



THRIVE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
MEETING PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE

# Thriving Families

*During this challenging time, the Thrive team has decided to compile useful resources, tips and activities into a weekly newsletter for Thrive families. Most of these tips and activities are geared to children ages 4–12. We hope this brings you a simple and enjoyable way to stay connected to your family.*

# DECEMBER

**Happy holidays! Here are some helpful and fun ideas to do throughout the month!!**

## Mindful Gift Wrapping

While wrapping gifts for family and friends this holiday season, have your children help you wrap. As you're wrapping each give, talk about the things you love about the person you are giving the gift to. Think about a special memory you share with them. As you are making the final touches on your wrapping, speak some positive thoughts to that person and imagine how happy they will feel when unwrapping the gift.



## Santa Beard Christmas Countdown Craft

### Supplies:

- paper plate
- flesh colored paint
- paintbrush
- red and white cardstock
- white copy paper
- cotton balls
- stapler
- scissors
- googly eyes
- Glue

### Instructions:

1. Start by painting the inside circle of your paper plate with your flesh-colored paint. Set the paper plate aside to allow the paint to dry.
2. Lay out your red cardstock horizontally and cut it so you have one piece 4-inches wide and one piece 7-inches wide. The 4-inch piece will be used for the Santa shirt. Cut a triangle out of the 7-inch piece for the Santa hat.
3. Cut off a small strip along the top of your paper plate to make a straight edge.
4. Cut out 25 white strips from your copy paper, each about 1-inch by 7 ½-inches. Loop six of the strips around the bottom of the paper plate and staple them in place to start making the Santa beard. Now use your Elmer's Glue Stick to glue on the remaining 19 pieces. Add some glue to the end of each strip, pull it through one of the existing paper circles and glue the strip shut to make another circle in the paper chain. You can design the paper chain beard for your Santa any way you choose with your 25 paper strips.



## Christmas Mindfulness Scavenger Hunt

This game is a fun holiday twist on the grounding techniques using all 5 senses. Have each member of your family collect 5 holiday items. These items could be things found inside or outside at Christmas time. They'll need: 1 thing that looks like Christmas, 1 that sounds like Christmas, 1 that tastes like Christmas, 1 that smells like Christmas, and 1 that feels like Christmas. Once everyone has their 5 items, they will come together to share their items and talk about why they are meaningful for them. You might ask questions like, "why is that important to you?" or "does that bring up any memories for you?" This is a great way to think about what brings us joy at Christmas and makes it meaningful for each of us.

## De-Stress your Holiday

The holidays can be one of the most stressful times of years for many parents and guardians, but when we're feeling the stress, it not only effects our physical and mental health, but the well-being of our families as well. Here are 4 simple tips for minimizing holiday stress.

**Accept Imperfection** – Sometimes celebrations don't go exactly as we planned. Prepare yourself in advance for this possibility and realize that good really might just be good enough!

**Don't Lose Sight of What Really Matters** – With so much hustle and bustle during the holiday season (long lines, heavy traffic, and overwhelming to-do lists), it can be easy to let the stress get the better of us. Try asking yourself these 3 questions when you feel yourself losing patience: Where does this fit in the grand scheme of things? Can I use this moment of frustration as an opportunity to reflect? Is there a way I can make this moment more pleasant?

**Respond with Kindness** – You can't change how other people act during the holiday season, but you can change how you react to them.

**Rethink Your Resolutions** – We often set ourselves up for failure with unrealistic expectations for the New Year. Instead of the usual resolutions, think of these 2 parameters when thinking ahead: be kind to yourself and think small.



## Celebrate Kwanzaa

Kwanzaa 2021 begins on December 26 and ends on January 1, 2022

Celebrate and learn more about Kwanzaa here: <https://www.verywellfamily.com/kwanzaa-celebration-ideas-for-the-entire-family-5204926>

## Helpful Gift Giving Organizations

- <https://www.thespruce.com/charities-that-help-children-at-christmas-3129334>
- <https://www.kochhomes.com/maryland-charities-that-need-your-support-this-holiday-season/>
- <https://www.santaclausanonymus.org/about-us/how-it-works/>

## December Kindness 2021

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY



5 Give a gift to someone who is homeless or feeling lonely

6 Leave a positive message for someone else to find

7 Give kind comments to as many people as possible today

8 Do something helpful for a friend or family member

9 Notice when you're hard on yourself or others and be kind instead

10 Listen wholeheartedly to others without judging them

11 Buy an extra item and donate it to a local food bank

12 Be generous. Feed someone with food, love or kindness today

13 See how many different people you can smile at today

14 Share a happy memory or inspiring thought with a loved one

15 Contact an elderly neighbour and brighten up their day

16 Look for something positive to say to everyone you speak to

17 Give thanks. List the kind things others have done for you

18 Ask for help and let someone else discover the joy of giving

19 Contact someone who may be alone or feeling isolated

20 Help others by giving away something that you don't need

21 Appreciate kindness and thank people who do things for you

22 Congratulate someone for an achievement that may go unnoticed

23 Choose to give or receive the gift of forgiveness

24 Bring joy to others. Share something which made you laugh

25 Treat everyone with kindness today, including yourself!

26 Get outside. Pick up litter or do something kind for nature

27 Call a relative who is far away to say hello and have a chat

28 Be kind to the planet. Eat less meat and use less energy

29 Turn off digital devices and really listen to people

30 Let someone know how much you appreciate them and why

31 Plan some new acts of kindness to do in 2022



ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

Happier · Kinder · Together



## Mini Yarn Hats

### Supplies:

- paper rolls (toilet paper roll, kitchen paper towel rolls,...)
- yarn in many colors – we recommend yarn that isn't too expensive – we love this pack of assorted colors (think it's a good value and you get a nice variety of colors) or this color changing yarn set. If you want something magical though do check this color (not the frugal one but oh my!)
- scissors
- tissue paper



### Instructions:

- Start by cutting yarn into threads. You'll need plenty of threads, all with equal length, the length depends on the width of your paper roll – so you'll have to find the perfect length for yourself. You can start with cutting 1 thread and trying it out.
- Cut the paper roll, you only need a thin "ring".
- "Fold" the yarn thread in half and push the "loop" side through the paper roll.
- Now take the other end and "fold" it over the paper roll and into the loop. Pull to get a knot.
- Repeat until you have all the paper roll covered with yarn.
- Once all is covered you will need to push the yarn through the paper roll.
- Roll a small ball out of tissue paper. Push it into the paper roll – this will help you get the perfect hat shape and keep the yarn in place.
- Now all that is left to do is to tie a knot around the threads to get a nice hat shape and trim the pom pom to get a nicer shape.

## Gingerbread House Day

Make your own homemade gingerbread to build a gingerbread house and gingerbread people!

Find the recipe here:

<https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/gingerbread-house-recipe-1963254>

