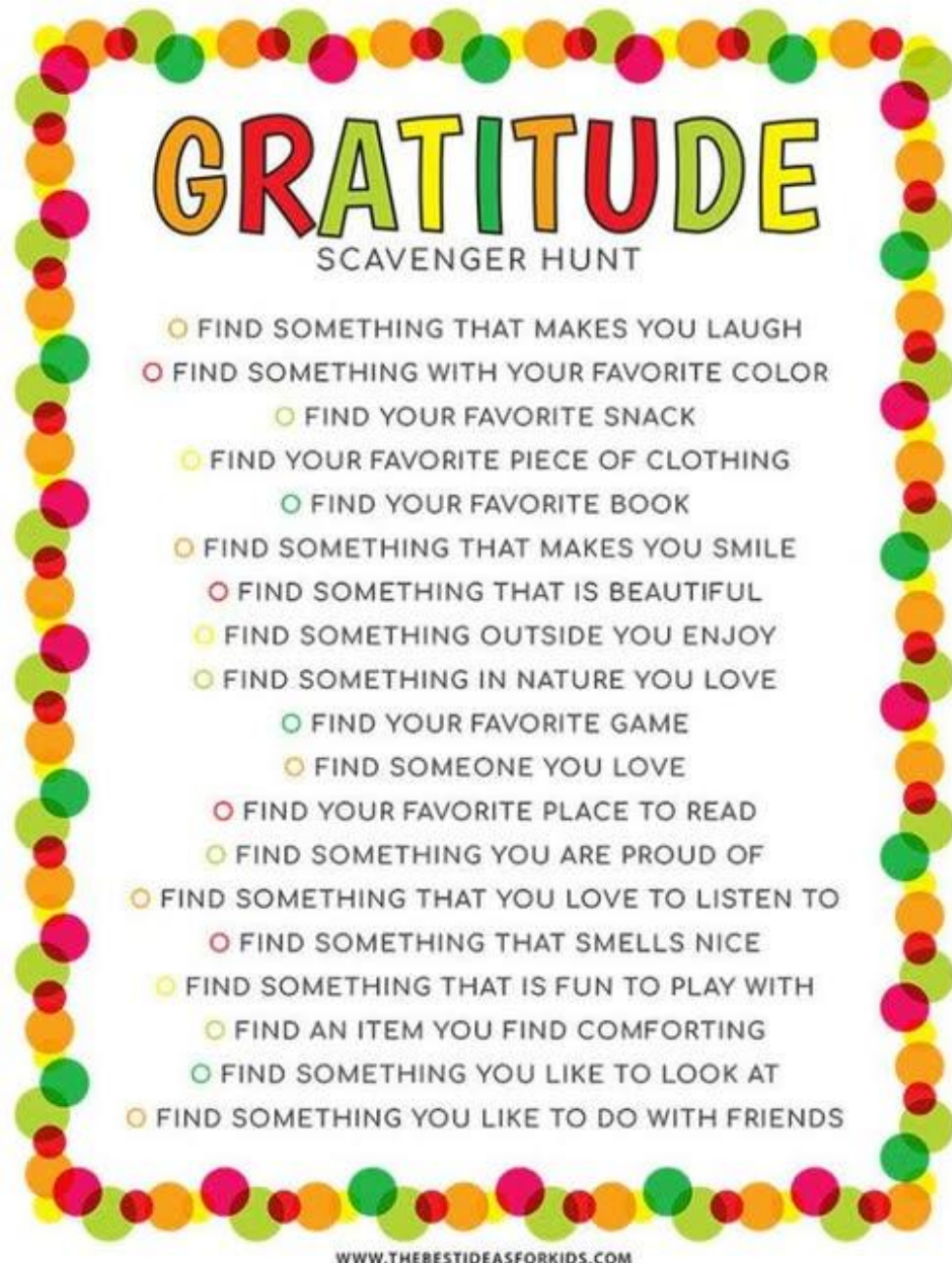
- Set realistic expectations.
- Avoid overbooking. Say no to a few things and schedule in naps, walks, etc.
- Identify must-do vs. nice-to-do
- Traditions do not have to be upheld if they are draining your wellbeing.



Maintain Self-Care Habits

- Keep sleep and movement routines
- Mindful eating & hydration
- Use simple relaxation techniques
 - Butterfly hug
 - 5-4-3-2-1 Technique
 - Box Breathing
- Book that spa appointment
- Practice gratitude
 - A single act of gratitude can provide an immediate 10% increase in happiness and a 35% reduction in depressive symptoms.
 - A five-minute daily gratitude journal can increase long-term well-being by 10%.





Breakout Session:

In the next 3 minutes, find 3 things on this list and bring them back to your small group.

You will have 10 minutes to share your three items and explain their significance to your group.

Helpful Tools & Resources



Mindfulness or breathing apps



Planners/checklists

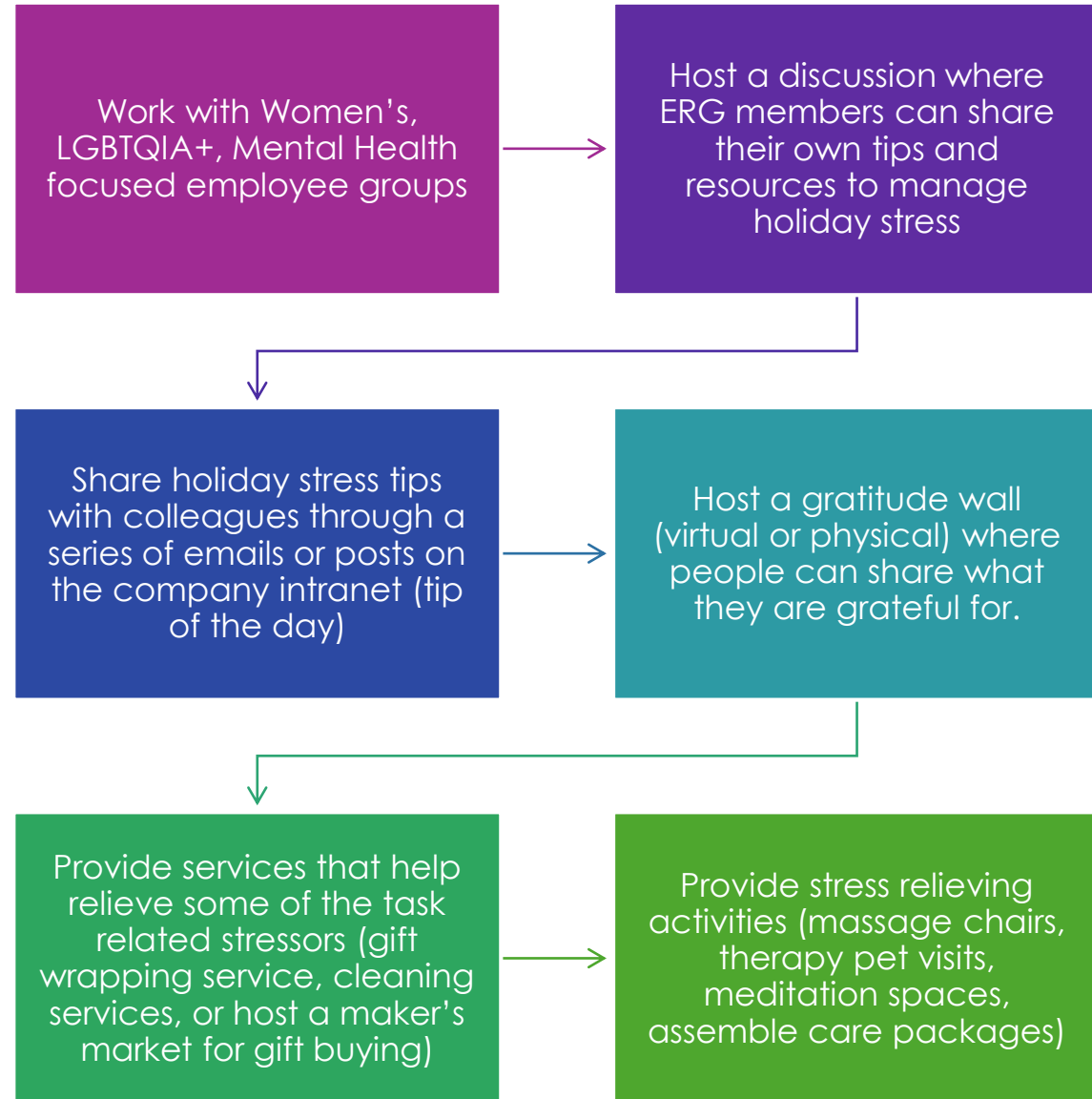


Gratitude journals



ERGs and Workplace Wellness
Programs

ERGs are a Resource



Creative Low-Cost Ideas



Virtual Coffee Chats



Music Breaks –
Playlist or Virtual DJ
drop in session



Laugh Breaks –
Caption Me
Challenge



Wind Down
Sessions – Fun
activities to ease
into the weekend



Walking Meetings



Art Therapy
Sessions, Coloring



Plant Projects –
plants boost mood
and reduce stress



Gratitude Wall



Professional Events – M & F Floral and Decor

- Flower Bouquet Healing Event
- Themed floral bar, bags, wrapping paper, ribbons. Customizable.
- Designed cards where each person would write a note to themselves
- \$30 per person up to 5 stems. Arranged and wrapped.
- 20 hours labor
- Email Fanny Mueller at: mffloralanddecor@gmail.com





Company Benefit Programs

- Partner with your benefits or wellness teams to have vendors host programming around stress management or financial wellness
- Reintroduce EAP resources

What Else Can You Do?

- Remind team members to use their time off benefits
- Offer flexible work arrangements
- Take mini-breaks with your team during the day (short walks or snack breaks)
- Organize a volunteer activity.
- Respect various cultural traditions.
- Check in! Ask how they are doing.





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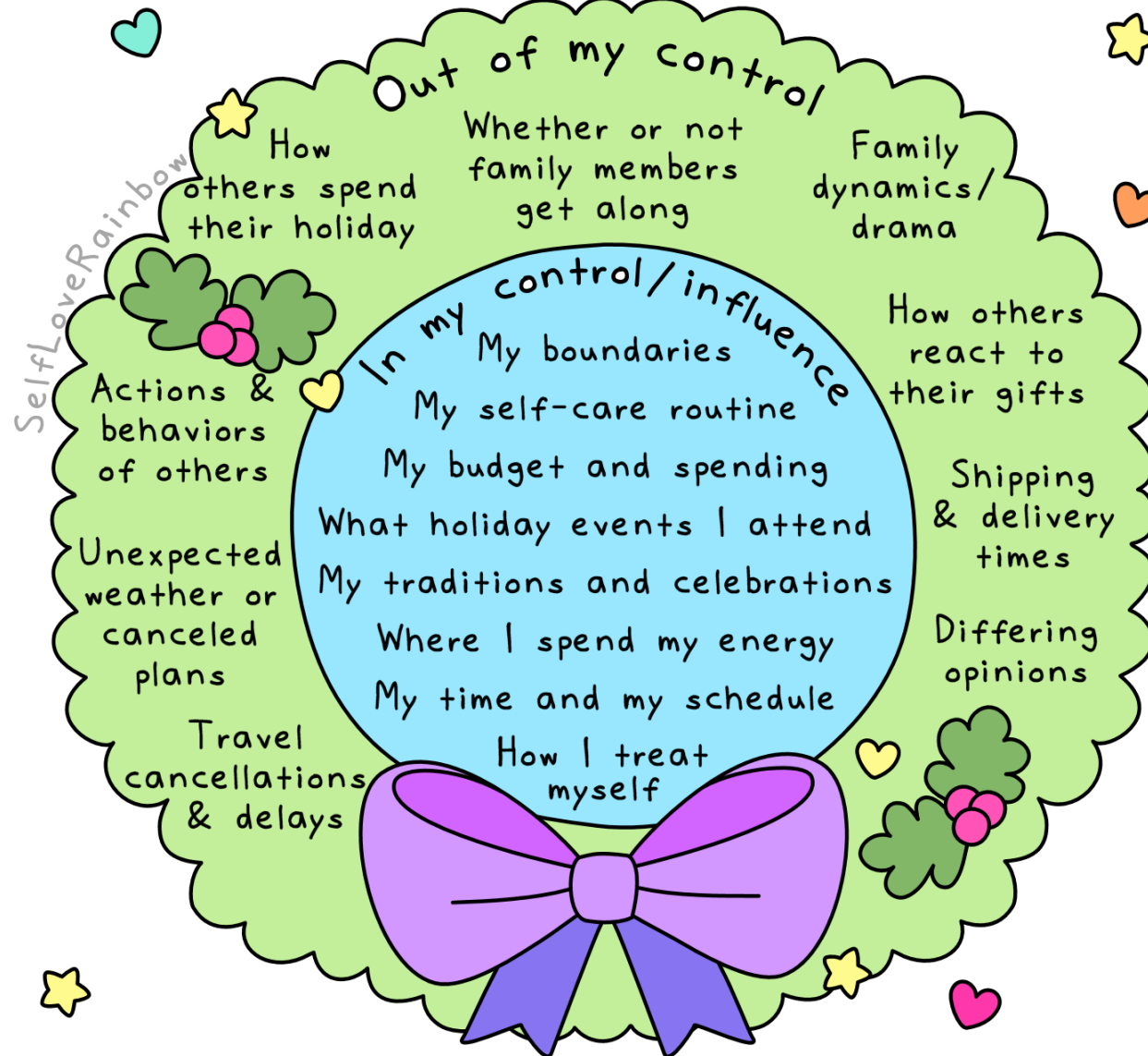


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The Circle of Control

(Holiday Edition)



BLØB TREE

