



Parish of Ascension

ASCENSION COUNSELING CENTER

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News Release

For Immediate Release

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Help for Holiday Over Spending

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Christmas is the season of giving, when people often go the extra mile for others and feel especially generous. But if you have a spending addiction, Christmas creates anxiety and anger for both you and your loved ones. If you suffer from spending addiction, you often experience out-of-control shopping sprees. One is never enough. Neighborhood malls and Internet shopping sites possess an irresistible appeal for you. You give the priciest, most lavish gifts. Your purchases reflect how knowledgeable you are about all the trendiest brands and designer labels. When you dine out with friends or business associates, you're usually the one who insists on picking up the tab—whether you can afford to, or not.

In spite of negative consequences that inevitably catch up with you--such as guilt, debt, or feeling ashamed and secretive about your compulsion to buy things--you find yourself on yet another shopping binge, charging or writing checks for things you don't really need and may never even use. You may lie about how much you've spent (to yourself and to those close to you), conceal price tags and receipts, and do financial gymnastics in an attempt to juggle your finances and keep up with monthly payment demands. Spending addiction is an attempt to try to "buy" happiness—to feel admired, accepted, empowered, or to push away troubling feelings like self-doubt or self-disappointment—and can risk ruining everything you hold dear.

Here are some tips from E-How (www.ehow.com) on how to limit holiday spending.

1. Decide how much money you can afford or want to spend. Write it down and stick to it.
2. Pay cash and avoid using your credit cards.
3. Buy only one present per person, and maybe a stocking stuffer.
4. Buy only for those people you really care about. Send everyone else a card.

5. Watch for before-Christmas sales. Not only will you save money, but your shopping will be done ahead of time.
6. Use your talents and make presents. Bake gingerbread and cookies, or craft your own ornaments. Give needlework, ceramics, framed photographs, or craft items.
7. Donate your time as a present. Offer to clean your sister's house, baby-sit your brother's kids for the weekend, or give 10 free swimming lessons to your niece.
8. If you are mailing packages, especially overseas, choose light items so you won't run up your postage costs.
9. Buy Christmas cards, wrapping paper, and decorations right after Christmas. They are half price.
10. Shop at after-Christmas sales for next year. The savings can sometimes be enormous.

If you believe you suffer from a spending, gambling, substance use, sex, or other addiction, please call Ascension Counseling Center at 621-5775 (Gonzales) or 473-8342 (Donaldsonville). We have licensed addiction counselors available to meet with you.

Ascension Counseling Center is supported by the public through a dedicated property tax. Because of this, clients pay according to a sliding fee scale based on family income and number of dependents. Beginning at \$2, the average fee is \$6. Please visit our website at www.AscensionParish.net, and then select "Departments", then "M – Z", then "Mental Health".