

Supporting Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

Holidays can be hard for a lot of people. Some experience the ever-present reminders of loneliness, loss, and isolation. Just the mere thoughts of these things can make holidays feel less than desirable. We see images of happy families gathering, commercials of loving parents searching for presents for their perfect children, holiday movies emphasize home and heart. **However, for many the holidays increase their sense of isolation, rejection, and exclusion.** This can especially be true for many with intellectual disabilities. Those who do not have a history of close family ties or a multitude of friends. This season can bring home, a powerful sense of loss.

Cooking for Comfort

Recipe - Ultimate Sweet Potato Bake

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 3 strips low-fat bacon, roughly chopped
- 600g sweet potato, thinly sliced
- 1 cup (240g) ricotta
- 1 cup (250ml) coconut milk
- 1 tsp ground nutmeg

Makes: 4 servings

Cook Time: 35 minutes



Source: [Delicious.com](https://www.delicious.com)

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F and lightly grease an 8-cup capacity ovenproof dish. Heat the oil in a large frypan over medium heat. Add the bacon and cook, until browned. Remove from pan, set aside.
2. In batches, add the sweet potato slices to the frypan and cook for 2 minutes each side or until lightly golden. Transfer the bacon and the sweet potato to the dish.
3. Place the ricotta, coconut milk and nutmeg in a bowl and whisk until smooth. Season with salt. Pour over the sweet potato and bacon mixture.
4. Transfer to the oven, bake for 20-25 minutes, until lightly golden on top. Serve immediately.

Ideas for Ensuring the Holidays go as Smoothly & Positively as Possible:

- Recognize that this can be a difficult time
- Take time now to review behavioral approaches
- Avoid unnecessary stressors
- Develop traditions
Start a tradition of *happiness* in place of a tradition of *loss*. It's a big goal, but a good one to try!
- Dealing with family visits
- Be careful about what you say
- Choose entertainment carefully
- Take a breather and pace yourself
- Be mindful of low impact holiday events/activities
- Take care of yourself!



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Source: Service, Support and Success: The Direct Support Worker Newsletter Vol 1: Iss 1 Unwrapping The Perfect Holidays: Tips for Staff Serving People with Intellectual Disabilities by Dave Hingsburger and Channele Salonia Vita Community Living Services