



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 helpline 1-800-662-4357 www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline
- National Alliance on Mental Illness www.nami.org/Home
- 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 Kendra Cherry Updated on February 22, 2021 Medically reviewed by Steven Gans, MD
Holiday Depression: Definition, Symptoms, Causes, Diagnosis, and Coping (verywellmind.com)
- Smiley image www.brylin.com/holiday-blues-major-depression/
- Holidays Ahead Image Beat Back the Holiday Blues | NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness
- Snowman image Help For “The Holiday Blues” At Library On Tuesday, January 8, At 6:30pm | Focus Newspaper
- Red bulb image beat the holidays Beat the Holiday Blues (theinternationalpageants.blogspot.com)