

# Community Institute for Psychotherapy

1330 Lincoln Ave #201, San Rafael, CA 94901-2141

Phone (415) 459-5999 Fax (415) 459-5602 www.cipmarin.org

## 2019-2020 News & Notes



### December 2020 News and Notes Some Thoughts on 2020 Holidays By Robin Joy Berenson, PhD, LMFT

There is no question that the coronavirus pandemic has upended our lives. Accepting this, we can think ahead to strategies and solutions that will help us make the best of the upcoming holiday season for our loved ones and ourselves. This year will be different from past years, but how?

**Begin early.** As you look ahead, ask yourself what will need to be changed? What can be the same? What modifications to traditional plans are needed?

**Communication is vital.** As soon as possible, consult others who will be involved. Let them know your concerns and expectations, and listen to theirs. It is possible that their perceptions of safety and risk differ from yours, and it's important to honor this. If changes need to be made, ask what they might have in mind, and offer your suggestions on how to make things work.

**Think of this time as an invitation to be creative.** It may well be that beloved activities and gatherings will need to be scaled back, take place virtually, or be set aside altogether. Make this an opportunity to initiate new traditions and ways to celebrate. For example, plan more outdoor activities, a nature hike, a visit to the beach, or an "astronomy night excursion" to view the stars or enjoy a full moon walk. Brush off your Christmas caroling.

If visits to loved ones in a retirement community are not allowed, plan a special outdoor "Hello" stop outside. Pick a time for you and other well-wishers to stop by and wave or blow kisses through the window as he or she watches inside. Make arrangements with staff to drop off gifts and cards.

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If you haven't already, set up remote communications capabilities, such as Zoom or FaceTime. While not as satisfying as in-person gatherings, remote visits can connect you and your household with others in important ways. Plan ahead to include sharing stories, poems, a snack or meal together, even exchanging gifts.

**Be patient with yourself and others.** Acknowledge that there may be disappointment with the departure from the usual celebrations, especially for children. Focus on what's possible, what can contribute to make this a special time, not what's wrong or missing.

**Safeguard physical and mental health, your family's and yours.** Special treats and activities are part of the excitement of the season, but keeping to regular routines as much as possible, especially meal times, waking and bedtimes, will help protect against emotional overload.

Remember, this is a time like no other. Consider it an unique opportunity to work together, build special memories, and to demonstrate resilience