

Holiday Stress Reduction Tips

As joyful as the holidays can be, they can also be a source of anxiety, frustration, weight gain and holiday depression, known as the familiar holiday blues. The following tips to reduce holiday stress and stay relaxed are adapted from *Disaboom.com*, a website for people with disabilities.

Pamper Yourself: If there ever were a time to get a massage, this is it. Do something special just for you. Make your health and well being a priority.

Move: Focus on fitness rather than worrying about weight gain. Rev up your metabolism with exercise and stretching. Many routines can be adapted to sitting. Exercise boosts serotonin and endorphins.

Volunteer: Consider volunteering and give the gift of yourself, even if all you can volunteer is a smile or a compliment, or help out at a local church or charity.

Lighten Up on Food: Stick to healthy foods, even if you add an occasional holiday splurge. This will make it easier to resume a healthy lifestyle in January. Choose what you want to eat carefully and use smaller plates and portions.

Rethink Gift-Giving: Make gift-giving as easy as possible. Buy fewer gifts, shop online, use gift bags and don't worry about

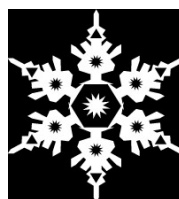
finding the perfect gifts. If you stick to a budget and avoid credit card debt, you will be much happier in January. The real gift you give is of your time – this is the gift that creates memories.

Focus on the Positive and Laugh: Laughter is a way to ease our fears, anxieties and frustrations, and decrease our stress hormones. Increase gratitude in your life by focusing on the good things you have, large and small.

Sleep: Try for eight hours and make sure you get at least seven. Lack of sleep will result in exhaustion, depression, and general crankiness.

Say No: Consider this an absolute necessity for protecting your health and peace of mind during the holidays.

Stop Feeling Guilty: How many ways can you say “guilt?” You did not get cards sent, do enough baking, get gifts mailed or you forgot to remember someone. Is this a cause for guilt? No – it is a cause for celebration. This just means you are a completely normal member of the human race, and you wisely decided the holidays should not be about stress, but about joy.



Season's Greetings
from the OSCIL Staff

OSCIL News

Linda Bradley, OSCIL's Home Access Coordinator, was recognized as this year's recipient of the William J. Ralston Memorial Award at the annual award ceremony of the RI Rehabilitation Association on October 28. The award recognizes outstanding achievement and dedicated service in the rehab field and acknowledges an outstanding level of professionalism and competence.

Thanking our Supporters

OSCIL extends our appreciation to Senator William Walaska's and Representative Eileen Naughton's continued support of Rhode Island's community programs.

We thank everyone who became members of OSCIL this past year. In addition, we thank our advertisers and those generous individuals who donated household items.

Holiday Closing Schedule

OSCIL will close at noon on Friday, December 23 and will reopen on Tuesday, January 3, 2012.

Mention of any product, service or event in this newsletter does not constitute any endorsement by OSCIL.

MS Computer Program

The National MS Society's Computer Outreach Program provides computers to those who are living with multiple sclerosis and are restricted to their own homes or are living in long term care facilities. This unique program enables these individuals to remain connected to the world despite financial constraints that preclude them from purchasing computers or assistive technology.

Often persons with MS who reside in long term care facilities are much younger than the typical population in those facilities; they are eager to participate in social media and online support networks. They want to learn, grow and move their lives forward.

The Computer Outreach Program provides those who qualify with a laptop or desktop computer, pre-loaded with adaptive software configured to each user's specific needs. Each recipient will receive training on software and technology, as well as have access to some in-home support. The program relies on the generosity of people who donate computers or make financial contributions to the program. If you are interested in participating or to learn more, please contact the programs and services staff at 738-8383 option 2 or email Gwen at gwendolyn.reeve@nms.org.

OSCIL Staff

Executive Director: Lorna Ricci
 Home Access Coordinator: Linda Bradley
 Home Access Office Assistants: Julie DeRosa & Kathie Murtough
 IL Specialist/Deaf Services: Bonnie Abols
 IL Specialist/Assistive Tech: Melissa Rosenberg
 IL Specialist/Community Living: Bridget Hjerpe
 Minority Outreach Program: Betty DeRamirez

Program Director: Lezlee Shaffer
 Office Manager: Carol McKenna
 Newsletter: Susan Eleoff
 Housing Advocate: Hal Fayerweather
 Information and Referral: Susan Eleoff
 Bookkeeper: Mireille Sayaf
 Outreach Specialist: Anna Liebenow

Counseling Services

Perspectives Corporation works with a broad range of clients, including children, adolescents and adults with a variety of diagnostic needs. Clients may access outpatient clinic services for clinical diagnoses related to mood, anxiety, behavior, adjustment, personality, developmental disability, trauma and grief.

Perspectives is now offering outpatient counseling services for Rhode Islanders who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing in both the Pawtucket and North Kingstown locations. There are two licensed clinicians fluent in American Sign Language who specialize in mental health services. A variety of insurances are accepted as well as a sliding fee scale. Call 583-0188 or visit www.perspectivescorporation.com.

Free Online Course

The New England ADA Center has produced a free, self-paced course that provides an overview of federal disability rights laws. The course takes about 90 to 120 minutes to complete and includes real life scenarios and an exam at the end. The intended audience is people with disabilities, advocates, service providers, rehab counselors, and anyone interested in learning the basics about disability rights laws.

Upon completion of this course, you should have a general understanding of the major federal disability laws, be able to assess what laws apply in different discrimination scenarios and be aware of resources for help and information about these laws.

Go to www.disabilityrightscourse.org to register.

SNAP Restaurant Meals Program

Since August, some recipients of SNAP benefits (formerly known as Food Stamps) may be able to use their EBT cards to purchase meals at approved restaurants. The goal of the SNAP Restaurant Meals program is to expand access to nutritious meal options for SNAP clients who are homeless, elderly or disabled. The program is available to you if your SNAP household meets one of the following criteria:

- **Homeless:** The household must lack a fixed and regular nighttime residence, or be living in a shelter, a halfway house, or place not designed for sleeping. This includes those who are temporarily staying in the home of another person for 90 days or less.
- **Elderly or Disabled:** The household must have only members who are age 60 or older or designated disabled by a government entity, or an elderly or disabled individual and his or her spouse.

If you meet the above eligibility guidelines you can use your EBT card at the following participating Subway restaurants:

- 225 Weybossett Street in Providence
- 2 Kennedy Plaza in Providence
- 719 Westminster Street in Providence
- 583 Elmwood Avenue in Providence
- 962 Cranston Street in Cranston

If you have questions about this program, call 874-5145. For additional information about SNAP, call 1-866-306-0270.

Preparing to Move

As a result of the economic downturn and high rents in the private sector, applicants for most subsidized apartments, especially in urban areas on bus routes, far exceed the number of available apartments. The waiting lists for many properties can be very long, especially for two bedroom apartments, ranging from one to five years. While you are waiting for an apartment to become available, there are a number of things you can do in advance to be ready to move.

Most housing authorities will check your credit as part of the application process. OSCIL recommends you be proactive and order a copy of your credit report. Are there any errors or inaccurate information that should be corrected?

The Fair Credit Reporting Act requires each of the nationwide consumer reporting companies, Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion, to provide you with a free copy of your credit report at your request once every 12 months. A credit report includes information on where you live, how you pay your bills, student loans, unpaid tax liens, and whether you have been sued or arrested, or have filed for bankruptcy. There are time limits for most of the negative information to remain on the report. To order your credit report, visit www.annualcreditreport.com or call 1-877-322-8228.

If you have a criminal background record, no matter how minor, get a copy of the report to review. For a small fee, you can obtain a copy of your BCI record at the RI Attorney General's office on 1500 South Main Street in Providence. Visit www.riag.ri.gov for details.

In some cases, a first offender may be able

to have a record of a conviction expunged (erased). You cannot expunge your record if you were convicted of a crime of violence. The Rhode Island Disability Law Center has a publication on this topic entitled *Criminal Background Checks and Expungement in Rhode Island* that is on the website www.ridlc.org or call 831-3150. If you meet the requirements to have your record expunged, it is recommended you follow the process to do so before submitting housing applications.

Are there pets in your current household? If you have multiple pets, keep in mind that property management companies have restrictions about pets. Most do not allow more than one pet, and there are weight restrictions. If you plan to acquire a pet, check the pet policies of the apartments to which you have applied. There may be an additional one-time or monthly fee if you have a pet.

Organize and prioritize your household belongings and furniture. If you are living in a home or large apartment, you will need to downsize, and this is a process that takes time. Do not purchase oversized furniture in advance of your move.

OSCIL's housing advocate can determine what housing options are available to you based on your monthly budget and assist you with completing applications for subsidized apartments. Please call OSCIL if you would like assistance. Keep in mind that if you are planning to move within the next several years, even if you are uncertain of your exact time frame, we recommend you start the application process now to get on waiting lists.

Rental Resources

Rhode Island Housing recently updated and published its *Rhode Island Housing Rental Resource Guide*. This online guide contains apartment listings and information on services available to Rhode Islanders to assist them in finding an apartment that meets their needs. Visit www.rihousing.org or call Lisa Sanchez at 457-1197.

The HUD Affordable Housing Resource Guide can be obtained by calling the Providence office at 277-8300. The booklet was last updated in 2007. In addition, HUD rental property information can be found online at www.hud.gov. Link to either resources or state info and you can search cities and towns.

The website www.HomeLocatorRI.net is a database of available homes with limited listings of affordable homes to rent or purchase in some cities and towns.

Shorter Waiting Lists Canonchet Cliffs

The waiting list for affordable studio and one-bedroom apartments at *Canonchet Cliffs I* and *Canonchet Cliffs II* in rural Hope Valley is estimated to be three months or less for qualified applicants. An elderly preference is in effect, which means applicants 62 and older may move even quicker. These nonsmoking facilities offer various activities for residents, including weekly coffee hours, wellness events, and educational speakers. A resident service coordinator is on-site several times a week. The buildings are accessible with some units having handicap accessible features. There is no public transportation service in this area. For details or to request an application, call 539-7490 or 539-2223. This is an equal housing opportunity.

Energy Assistance

LIHEAP Program

The Low Income *Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)* Program helps with energy needs of households that meet income guidelines. As of November 1, 2011, the income limits are as follows:

Household of 1	\$27,353
Household of 2	\$35,769
Household of 3	\$44,185
Household of 4	\$52,601
Household of 5	\$61,018
Household of 6	\$69,434

Resources are not counted for this program, and there are no citizenship or immigrant requirements. Persons should apply at the local community action program (CAP) that serves the applicant's city or town. A list of CAP agencies can be found at www.energy.ri.gov or call OSCIL if you are not sure where to apply.

Good Neighbor Energy Fund

The Rhode Island Good Neighbor Energy Fund is a cooperative effort between RI's gas and electric companies and The Salvation Army of RI. The Fund provides assistance to Rhode Islanders in temporary financial crisis who are not eligible for the LIHEAP described above. Your income must exceed LIHEAP guidelines, and documentation of a denial from LIHEAP is required. Persons living in subsidized housing are not eligible to apply. The maximum one-time grant is \$400, the total of which can be distributed to more than one utility. To request assistance, please contact The Salvation Army in Providence at 831-1119. Visit www.rigoodneighbor.com.

FYI

Homemaker Program: The Respite Homemaker Program, administered by the Diocese of Providence, is no longer being offered as a component of the Respite Program. Current clients in the program are not affected by this change, but no new applications can be accepted.

Studio Relocates: PeaceLove Studios has relocated to 171 Main Street in the Blackstone Valley Visitors Center. (This is just across the street from the old location.) See OSCIL's September newsletter for more information about PeaceLove Studios.

Emergency Preparedness: Hurricane Irene reminded us about the importance of planning ahead for emergencies. If you have disabilities, chronic conditions or special health care needs that require you to have assistance during emergencies, make sure you have completed or updated the Rhode Island Special Needs Emergency Registry form. Forms can be completed online at www.health.ri.gov/emergency or call 946-9996 to have a form mailed to you. Forms are also available at the OSCIL office.

Support Group: The Shoreline Polio Survivors Group was formed in 2010 to provide support and information on resources to those polio survivors who are now affected with post-polio syndrome. The group meets in the Westerly area throughout the year. For meeting times and locations email rbill@gmail.com or call Bill at 596-3398. The website is <http://shorelinepoliosurvivors.yolasite.com>.

Pet Food Program: Since 2007, Meals on Wheels of RI has provided pet food for clients who could not have otherwise afforded it. The program prevents seniors from sharing their meals with pets, and helps keep cherished pets in the homes of homebound seniors who receive Meals on Wheels Services. All Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island clients are eligible to receive pet food and supplies. For details call 351-6700.

Quit Smoking Video: Researchers at The Miriam Hospital need current smokers and ex-smokers to be featured in a video that helps people quit smoking. If you smoke cigarettes and use a cane, braces, wheelchair or other device to help you get around, you may qualify. You will be compensated for your time. Call The ABLE Program at The Miriam Hospital at 793-8168 or email ABLE@lifespan.org.

Medical Supplies: Express Medical offers a wide range of health care supplies that can be ordered online or via telephone. Visit www.exmed.net or call 1-800-633-2139 to request a catalog.

Organization Name Change: After 26 years, Shake-A-Leg, the oldest disabled sailing program in the U.S. that is based in Newport, has changed its name to Sail To Prevail. Visit www.sailtoprevail.org for the latest news or call 849-8898 for more info.

Free Membership: United Spinal Association offers a free membership to all individuals who have a spinal cord injury or disorder such as multiple sclerosis or spina bifida. To learn more, visit www.unitedspinal.org or call 1-800-404-2898.

LOOKING AHEAD

SUPPORTING OSCIL SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

With the end of 2011 just a few weeks away, please consider making a tax-deductible donation to OSCIL in preparation for filing your 2011 income tax return. Donations must be made out before December 31, 2011. These donations enable OSCIL to provide quality services to consumers throughout Rhode Island and are greatly appreciated.

OSCIL'S COMMUNITY LIVING PROGRAM

If you have a family member or friend who no longer requires the care and services of a nursing home and who is capable of living a more independent life in the community, but who may need accessible and/or affordable housing, assistive technology, or community support services, please call the OSCIL office at 738-1013 ext. 13. Candidates for this program must be medically stable and motivated to participate in the transition process. If you know someone in a rehabilitation center who will be going to a nursing home and who meets the above criteria, please have the person call us from the rehab center to request services.

OSCIL SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE IN FEBRUARY

In April 2012, OSCIL will award two \$1,000 educational scholarships. Applicants must be Rhode Island residents with significant disabilities currently enrolled or planning to enroll in a post-secondary education program. This may include an academic, trade, or vocational program. Preference will be given to merit, economic need, and career goals. Scholarship applications will be on the OSCIL website www.oscil.org. If you need an application mailed to you, please call Carol McKenna at 738-1013 ext. 10.

RHODE ISLAND YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM 2012

Starting in January, applications will be accepted for the 2012 RI Youth Leadership Forum that will be held in August. High school juniors and seniors with disabilities who have demonstrated leadership capabilities in their communities and schools are invited to apply. To learn more about this exciting opportunity, visit www.riylf.org. The application is online. If you have questions, please call Susan Shapiro at 263-7876.

SAVE THE DATE: VSA ARTS OF RI FUNDRAISER: MARDI GRAS BALL

Saturday, February 18 5:00 p.m. to midnight Rhodes on the Pawtuxet
The 20th Annual Cajun & Zydeco Mardi Gras Ball features Steve Riley & The Mamou Playboys and other Louisiana bands, a cash bar, and Cajun and Creole food for sale. The ball is costume optional with prizes awarded for the best costumes. A portion of the proceeds benefits VSA Arts of Rhode Island. Tickets sold in advance or at the door. Prices to be announced at a later date. Call 783-3926 or visit www.mardigrasri.com.

SAVE THE DATE: RHODE ISLAND INDEPENDENT LIVING CONFERENCE

Wednesday, May 23 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Rhodes on the Pawtuxet



Ocean State Center for Independent Living
1944 Warwick Avenue, Warwick, RI 02889
Office Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

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Toll Free: 1-866-857-1161

Email: info@oscil.org

Website: www.oscil.org

Return Service Requested

Project Endeavor Offers Discounted Internet Services and Devices

Project Endeavor is a nationwide program under Communication Service for the Deaf, Inc., (CSD) that was established in 2010 as a result of a multimillion dollar grant from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The program focuses on providing deaf and hard of hearing Americans with access to broadband or high speed internet through discounted internet service plans for new internet users and gives those approved for the program the opportunity to purchase discounted internet devices that will enable them to more fully participate in today's digital society.

Project Endeavor has recently expanded its eligibility guidelines and added a new line of products, including the iPad 2, iPod Touch, Toshiba Thrive, a Samsung notebook and other new handheld devices. Subsidized broadband plans may be bundled with the equipment or the devices can be purchased separately at great savings, usually 50 percent or more. Applicants must have a bilateral hearing loss of 40 decibels or greater, be 16 years of age or above and a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident. Vocational rehabilitation clients and transition plan students automatically qualify. Income guidelines are generous. For example, for one person the income limit is \$49,005; for two persons it is \$66,195. The program runs until July 2012. Detailed information, eligibility guidelines and the application are on the website at www.projectendeavor.com. The voice line is 1-877-638-6377. Videophone numbers are 605-644-7399 or 605-550-4056 or email info@projectendeavor.com.