



# HOLIDAY HELP GUIDE



WINTER 2022



[WWW.ANAD.ORG](http://WWW.ANAD.ORG)



# Hello!

The holidays are a very special time of year, but for many people they can come with a unique set of challenges. For those with eating disorders, their day to day challenges can be exacerbated by the disruption in routine, focus on food, and other holiday stressors.

With this guide, we aim to share some tips and tricks from our community to ease the transition into the holiday season and help support you in your journey, wherever you are.

In the first part of this guide, our support group leaders provide ideas on how to make the holiday more comfortable. In the second part, we have listed resources from our friends and partners for you to lean on during the holiday season.

Wishing you a safe and comfortable holiday season,



# TIPS

## from our Support Group Leaders

### Create a Safe Space

"A lot of participants have expressed feelings of anxiety, frustration, and sadness. This week I was co-leader for a group, and the leader asked an excellent question about how to create safe spaces for yourself. This helped direct the conversation toward actionable ways to help oneself feel safe, and participants had various suggestions like preparing food items ahead of time, watching a favorite TV show during mealtimes, and creating a comfy private area in the home for eating."



Ashley, Support Group Leader

### Have an Ally



"In order to make sure that the holidays go a bit more smoothly, I like the idea of designating a Holiday ED Ally ahead of time so that one can plan a check in with that person during the actual holiday. I got out of what I hope will be my last stint in treatment 4 days before Christmas several years back. So, in order to prepare myself for what I knew would be a very triggering holiday, I chose to set up a couple of calls with one of my pals from treatment who was also happened to be in a very positive place. And so we checked in several times via text both on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, and she reminded me of all of the skills I'd learned and also of my overall goals so that I felt completely ready to handle the chaos. This set up worked so well that I continue to use it even now."

Leslie, Support Group Team Lead

# TIPS

## from our Support Group Leaders

### Be Proactive with Self Care

"I create cope ahead plans that acknowledge my vulnerability and past struggles to come into the holidays with a blueprint of how I want to respond. Self care via non food and body focused practices is also helpful. Journaling and reading are often more effective for me than a warm bath or walk.

If I begin to idealize behaviors, it helps me to ask what that behavior is trying to help with (triggering family member, feeling as if I don't fit in, etc.) and use my cope ahead plan to meet that need in another way.

Finally- remembering participating in holidays is my choice. If at any point it is harming more than helping, I can remove myself from the situation to tend to my needs or celebrate in a way that brings enjoyment rather than shame."



Abbi, Support Group Leader

### Set boundaries

"To avoid being triggered: it might be helpful to keep your distance from a family member who's not supportive & doesn't respect boundaries.

To avoid restricting: Reminding myself to continue to mindfully eat throughout the day, just like any other day, before a holiday dinner."



Mandi, Support Group Leader

# TIPS

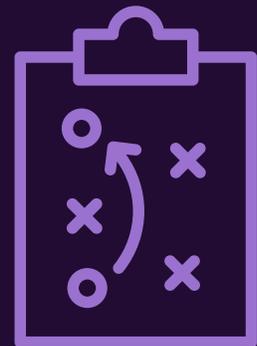
## from our Support Group Leaders

### Make a back-up plan

"I used a 'back up' meal plan at one point, even when I was no longer using them. I used that strategy a few times, actually. I just had one saved so if it ever felt too stressful to make all my own choices, I could look at that for guidance. It had flexibility built in, so I was able to use it for different times of year/holidays. I almost never went to it, but knowing that I could was like a safety net.

And continually reminding myself that other people's food choices and talk about what they did/didn't eat had nothing to do with me."

Kristen, Support Group Leader



## Get Support!

Whether it's a friend, family member, or healthcare professional, having the right support for when times get tough is crucial. Throughout the holiday months, ANAD's free support services are still operating. Whether you want to sign up for one of our weekly peer-support groups, join a holiday support group, or call our helpline, we are here to help you get the support you need. Check out [www.anad.org](http://www.anad.org) to see the full range free services we offer.

ANAD Support Group Team

# BLOGPOSTS

from our partners

## THE EATING RECOVERY CENTER

- [Eating Disorder Support Toolkit](#)
- [Navigating the Bermuda Triangle of Holidays](#)

## EQUIP

- [Family & Recovery](#)
- [Navigating Eating Disorder Recovery during the Holidays](#)

## ROGERS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

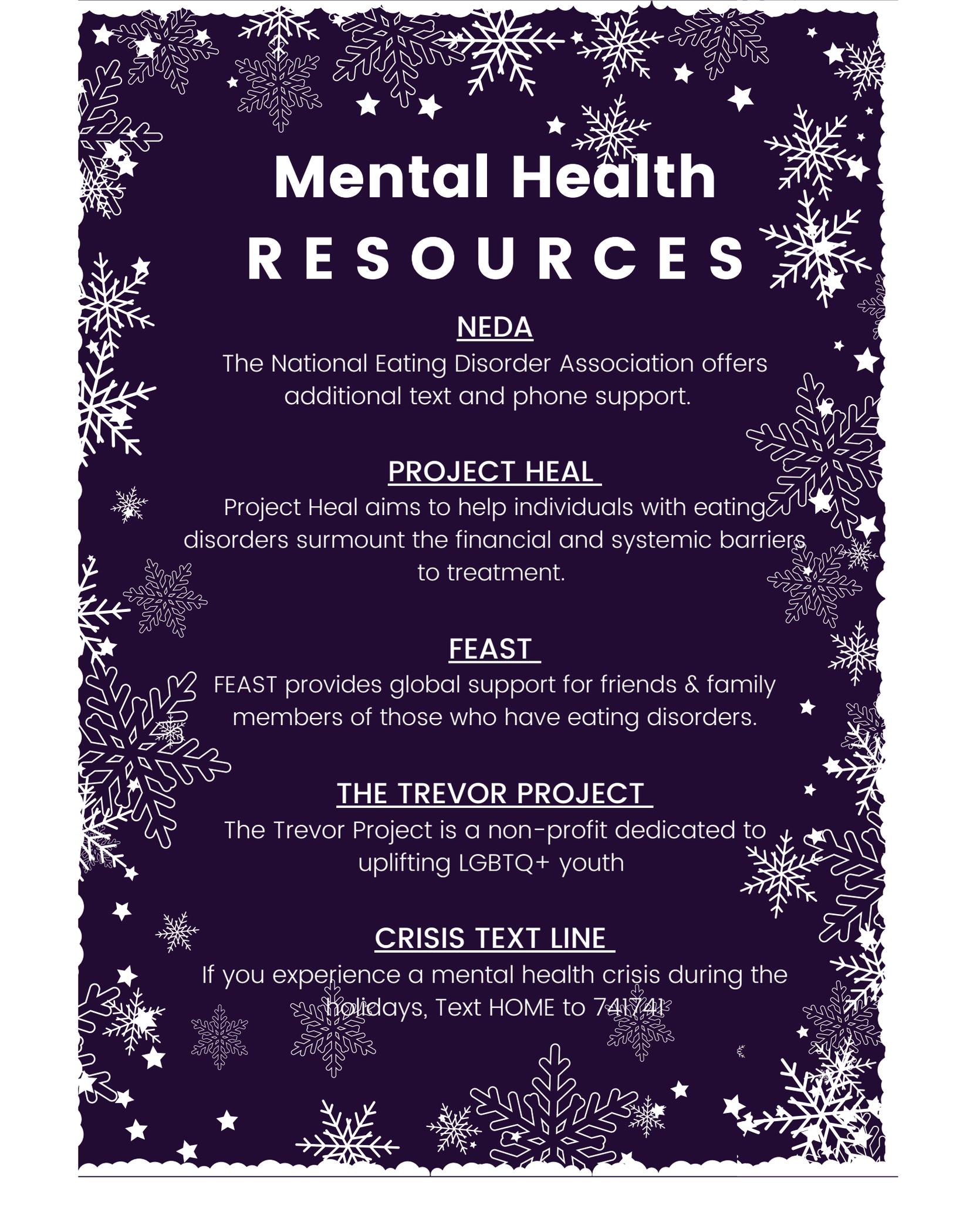
- [6 Tips for Good Mental Health this Holiday Season](#)

## EATING DISORDER CARE

- [Eating Disorder Recovery & Surviving the Holidays](#)

## MCCALLUM PLACE

- [How Holiday Stress can be complicated by an Eating Disorder](#)



# Mental Health RESOURCES

## NEDA

The National Eating Disorder Association offers additional text and phone support.

## PROJECT HEAL

Project Heal aims to help individuals with eating disorders surmount the financial and systemic barriers to treatment.

## FEAST

FEAST provides global support for friends & family members of those who have eating disorders.

## THE TREVOR PROJECT

The Trevor Project is a non-profit dedicated to uplifting LGBTQ+ youth

## CRISIS TEXT LINE

If you experience a mental health crisis during the holidays, Text HOME to 741741

**Thank you!**  
**We wish you a warm  
holiday season.**

If you're able, please consider  
donating to ANAD this holiday season  
to keep our services free and  
accessible

The logo for ANAD features a stylized flame icon to the left of the word "ANAD" in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

