

# Holiday Happiness

Don't Let the Humbugs Bite

Presented by your Employee Assistance Program (EAP)



# Seminar goals

- Discuss how the holiday season can affect our emotions
- Understand how the “holiday blues” differ from depression
- Review factors that contribute to or trigger holiday blues
- Learn self-care strategies that can help during the holidays
- Know the benefits of your Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

# The whirlwind of the holidays



(Perrigo, 2018)

# Is it depression?

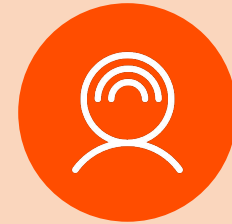
- Holiday blues are a temporary change in mood related to a particular set of circumstances
- Clinical depression is a condition with a persistent set of symptoms regardless of circumstances or season
- Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) occurs in a regular pattern tied to the time of the year



Holidays can worsen existing mental health issues.  
If any difficult feelings persist, seek help.



(Cherry, 2020; Mayo Clinic Staff, 2018; HelpGuide, 2019)



## Possible signs of holiday blues

- Feeling overwhelmed
- Exhaustion
- Sadness
- Guilt
- Irritability
- Anxiety
- Appetite/sleep changes

# What triggers holiday blues?

- Demands, expectations
- Family, relationships
- Financial pressure
- Reflections on the past
- Loneliness or isolation



The stress associated with these triggers can be magnified by the fact that we can't or don't address them.



# Know your struggles

- Acknowledge past triggers
- Be proactive, not reactive
- Develop a holiday self-care plan



Taking an honest assessment of your holiday stressors means you can consider how to gain control of them before the holidays begin.



# Manage your expectations

- Set realistic goals
- Limit exposure to the hype
- Let go of perfectionism
- Imagine alternatives



Focus on the fun of making new memories instead of trying to recreate the past. You don't need to reach a past standard for an experience to be meaningful.



# Dealing with family

- Plan strategies in advance for tensions and conflict
- Work on finding forgiveness to release past hurts
- Set limits to balance your needs with your family's
- Remember and incorporate whatever brings out the best in your family



Bring an empathetic, optimistic mindset to gatherings, but also your boundaries and an exit plan.





# Don't go it alone

## Be willing to make the first move

- Practical support: Share the load
- Social support: Alleviate loneliness
- Emotional support: Talk about it



If you are navigating the holidays after a loss, support will be key. Let others know what will be difficult for you and what they can do to help.



# Make yourself more stress-resistant

## Take care of yourself

- Release the grip of obligation
- Eat, drink, spend in moderation
- Keep self-care on your to-do list
- Make time to nurture yourself



Use the vision of your perfect “not so perfect” holiday to help make sure your priorities are represented in holiday choices.



# Remember the “reason for the season”

## Give the gift of...

- **Gratitude:** Power of thanks
- **Kindness:** Offer compassion
- **Wonder:** Notice the magic



# Benefits of the EAP

- Face-to-face sessions
- Confidential
- Prepaid
- Unlimited telephonic consultation
- Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Household benefit
- Home life support such as elder care, child care and pet care
- Convenience services
- Financial services
- Legal services

**Benefits vary by employer. Please check with your HR for your specific EAP benefits.**

# References

Cherry, K. (2020) *An overview of the holiday blues*. Retrieved from <https://www.verywellmind.com/holiday-blues-4771716>

HelpGuide. (2019) *Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)*. Retrieved from <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/seasonal-affective-disorder-sad.htm>

Mayo Clinic Staff. (2018) *Depression (major depressive disorder)*. Retrieved from <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/depression/symptoms-causes/syc-20356007>

Perrigo. (2018) *Season of joy? Actually, season of stress for 88 percent of Americans*. Retrieved from <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/season-of-joy-actually-season-of-stress-for-88-percent-of-americans-300758622.html>

# Thank you



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