

# Solutions

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## Mastering Family Get-Together Stress

Don't let family get-togethers plunge into stressful discussions. Try these three artful conversational skills. First, plainly decide your comfort zone for specific topics. Decide they will be off limits for you and avoid initiating comments or conversations regarding them. Second, communicate your boundaries and do so with assertiveness and respect, and while maintaining a harmonious atmosphere, simply saying: "I'd appreciate steering our conversation away from [topic] for a more pleasant interaction for all." And finally, use the "redirect." Gently guide discussions away from sensitive subjects, shifting the focus toward neutral or positive topics. This tactful redirection effectively diffuses tension, fostering a more harmonious and enjoyable gathering for all participants. Hint: Before your next get-together, hone these skills. See if they help create more joyful memories.

## Could a Sleep Tracker App Help?

Many people have experimented with sleep-tracking tools—wearable devices or mobile apps—that can offer insights into the quality of sleep. A 2023 survey found that more than 75% of those who have tried these devices found them beneficial. Talk to your doctor about your sleep quality and follow what is recommended, but here are a few sleep app tips: 1) Don't rely entirely on sleep trackers for assessing sleep quality. They might create undue stress or anxiety if the data suggests poor sleep. This could reduce sleep quality further. 2) Don't check sleep data in the middle of the night, for those same reasons. 3) Don't rely solely on the data—it could overlook other factors affecting your sleep, including stress, diet, or health issues. 4) Use a sleep tracker as a supportive tool, not the last word on diagnosing a condition. For a complete picture, talk with your doctor and/or a sleep medicine physician to whom you might be referred.



Learn more at [www.hopkinsmedicine.org](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org) [search: "do sleep trackers work" and [aasm.org/](http://aasm.org/) [search "sleep tracker"]]

## Build Your Personal Brand in the Workplace

A personal brand in the workplace reflects your unique strengths and values, but this image shouldn't be accidental. Decide how you want to be viewed by your organization. Identify the values that underlie the vision you hold for yourself, and then remain consistent with your vision in everything you do. Your visibility, recognition, career opportunities, stronger relationships, and ability to be a positive influence will likely follow, and along with them will come more doors open to more opportunities.



## Volunteerism: The Perfect Pick-Me-Up

The positive effects of volunteering to help others have been demonstrated in many research studies. These include improved feelings of well-being and positive effects on a person's mood and general happiness. Along with helping others, these personal benefits are powerful motivators for some people affected by sadness, depression, and stress during the holidays to reach out. Research has also shown that volunteering can have positive effects on physical health, including lowered blood pressure, reduced risk of heart disease, and increased longevity. Could you use some of the good things that flow from volunteering? To find thousands of opportunities, try [www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org) or [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org) and [click on "find opportunities"].

Source: [psycnet.apa.org/record/2013-21685-006](http://psycnet.apa.org/record/2013-21685-006)

## Access Counselling Through Your EAP

Balancing work and life can be tough, and sometimes it can feel like you're juggling too much. It's easy to get caught up in the day-to-day and forget to prioritize your mental health and well-being. If you're feeling overwhelmed or struggling with personal issues, counselling through FSEAP can provide you with the support and guidance you need to get back on track. We offer effective short-term counselling for individuals, couples, and families. Our professional counsellors are skilled in addressing a range of concerns, including anxiety, depression, stress, relationship challenges, substance use and addictions, grief and loss, and more.

