

What is the “Holiday Blues”?

The Holidays Blues are considered to be “feeling of sadness, loneliness, depression and even anxiety that often occur in and around the holiday season.”



What is it about the Season?

The holiday season are often a difficult time, a time of sadness and loneliness, a time of self-evaluation and reflecting about the past and a time of anxiety about the future year.

Who experiences the Blues?

There are many different people who might be at risk for feeling blue at the holidays:

- Someone who has a death in the family
- Someone who has experienced financial setbacks at the holidays
- Someone who is separated from loved ones at the holidays with work, military obligations or other reasons
- Someone who has experienced other losses during the year – moving, medical diagnoses
- Someone who has experienced a change in lifestyle or roles – getting married, getting divorced, starting a job or retiring,
- Someone who has experienced a change in the family - having a new baby, having children go away to college, work or military.

People who tend to be depressed, stressed, anxious can also become bluer at the holidays.

Factors Adding to the Blues

There are a lot of different reasons that can make the holiday season a time that leaves people feeling blue:

- Increased stress and anxiety
- Increased financial pressures
- Fatigue
- Unrealistic expectations
- Inability to be with family
- Memories of past holiday celebrations
- Over commercialization
- Change in diet
- Change in daily routines

How can I recognize the Blues?

The “Holiday Blues” often present with:

- Headaches
- An inability to sleep or sleeping too much
- Changes in appetite that cause either weight loss or gain
- Agitation and anxiety
- Excessive or inappropriate feelings of guilt
- Diminished ability to think clearly or concentrate
- Decreased interest in activities that usually are enjoyable, such as: food, sex, work, friends, hobbies and entertainment.



Basics Ways of Coping with the Holiday Blues

For anyone feeling blue during the holidays, there are some very basic, common sense steps that can be taken to help cope.

- Take it one hour at a time, one day at a time.
- Maintain a normal routine. Keep doing your normal daily activities.
- Get enough sleep or at least enough rest.
- Regular exercise, even walking, helps relieve stress, tension and improve moods.
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet. Limit high calorie foods and junk food.
- Avoid using alcohol, medications or other drugs to mask the pain.
- Do those activities, or be with the people that comfort, sustain, nourish and recharge you.
- Remember coping strategies used to survive past challenges. Draw on your strengths again.

How can I feel less blue during the Holidays?

There are several other things that can help in making it easier to manage the blues.

- Determine your priorities and establish realistic goals for the holidays.
- Delegate some responsibilities to others.
- Take time for yourself.
- Minimize financial stressors by setting a budget and sticking to it.
- Enjoy free holiday activities.
- Think about giving a free gift from your heart. Your time or your presence.
- Be around supportive people.
- Volunteer and help someone else.
- Create a New Holiday Tradition.
- Find a new place or a new way to celebrate.

Handling the Holiday Blues

One of the best ways of handling the Holiday Blues is remember to get your **R-E-S-T**:

Reasonable expectations and goals. Be realistic about what you can and cannot do. Get plenty of rest and relaxation.

Exercise, even walking daily. Eat and drink in moderation. Enjoy free activities.

Simplify to relieve stress. Set a budget for social obligations and gifts. Simple gifts can still bring happiness. Give your time to others—volunteer, donate to charity, call or visit a friend or some-one who is homebound.

Take time for you to relax and remember. Spend time with caring, supportive people. Keep in mind that Traditions can be changed.

When to be Concerned

- Constantly sad or in an empty mood
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Insomnia
- A change in appetite with weight loss or weight gain
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities, including sex
- Irritability or restlessness
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feeling inappropriate guilt, hopelessness or worthlessness
- Thoughts of death or suicide.

Anyone with suicidal thoughts or ideation needs to seek immediate care with a physician, mental health provider, crisis line or the nearest hospital emergency department.

The Blues: A Short-Term Event

The Holiday Blues can be emotional, intense and upsetting, but they tend to be short-term lasting at the most about 2 weeks.

The Blues end and people generally get better once the holiday season is over & get back to a normal daily routine.



More Information & Resources

Newest Resources

Holiday Blues <http://www.squidoo.com/holiday-blues>
Are You Having a Charlie Brown Christmas?
<http://www.squidoo.com/charlie-brown-christmas>

References

Handling the Holiday Blues or a Charlie Brown Xmas
http://dying.about.com/od/copingwiththeholidays/p/holiday_blues.htm
Good Grief! I'm Having a Charlie Brown Xmas - How to Deal with the Holiday Blues. 2001
http://www.journeyofhearts.org/kirstimd/grief_xmas.htm
<http://www.mommd.com/charliebrownshtml>
The Holidays 2001: Coping in this Year of Change & Uncertainty
http://www.journeyofhearts.org/kirstimd/blues_01.htm

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Holiday Blues at the Holidays



Information for you
if you're feeling
a bit blue
this holiday season.