

# DEPRESSION AND THE HOLIDAYS

SOURCE: SUICIDE PREVENTION EDUCATION AWARENESS KNOWLEDGE (SPEAK)

The holidays are supposed to be a time of cheer and joy. For some it is a time of more stress and anxiety. During the holiday season we are reminded of past holidays when times were different. It is important to recognize that feeling sad or depressed during the holiday season or other special dates - anniversaries of births or deaths or special occasions - is not abnormal or even unusual. Holidays and special dates can trigger an episode of the blues, feelings of loneliness, depression, and melancholy, especially if one is still in an active grieving process. Try to keep expectations for the holiday season manageable. Try to set realistic goals for yourself. Pace yourself Organize your time.

Make a list and prioritize the important activities. Be realistic about what you can and cannot do. Do not put the entire focus on just one day (i.e., Christmas Day). Remember it is a season of holiday sentiment and activities can be spread out (timewise) to lessen stress and increase enjoyment.

Tips to help you get by:

- 🧠 It is okay to cry.
- 🧠 Try to create new rituals and traditions.
- 🧠 If you are grieving, do not try to be all things for all people.
- 🧠 Learn to set realistic limits on your energies.
- 🧠 Find time/ make time for yourself. If possible, do something self-indulgent. Try a massage, a new haircut, or even just a bubble bath.
- 🧠 Get plenty of sleep and exercise.
- 🧠 Excessive alcohol will contribute to the depression. Spend time with people who care about you.
- 🧠 Try to limit the amount of time with those who upset you. Realize that each holiday, birthday, or anniversary is only one day. Take them one occasion at a time.
- 🧠 There is no right or wrong way to deal with the holidays. Decide what works for you.

"Self-help works."



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Page 1

