

COPING WITH HOLIDAY STRESS AND LONELINESS



As the holiday season approaches, we often find ourselves immersed in a whirlwind of activities, expectations, and emotions. While this time of year can bring joy and togetherness, it can also be a source of stress and loneliness for many. Older adults are more likely to experience isolation, especially if they live alone or are far from family and friends. The holidays can amplify these feelings, leading to increased loneliness and sadness. Social isolation can have significant negative effects on both mental and physical health, contributing to conditions such as depression, anxiety, and a decline in cognitive function. Understanding the specific ways holiday stress and loneliness impact this population is crucial for providing the necessary support and care.



Recognizing Holiday Stress

The holidays can bring a unique set of stressors, including financial pressures, family dynamics, and the expectations of holiday preparations. It's important to acknowledge these stressors and recognize that it's okay to feel overwhelmed.

Check out the next page for more tips on coping with holiday stress.



Managing Expectations

Setting realistic expectations for holiday activities and interactions can significantly reduce stress. Remember, it's perfectly fine to say no to events or traditions that cause more stress than joy. Prioritize activities that are meaningful and enjoyable for you.



Maintaining Healthy Routines

Amid the hustle and bustle of the season, it's crucial to maintain healthy habits. Regular exercise, balanced nutrition, and sufficient sleep can help keep stress levels in check. Even short daily walks or simple stretching exercises can make a big difference.



Finding Joy in the Season

Identify activities that bring you joy and relaxation. Whether it's spending time with loved ones, practicing a hobby, or volunteering, make time for things that make you happy. The holiday season is a perfect opportunity to focus on what truly matters to you.



Dealing with Loneliness

Feelings of loneliness can be amplified during the holidays. Staying connected with others can help alleviate these feelings. Reach out to friends and family, participate in community events, or use technology to stay in touch. Remember, you are not alone.



Seeking Professional Help

If the holiday season feels overwhelming or if you are struggling with your mental health, don't hesitate to seek professional help. Speaking with a mental health professional can provide valuable support and strategies to manage your feelings.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CARE

Practicing self-care during the holidays is essential to maintain your mental and physical well-being. Self-care involves taking intentional steps to care for your own health and happiness. This can include setting realistic expectations, maintaining healthy routines, and finding joy in simple pleasures. It's important to recognize your own limits and give yourself permission to say no to activities that cause unnecessary stress.

Moreover, the holidays can sometimes bring feelings of loneliness or sadness, especially if you're unable to be with loved ones. Staying connected with friends and family, even virtually, and seeking support from mental health professionals when needed can make a big difference.

By prioritizing self-care, you can navigate the holiday season with greater resilience, ensuring that you enjoy this time of year in a way that is healthy and fulfilling for you.

WE CAN HELP.

Our hospital-based outpatient program is designed to meet the unique needs of older adults experiencing depression and/or anxiety related to life changes that are often associated with aging or a chronic diagnosis. Anyone can make a referral to our program, including self-referrals, provider referrals, or community consultations.

Call us today at