

## Weathering the changes of the season

Many of us are excited that we have a new Black President. However, in light of our national economic crisis, we need to



Dr. Linda Parham Morris

remain sober. His new leadership will not magically change our everyday economic or social struggles.

Let's be real; many of us are about to face the most severe economic challenges of our lifetime. When we have money troubles, it interferes with our ability to purchase the "creature comforts" we like, and makes it difficult to live the lives we have become accustomed to. People respond differently to transition and change. Some people will see new opportunities, feel exuberant and hopeful. Other people

will feel unsettled, overly worried, sad or lonely. Still others may move back and forth between these two extremes as circumstances change.

### How to manage economic hardship

1. *Accept the reality of your situation.*
2. *Seek professional advice (financial advisors, accountants, or attorney, etc).*
3. *Communicate clearly to everyone who will be affected by the change (even children).*
4. *Set realistic expectations: Make a budget and stick to it. Prioritize expenses and eliminate unnecessary items.*
5. *Talk to people who can support you and listen to your feelings (family members, friends, clergy, and professional counselors).*

Not only are we entering economic hard times, but the winter holiday season is upon us. Traditionally, we celebrate with an abundance of food and drink, gifts of all kinds and extravagant parties. However, in the midst of all these reasons to celebrate, there are some people who are not experienc-

## HealthFirst

ing holiday cheer. Take time to notice how the people around you are feeling. If they seem lonely or down, the best thing you can do is listen with a compassionate ear. You can also offer some suggestions.

### How to manage holiday blues

1. *Do take care of yourself---eat right, get enough sleep and take time to exercise.*
2. *Don't over indulge in alcohol, rich foods, or partying.*
3. *Do organize your time---set goals, make to-do lists, and prioritize.*
4. *Do make a budget---plan your purchases and don't over spend.*
5. *Do focus on people and relationships over money and things.*
6. *Don't dwell on the past or negative thoughts.*
7. *Don't compare yourself to others. Learn to be content with who you are.*
8. *Do celebrate without spending money. Learn to smile, have fun and laugh.*

During these months of political and seasonal transitions, all Americans are faced

with the reality that change has come to their life, their family, their community and our nation. Now more than ever we need to take time to make smart decisions. Given the extreme suffering that many around us may be experiencing, it is imperative that we all respond.

First, we can tighten our belts and modify our lifestyles to reflect conservative financial decisions.

Second, we can develop an attitude of concern for the welfare of others. When one suffers, we all suffer. However, through our suffering we gain strength.

Simplicity is a life-style choice that many people have already learned. In the months ahead, we will need to shift our emotional dependence on material possessions and external objects, to those qualities of human existence which last and gain value.

These valuable human qualities include: helping others, kindness, generosity, spending time with others and nurturing the human spirit.

## Move your body.

Exercise is one of the best things you can do to improve your health. Regular physical activity can reduce your risk of heart disease, osteoporosis, diabetes, obesity, and more. And you'll be rewarded with less stress, more energy, and improved muscle tone.

Aim for at least 30 minutes of exercise a day.  
But remember, even a little exercise is better than none at all.  
And if you're new to exercise, check with your doctor before beginning an exercise program.



MASSACHUSETTS