

DECEMBER 2022

A December to Remember

A tradition, according to the dictionary, is “the transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation, or the fact of being passed on in this way.” They can include things we do at various time intervals: daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, or during specific events. In this month’s newsletter, we will explore how to use traditions to celebrate and heal as we move into a busy holiday season.

Traditionally Healthy

Traditions are important to our mental health because they provide a sense of stability, help us connect with each other and our roots, and provide structure allowing us to feel safe (especially when we are going through hard times). They represent a piece of our culture and a piece of ourselves. Tradition contributes a sense of comfort and belonging and can give life meaning. It brings people together and enables us to reconnect with those around us. They are a source of enjoyment and meaning, help us feel like we belong to our community or to the broader society, and they make us believe in something larger than ourselves.

Traditions and Grief

Traditions can (and do) change with time. This can be especially hard if you are grieving someone or something that is no longer in your life. Here’s another resource called [12 days of coping with grief during the holidays](#).

Remember: things will look different this year; that’s expected. Continue the traditions that feel right for you, stop (or pause) the ones that don’t, and think about starting new ones. Give yourself grace in honoring your emotions throughout holiday seasons and limit expectations of how traditions “should” be held.



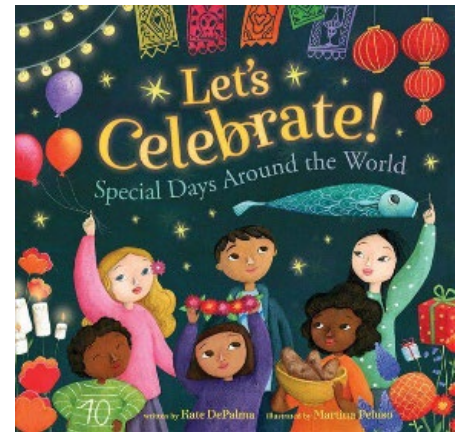
Management in the Moment

Sometimes, uncomfortable emotions lingering just below the surface during times of celebration or during get-togethers can feel like they are interrupting us. Try these strategies to stay grounded:

- Take a deep breath or a series of deep breaths with a 4 second inhale, 4 second hold, and 6 second exhale.
- Touch various objects around you: a pen, your clothing, the table, the walls. Notice textures, colors, weight, temperature. Compare the objects you touch.
- Say a coping statement: “I can handle this,” “This feeling will pass.”
- Describe your environment in detail, using all of your senses – for example, “The walls are white, there are five blue chairs, there is a wooden bookshelf against the wall...” Describe objects, sounds, textures, colors, smells, shapes, numbers, and temperature. You can do this anywhere.

Book Recommendation:

As discussed above, traditions are rooted in our cultures. There are so many different cultures around the world that make each of us rich and unique. Here is a book to share with your students or kiddos to help teach them about some of the ways various people celebrate and maintain traditions! You can even look this book up on YouTube and have it read to you!



Art Corner: Create Your Own Tradition

Here is an activity from the “Student Treasures” blog to try as a family or unit to help you explore your current traditions and creating something new! Start with a discussion prompt: What if you had to create a new tradition? What would that look like for your family or unit? To add creativity to this, or to help littles understand better, you can draw a picture of your family or unit and discuss or write a description of the drawing and what you imagine the family or unit doing together. Encourage a variety of ideas no matter how random or out of the box!

