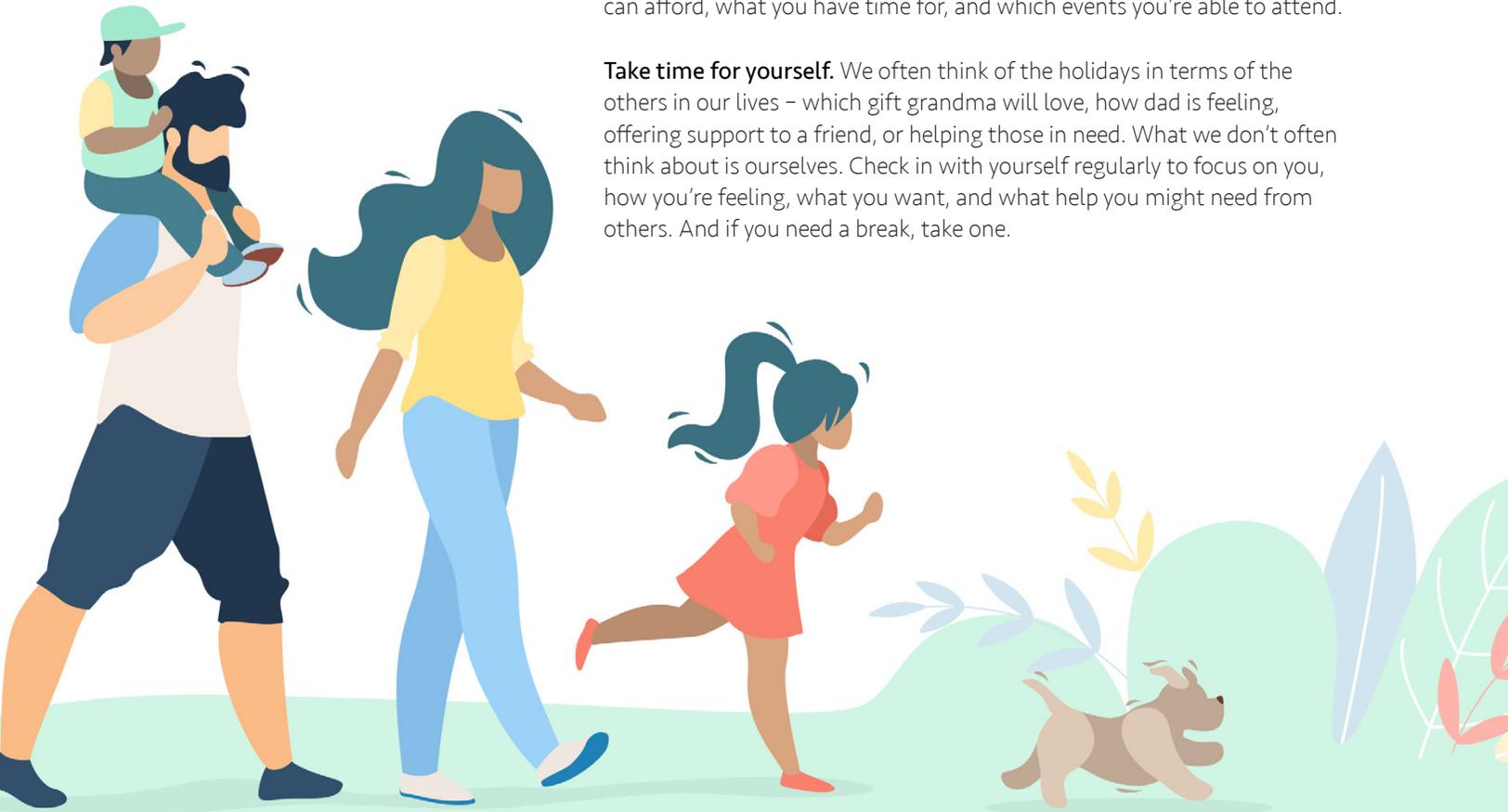


# HOUSEHOLD HARMONY

This time of year can quickly get chaotic – and it’s no wonder when the usual daily juggle of work and personal obligations is compounded by the extra time and expense of planning or attending events, shopping, and preparing to host or visit family and friends. Keep yourself and your household in harmony during the holidays with these tips:

**Set boundaries.** It’s easy to become stretched thin during the holidays. Whether it’s overspending, a gift list that only gets longer, volunteering too much of your time, or overcommitting to events, things can get out of hand quickly if you don’t set a budget and some limits and adhere to them. Involve the whole family in a discussion about everyone’s wishes and schedules. Then, be honest with yourself and others about how much you can afford, what you have time for, and which events you’re able to attend.

**Take time for yourself.** We often think of the holidays in terms of the others in our lives – which gift grandma will love, how dad is feeling, offering support to a friend, or helping those in need. What we don’t often think about is ourselves. Check in with yourself regularly to focus on you, how you’re feeling, what you want, and what help you might need from others. And if you need a break, take one.





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**Agree to be grateful.** Make a conscious effort to appreciate the things and people in your life. Stop to think about how happy your child's smile makes you or thank your sister for always coming through for you at just the right moment. Whether you feel stressed or anxious or sad, do your best to find something that taps into gratitude. Recognize even small accomplishments, or appreciate that contact you had with a long lost friend. Make it a family affair at dinner time and take turns sharing something from the day or week that each of you is grateful for.

**Remember what's important.** When things get overwhelming or emotions are running high, take a moment to step back and refocus on what really matters. If you find that you're annoyed with your in-laws or notice that your mom is upset that the gifts she ordered won't arrive on time, ask yourself and her whether being irritated is worth getting in the way of quality time with everyone.

Achieving household harmony during the holidays can be challenging, but the EAP is here to help. Call any time, day or night, for more information and helpful resources from one of our licensed counselors.

The EAP is a voluntary and confidential employee benefit available to federal employees at no cost.

