**HOLIDAY SAFETY PLAN**

1. Triggers

Recognize who activates your triggers. Which family member says something in just the right way that makes your blood boil? Is there an unsafe place where you may feel obligated to make an appearance over the holidays? What about the dreaded Christmas party at work where many people may be really intoxicated? Remember, it’s ok not to go. What are some things you can say to politely decline an invite?

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2. Plan Ahead

If you are aware of who or what triggers you, creating a plan with someone in your support system is an effective way to show up prepared. Talking to people in your support system leading up to the event where you will spend time with the challenging people or situations in your life will give you a sounding board. Your support system might have some suggestions that have yet to cross your mind. Even role-playing challenging situations can give you the opportunity to practice what you might want to say when you are in an uncomfortable situation.

3. Time Out

All the role playing and planning ahead will not always prepare us for what may be in store over the holidays. Letting family members know that you may need to step out for a bit to take a breath is one way to create some much needed space. There is nothing wrong with retreating from a battle. One of the gifts of recovery is that we don’t have to fight the way we used to.

4. Supports

Know who you can call when you have an emergency. Who is going to answer your call no matter what time you call? Perhaps you have arranged for scheduled check in times to make sure that you are staying on track.

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5. A Way Out

In some cases, an escape plan may be necessary. What are some ways you can plan to leave if needed?

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Your holiday season might go very well as many families are just happy that you are not going to fall out of your chair at the dinner table. If that is the case, bravo. Enjoy this special time with your family. If your family has other plans for this time, come prepared so that your holiday does not end in disaster.