

Why Are Holidays Challenging for Recovery after Addiction Rehab?

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Going through addiction rehab and coming out the other side is an incredible achievement. And once you've gotten through a [treatment](#) program like this, it can still be a challenge to maintain your sense of wellbeing. But when the holiday period rolls around, this can become more of a struggle than ever.

Relapsing is incredibly common during the winter festive period, and for a variety of reasons. Whether you feel secure in your emotions right now or you know you've had trouble in the past, this time of year could cause extreme upset. However, knowing about this in advance could help you to face the upcoming potentially triggering situations.



Everyone Around You is Drinking

This is one of the biggest reasons someone in recovery can relapse during the holidays. When everyone around you is drinking, you can feel left out, and even peer pressured into taking part. Being surrounded by substances such as alcohol on every table and in every hand can even be enticing.

In situations like this, it's best to keep your answer to a short and sweet 'no' when someone offers, but we recognize just how hard even summing up the courage to say that can be. Relapse is often down to the social element.

The Holidays Can Be Stressful in Many Areas

Holiday anxiety is common in both those attending an [outpatient program](#) and those who have never been to rehab at all. For the latter, it's this sense of time pressure around preparing the perfect holiday season that can cause breaks in your alcohol or drug rehab. You're in a constant rush and that ticking of the clock can set you over the edge.

This is also a time when your anxiety is high due to socialization. Say you see family members again for the first time after a full or [partial hospitalization](#); you can feel the need to halt your recovery journey. The urge to relapse can be strong due to the heightened pressure of feeling judged or scrutinized, and like you're unable to deal with it alone.

Triggers are More Likely Than Ever

A person who's had any kind of experience with an [intensive outpatient](#) program will know all about their triggers. They can include those above, as well as many other separate scenarios. And both those at the beginning of their recovery and those who have seen 2 or 3 years out will know that the holiday season is incredibly triggering regardless of willpower.

And seeing as triggers can happen in a moment without any preparation whatsoever, they can be hard to prepare for. But identifying what could be specifically triggering for you is the best first step. This way you'll be able to excuse yourself in that moment and take time where and when you need it. You can also plan what you need to say to people in case they ask what's going on in your life, or why you're not partaking in the "festivities".

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