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1. Have a Clear Sober Plan (Before Events)

- Decide ahead of time whether you'll attend events and how long you'll stay.
- Plan your exit strategy ("I'll leave when I start feeling  overwhelmed"). 
- Bring your own non-alcoholic drink so you're never empty-handed.
- Have your own ride home.

2. Identify Your Personal Triggers

- Common holiday triggers:
- Family conflict or tension
- Loneliness
- Stress or pressure
- Old traditions involving drinking
- Exhaustion or overstimulation

Write down your top 3 and decide how you'll handle each one before they arise.



☀ 3. Use “If–Then” Coping Statements

- *If someone offers me a drink, then I'll say: “I'm good with this, thanks.”*
- *If I start feeling anxious, then I'll take a short walk or step outside.*
- *If I want to leave, then I will just leave – no guilt.*

4. Have Sober Allies

Don't go it alone.

Tell 1–2 trusted people your intention to stay sober.

Ask them to check in with you before/after events.

Text a sober friend or group during rough moments.

This increases accountability and connection.

5. Avoid “People-Pleasing”— Protect Your Energy

You don't have to attend every gathering.

You don't have to stay long.

You don't have to explain your sobriety.

If someone pushes, “I'm not drinking tonight” is enough.

6. Care for Your Body First

- *Being tired, hungry, or overwhelmed makes urges much stronger.*
- *Try to keep blood sugar stable*
- *Sleep as consistent as possible*
- *Hydration!*
- *Movement in your day will keep your nervous system more resilient.*



7. Keep Something in Your Hands at Events

A small but powerful tactic:

- *A sparkling water*
- *A fancy mocktail*
- *A coffee or hot cider*

It reduces “offers” and takes away a big pocket of awkwardness.

8. Give Yourself Moments to Step Away

Social overwhelm is a major trigger.

- *It is absolutely OK to: Step outside*
- *Go to the bathroom just to breathe*
- *Sit quietly in your car for a minute*
- *Take five slow breaths*

These micro-resets prevent emotional overload.





9. Keep Your Support (AA, therapy, sober groups) Close

- *Holidays often disrupt routines – which can weaken sobriety.*

Try to:

- *Keep attending your usual meetings*
- *Or find online ones if you're traveling*
- *Reach out to your support before big events*
- *Use your tools daily (journaling, prayer, affirmations, grounding)*

Routine = reliability.

10. Watch Out for the “I Deserve This” Trap

Stress can create the illusion that alcohol is a “reward.”

Prepare a real reward list:

New book

Special dessert

Massage

Long bath

New candle

Cozy night in

Give yourself relief in healthy ways.

11. Plan for the Day After Waking up proud and clear-headed is one of the strongest motivators.

Plan something that aligns with your sober identity:

- *A breakfast date*
- *A workout*
- *A walk in nature*
- *A relaxing morning*

Let tomorrow pull you forward.



Happy
Holidays