

### Helping Clients Cope With the Holiday Blues

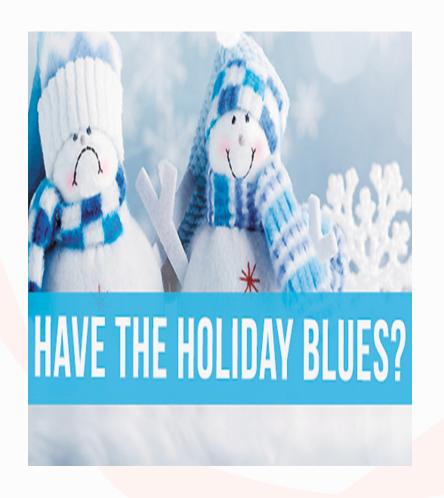
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## Learning Objectives

- Define the meaning of the Holiday Blues
- Discuss symptoms
- Identify factors that trigger symptoms
- Explore strategies to help clients cope with symptoms



### Statistical Information



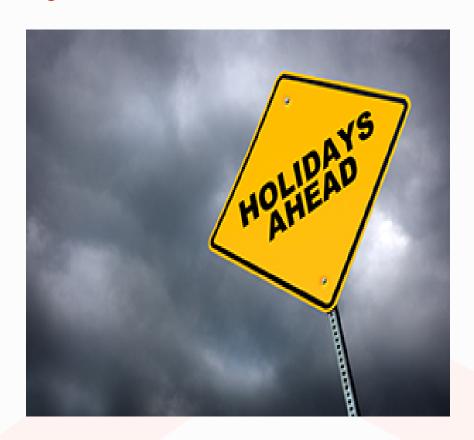
In a survey completed by the National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI)

- 755 of overall respondents reported that the holidays contributed to feeling sad
- 64% of individuals with an existing mental illness reported that the holidays made their condition worse.
- 68% financially strained
- 66% experienced loneliness
- 63% too much pressure
- 57% unrealistic expectations



# What is the "Holiday Blues"

- The holiday blues is not a recognized psychiatric condition According to the DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders)
- The Holiday Blues usually last from Thanksgiving to New Year's
- Described as a passing mood of the season
- Persistent feeling of sadness that begins during the holiday season.
- It affects men and women of all ages





### What is it About the Holiday Season?

- 3 holidays in a short period of time
- Busy time of the year
- Its a time of self evaluation
- Reflection regarding the past
- Anxiety regarding the future



# **Symptoms**



- Sadness
- Anxiety
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Anger
- Frustration
- sleep issues
- Isolation



# Factors that Trigger Symptoms

- Current events
- Personal grief
- Loneliness/ Isolation
- Illness
- Economic concerns
- Separation from family members
- Relationship concerns
- Unrealistic expectations



# Holiday Blues vs Depression

- Seasonal sadness
- Anxiety
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Anger
- Frustration
- Sleep issues
- Isolation

- Constantly depressed
- Anxiety
- Lack of interest
- Irritable mood
- Hopelessness
- Sleep issues
- Suicidal ideation
- Self harm



### **Action Plan**

**Assess for MDD** 

Assess for suicidal ideation

Education

Help the client identify their stressors

Understanding stress responses

Identify patterns of negative thinking

Role play scenarios

Prepare for holiday events

**Toolbox** 



# Client Strategies and Task

Delegate tasks to others

**Create New Traditions** 

Learn to Say 'No'

Volunteer

Set a budget

Don't Isolate Yourself

Make time for yourself

Socialize with supportive people

**Exercise** 





#### Resource List

- American Psychiatric Association www.psychiatry.org
- Mentalhealth.gov
- CDC www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/tools-resources/index.htm
- NIH.gov
- SAMHSA national helpline1-800-662-4357 www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline
- National Alliance on Mental Illness <u>www.nami.org/Home</u>
- Betterhelp.com
- Psychology Today
- Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)
- Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9): this is a nine-item questionnaire which helps both to diagnose depression and to assess severity. ...
- Beck Depression Inventory® Second Edition (BDI-II): this also uses DSM criteria.



#### References

- The Holidays 2001: Coping in this Year of Change & Uncertainty http://www.journeyofhearts.org/kirstimd/blues
- What Are the Holiday Blues? By <u>Kendra Cherry</u> Updated on February 22, 2021 Medically reviewed by <u>Steven Gans, MD</u> <u>Holiday Depression: Definition, Symptoms, Causes, Diagnosis, and Coping (verywellmind.com)</u>
- Smiley image www.brylin.com/holiday-blues-major-depression/
- Holidays Ahead Image <u>Beat Back the Holiday Blues | NAMI:</u>
  National Alliance on Mental Illness
- Snowman image <u>Help For "The Holiday Blues" At Library On</u> <u>Tuesday, January 8, At 6:30pm | Focus Newspaper</u>
- Red bulb image beat the holidays <u>Beat the Holiday Blues</u> (theinternationalpageants.blogspot.com)

