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TIME AND MONEY WORRIES GIVE WAY TO HOLIDAY STRESS

Georgia Psychological Association Offers Strategies to Curb Stress During Holidays

GEORGIA — With pleasant thoughts of food, family and decoration, the holidays can be a source of joy for many people. For others, this time of year can be associated with anxiety and stress. In fact, the American Psychological Association's (APA) *Stress in America* survey finds that many Americans report money as a significant source of stress in their lives and that many report lack of time as a reason they're not doing more to manage their stress. During the holiday season, however, money concerns can be elevated and personal time can be tight, which may add to people's stress says the APA.

"The holidays can be a stressful time for everyone, but there are some steps you can take to help manage your stress," says Angela Londono-McConnell, Ph.D. "You can begin by developing a simple approach that helps you set realistic goals. Then, be sure to make time for relaxation and enjoy low-key celebrations with good friends and family."

APA and the Georgia Psychological Association suggest the following strategies to help manage your holiday stress:

- **Set realistic expectations.** No holiday celebration is perfect; view inevitable missteps as opportunities to demonstrate flexibility and resilience. Create a realistic budget and remind your children that the holidays aren't about expensive gifts.
- **Take time for yourself.** Taking care of yourself helps you to take better care of others in your life. Go for a long walk, read something that interests you or listen to your favorite music. By slowing down you may find more energy to accomplish your holiday goals.
- **Volunteer.** Many charitable organizations face new challenges as a result of the ongoing economic downturn. Find a local charity, such as a soup kitchen or a shelter, where you and your family can volunteer together throughout the year. Helping others can put hardships in perspective and build stronger family relationships.
- **Remember what's important.** Commercialism can overshadow the true sentiment of the holiday season. When your holiday expense list is running longer than your monthly budget, scale back. Remind yourself that family, friends and the relationships in your life are what matter most.
- **Seek support.** Talk about stress related to the holidays with your friends and family. Getting things out in the open can help you navigate your feelings and work toward a solution. If you continue to feel overwhelmed, consider talking with a professional such as a psychologist to help you develop coping strategies and better manage your stress. A psychologist has the skills and professional training to help people learn to manage stress and cope more effectively with life's problems.

For additional information on stress and lifestyle and behavior, visit www.apahelpcenter.org, read the blog www.yourmindyourbody.org and follow @apahelpcenter on Twitter. Also, visit www.gapspsychology.org or 'Like' the facebook page "Georgia Psychological Association."

The American Psychological Association, in Washington, D.C., is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and is the world's largest association of psychologists. APA's membership includes more than 154,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students. Through its divisions in 54 subfields of psychology and affiliations with 60 state, territorial and Canadian provincial associations, APA works to advance psychology as a science, as a profession, and as a means of promoting health, education and human welfare.

The Georgia Psychological Association is a collective group of psychologists who strive to improve and contribute to the field of psychology. GPA's members include clinical psychologists, industrial psychologists, academic psychologists, college level students and many other psychology professionals. GPA's mission is to further the development of psychology as a science, as an applied practice, and as a means of promoting human welfare.

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