



It's the Most Wonderful
Time of the Year

Unless it's Not

Holiday Blues

Tips to manage anxiety, stress and depression

- Many people can experience feelings of anxiety or depression during the holiday season.
 - People who already live with a mental health condition should take extra care to tend to their overall health and wellness during this time.
 - Extra stress, unrealistic expectations or even sentimental memories that accompany the season can be a catalyst for the holiday blues.
 - Seasonal factors can trigger the holiday blues such as, less sunlight, changes in your diet or routine, alcohol at parties, over-commercialization or the inability to be with friends or family. ([Tips For Managing The Holiday Blues](#))
-

What are the Holiday Blues?



WHAT ARE THE HOLIDAY BLUES?

In a survey on the Holiday Blues

64% say they are affected

and 24% say the holidays affect them a lot.

So, what are they?

The Holiday Blues are temporary feelings of anxiety or depression during the holidays that can be associated with extra stress, unrealistic expectations or even memories that accompany the season.

This might include:

Fatigue	Loneliness or isolation
Tension	Sadness
Frustration	A sense of loss

The difference between the holiday blues and clinical anxiety or depression is that the feelings are temporary. However, short-term problems must still be taken seriously because they can lead to long-term mental health conditions.



Tips for avoiding the Holiday Blues



Stick to normal routines as much as possible.



Get enough sleep.



Take time for yourself, but don't isolate yourself. Spend time with supportive, caring people.



Eat and drink in moderation. Don't drink alcohol if you are feeling down.



Get exercise—even if it's only taking a short walk.



Make a to-do list. Keep things simple.



Set reasonable expectations and goals for holiday activities such as shopping, cooking, entertaining, attending parties or sending holiday cards.



Set a budget for holiday activities. Don't overextend yourself financially in buying presents.



Listen to music or find other ways to relax.

Remember

The holiday blues are short-term. Be patient. Take things week by week or day by day.

Learn more at <http://www.nami.org/holidayblues>

Managing Your Mental Health

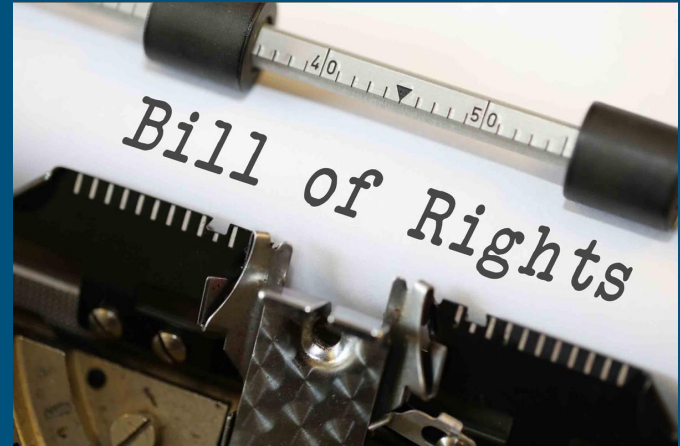
- Stay in Therapy (or start)
- Mindfulness
- Don't Rely on Drugs and Alcohol
 - a. There is a 20% overlap between people with anxiety or mood disorders and substance use disorders
- Soak Up the Sun
- Set Realistic Expectations

LET'S TALK
ABOUT GOING TO
THERAPY
THE SAME WAY WE
TALK ABOUT
GOING
TO THE GYM.

Holiday Bill of Rights

You have the right to:

- Take care of yourself.
- Feel mixed up emotions around the holidays.
- Spend time alone thinking, reflecting and relaxing.
- Say "no" to party invitations.
- Ask for help and support from family, friends and community service agencies
- Say "no" to alcohol, drugs...and seconds on dessert.
- NOT to ride with a drunk driver, to take their keys away and to call a taxi for them.
- Give gifts that are within your holiday budget.
- Smile at angry salespeople and/or rude drivers and give them a piece of your mind.
- Enjoy your holiday the way you want. (<http://www.mhawisconsin.org/holidaystress.aspx>)



Holiday Mental Health Tips for Families



- During the busy holiday time, try to keep household routines the same.
- Take care of yourself, both mentally and physically.
- Make a plan to focus on one thing at a time.
- Give to others by making it an annual holiday tradition to share your time and talents with people who have less than you do.
- Remember that many children and adults experience a sense of loss, sadness or isolation during the holidays.
- Don't feel pressured to over-spend on gifts.
- Most important of all, enjoy the holidays for what they are--time to enjoy with your family.

How to Help a Loved One

If your loved one is struggling with the Holiday Blues, here are some ways to help

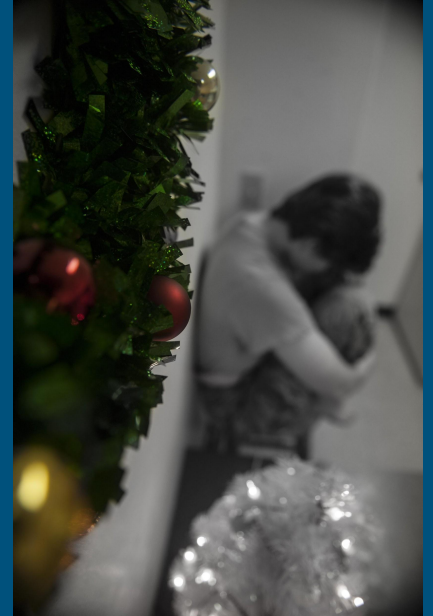
1. Ask your loved one how you can help them.
2. Be patient—learning and practicing new coping strategies takes time.
3. If your loved one is learning new skills, offer to help them practice.
4. Listen and offer support, but avoid pushing unwanted advice.
5. Set boundaries and seek support for yourself, if needed.



Tips to cope with stress and depression



- Acknowledge your feelings
- Reach out
- Be realistic
- Set aside differences
- Stick to a budget
- Plan ahead
- Learn to say no
- Don't abandon healthy habits
- Take a breather
- Seek professional help if you need it



What if it's more than the Holiday Blues?

If the Holiday Blues seem more like everyday life, it may be time to seek professional help. The following are a good place to start:

⇒ **School Counselor**

⇒ **Family/Marriage Counselor**

⇒ **Family Doctor**

⇒ **Religious Leader**

⇒ **Psychiatrist (treat diagnosed medical condition)**

⇒ **Psychologist (therapist)**

❄ Please know that asking for help will remain confidential and will not jeopardize your position with us...we are here to help! ❄

Holiday Survival Guide

For a comprehensive list of ways to make this holiday the most joyful, peaceful, and stress-free, including a Christmas “Not-To-Do” list and one therapist’s favorite holiday tradition, check out PsychCentral’s Holidays Survival [Guide](#)

