

Embracing Holiday Stress: ABCDEs

By Dr. Danny Jui, ND

Although there are a lot of perks to the holiday season, it can also be a particularly stressful time for many of us. With seemingly increased physical, financial and relational demands, we sometimes feel the pressure of wanting to do it all, buy it all and be it all. By understanding the ABCs of stress and ways to DE-stress, it can help us enjoy the holiday spirit without being overwhelmed by faulty perceptions of what the holiday season is really all about.

A is for Activating Event

Any potential stressful situation begins with an activating event: year-end deadlines at work, social events, holiday meal preparations, last-minute gift shopping, traveling, family conflicts or being alone over the holiday season. Although these events, also known as stressors, do not necessarily translate into stress, many people do interpret them that way and therefore experience the consequence of distress almost automatically.

B is for Belief

This is the component that most of us fail to examine closely whenever we encounter an activating event. The default setting of our thinking is usually on autopilot with input from societal norms or negative self-talks. In this mode, we automatically equate the activating event as either “stressful” or “bad” by these standards without truthfully reflecting what the event really means to us before we respond to it. This intermediary process is crucial in determining the consequence of any potential stressor.

C is for Consequence

When our mind is on autopilot, we tend to react to the stressor with distress. However, when we become aware of our beliefs

and examine them carefully and truthfully, we then are able to respond to the activating event by making healthier choices. Being response-able, rather than merely reactive, is the first step to truly enjoy life’s challenges rather than seeing them as stressful.

D is for Dispute

By disputing faulty beliefs or negative self-talks associated with any activating event is the key to unlock a more truthful reflection of what is really happening. We may not have full control over the activating event, but we do have some control over our beliefs to make better decisions regarding our situation.

E is for Embrace

When we make these choices, we create an inner environment through which we can fully or at least partially embrace what is happening. By doing so, we learn to appreciate the changing colours of the holiday season and start to see what the holiday season is really all about!

Happy Holidays! 



Dr. Danny Jui is a licensed naturopathic physician with additional experience in Mind/Body Medicine. He enjoys helping people achieve a sense of balance in their daily lives through effective stress reduction techniques, including cognitive restructuring. To schedule a consultation with Dr. Jui, please call Sage Clinic at 604-697-0397.