

Tips for Handling the Holiday Blues

Making time for social events; doing the cooking, the shopping and the entertaining and all while doing our best to care for ourselves and our families, the holidays are a busy time for many (even “decking the halls” can be stressful!)

While the holiday season can be a light-hearted time full of joy and good cheer, the hustle and bustle, and the stress that comes along with it, can lead to a dark period of anxiety, loneliness and regret for some.

As we go through this season, OAOHN would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to care for yourself, and your loved ones, by reminding you of the importance of preventive care, including embracing a healthy spirit.

Mental Health America offers the following tips on how to help make the season brighter:

- Keep your expectations manageable and set realistic goals for yourself. Make a list and prioritize the important activities.
- Be realistic about what you can do. Don't put the focus of the entire holiday season on just one day. Activities can be spread out to lessen stress and increase enjoyment.
- The holiday season does not eliminate reasons for feeling sad or lonely; there is room for these feelings to be present, even if you choose not to express them.
- Life brings changes. Each season is different and can be enjoyed and celebrated in its own way. Don't set yourself up in comparing today with the “good ol' days.”
- Try volunteering some of your time to help others.
- Enjoy activities that are free, such as taking a drive to look at holiday decorations, going window shopping or making a snowperson with children.
- Be aware that excessive drinking will only increase your feelings of depression.
- Try something new. Celebrate the holidays in a new way.
- Spend time with supportive and caring people. Reach out and make new friends or contact someone you haven't heard from in a while.
- Save time for yourself and recharge your batteries! Let others share in the responsibility of planning activities.

Make an appointment with your primary care physician (PCP), who can help coordinate your care and refer you to a specialist, if needed. If you don't have a PCP, visit your insurance carrier's website, look for the “find a doctor” area and follow the instructions.