

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



This information is for educational purposes only. It's not medical/clinical advice. Always ask your doctor for appropriate examinations, treatment, testing and care recommendations.

All Cigna Healthcare products and services are provided exclusively by or through operating subsidiaries of The Cigna Group. All pictures are for illustrative purposes only.

881191d 11/23 © 2023 Cigna Healthcare. Some content provided under license.