

# FAMILY EXPECTATIONS DURING THE HOLIDAYS

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Teenagers here at Arapahoe experience a wide array of expectations that they are expected to live up to. These expectations are meant to make us better people. But at what point do these expectations become harmful to students' well-being?

Teenagers are told over and over again that perfection is not the goal, the goal is progress, but a lot of time progress is measured by how perfect the performance was.

Effort is supposed to be valued. How often are we made to feel that our full effort wasn't good enough? On the daily in one way or another.

One little thing doesn't change much but it all adds up over time. We have so much on our plate all the time that it becomes extremely difficult to meet the expectations we set for ourselves or other people set for us.

While we do meet some of these expectations, the truth is that we don't meet a lot of them. So what happens when we don't meet them? We start to feel like we are failures and that we are not good enough. But we tried our hardest so why doesn't that matter?

During the holidays, most people visit with extended family, which can be an anxiety inducing experience for some. Seeing that many people can be stressful alone, but with the added factors of expectations or even opinionated arguments, seeing family can be an unkind and unwelcoming situation to be in.

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Although making your parents or guardians proud is a value most people hold, it becomes hard to realize that others' expectations for you don't determine your self worth or capability to do anything.

Uncomfortable conversations or remarks toward discussions you don't want to have are hard to avoid, especially with people who you know will attempt to make you feel uneasy. Avoiding interactions like that is not always possible when family or others expect you to be on your best behavior and in a good and cheerful mood.

Standing up for either yourself or someone else is challenging when in an unaccepting environment. Students going into break knowing unwanted family members will be visiting, it takes a toll on their emotional state.

Self awareness is the first step to helping students stand their ground this season because when you are comfortable and confident with yourself and your capabilities, it becomes easier to correct and inform others on how to respect you.

Setting boundaries is a difficult task for teens because of their communication skills on what needs they need to be met. By communicating your needs to others, you will be able to make it through this holiday season.

Adults need to realize how hard it is for teenagers to talk about their mental health. Because of how stigmatized talking about your mental health is it's more common, for teenagers especially, to suffer in silence. Teenagers often don't want to admit that they are struggling so they don't seek help until they are in an extremely dark place.

With heightened stress levels during the holidays, it's more important than ever to let people know that you are there for them.

**Take care!**