

## **10 Stress from Winter Holidays**

The upcoming winter holidays can bring stress for you. The range of emotions may include loneliness, anger or disappointment mixed in with joy and thankfulness. I want to give you a few survival tips, however. First, plan ahead for the holidays. Get an early start with gifts and cards, particularly if you have loved ones who are deployed. Have the children make their lists early. Record a holiday message on a video camera or tape recorder. Be sure to put a "Do not open until..." message on it. For yourself, surround yourself with friends and or family. Help organize a holiday party or potluck. Include the children in the planning. Maybe start a tradition of cookie decorating with other children involved and then donate the cookies to a needy program. Volunteer for a good cause to keep yourself busy and considering others needs. Find ways to have fun, go to a movie or a museum. Get plenty of rest and exercise and lastly, be realistic! Accept that the holidays will be different and that post holiday let downs will occur. Keep your support system lined up through January and keep moving forward! Warm wishes to you! I'm Dr. Karen DeBord with North Carolina State University Cooperative Extension.