



MENTAL HEALTHY NEWSLETTER



As mental health issues among individuals continue to rise year by year, month by month, and day by day, so do topics around ending the stigma on mental health. The *Mental Healthy Newsletter* focuses on raising awareness surrounding mental health and decreasing the stigma on campus.

LOOK FORWARD TO:

- ✓ Education, information, and resources about mental illness
- ✓ Tips on mental health and wellness
- ✓ A dose of inspiration and positive affirmations to get you through

Now, let's get into the December Mental Healthy Newsletter!

Certainly, the holidays can be a joy-filled season, but let's acknowledge that this time can be both joyous and challenging for our mental health. A survey conducted by the American Psychological Association found that over 38 percent of those surveyed felt increased levels of stress, depression, and anxiety and reported more substance abuse during the holiday season (Durlinsky, 2022).

Many people can experience feelings of anxiety and depression during the holidays, and for some the holiday season is not always the most wonderful time of the year. These holiday blues can stem from a variety of factors, but there are ways to help cope and manage feelings through this holiday season.

Each month the topic will focus on something different, providing you with up-to-date information and resources within the mental health field. If you have a specific topic or issue surrounding mental health that you would like to see here, please send an email to Kaisha Yeager at kyeager@fpctx.edu.

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Mental Healthy Newsletter



The Holiday Blues

During the holidays, many people may experience what is often interchangeably called the “holiday blues” or seasonal affective disorder (SAD). What are the Holiday Blues? The holiday blues are typically characterized as feelings of anxiety and depression during the holiday season that can be associated with extra stress, unrealistic expectations, or even memories that accompany the season.

Here are some things to know about the holiday blues, and what you can do to help yourself or a loved one.

Holiday Depression

- ✦ Typically confined to the holiday season, starting around late fall or beginning of winter and shortly reaches a resolution.
- ✦ Characterized by mild feelings of stress, anxiety, and sadness that arise during the holidays.

This might include :

Changes in sleep, weight, or appetite

Fatigue
Tension
Frustration

Loneliness or Isolation
Sadness
Sense of Loss

IF THE HOLIDAY SEASON PASSES AND YOU'RE STILL FEELING DEPRESSED OR ANXIOUS, YOU SHOULD TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR OR A MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL TO DETERMINE IF WHAT YOU ARE EXPERIENCING IS MORE SIGNIFICANT.

Seasonal Affective Disorder

- ✦ SAD is considered a form of Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) categorized by its recurring seasonal patterns, in addition to certain symptoms that differ for winter-pattern and summer-pattern SAD” (Lezcano, 2021).
- ✦ SAD is a type of depression that occurs during certain months of the year with symptoms lasting about four to five months, about 40 percent of the year (Lezcano, 2021).
- ✦ Symptoms of SAD are more severe and debilitating.
- ✦ Typically starts around late fall and early winter and lasts until about spring or summer.

Common Stressors for Holiday Depression:

1. Stress brought up by preparing for the holidays
2. High or unmet expectations
3. Thoughts of loss or absent loved ones
4. Money and a focus on gifts
5. Parties, activities, and other social commitments
6. Comparing oneself to others
7. Feelings of not having or providing enough
8. Increased alcohol consumption
9. Loneliness during the holidays
10. Mood Disorders
11. Recent life changes
12. Recent trauma
13. A concurrent illness
14. Having a sick family member or loved on
15. Self-reflection

HELPFUL TIPS

CHILL OUT. Stick to normal routines as much as possible and avoid overbooking yourself. Take time for yourself and find ways to relax.

DONT FREEZE PEOPLE OUT. Take time for yourself, but don't isolate yourself. Spend time with people who love and support you.

HIBERNATE. Make sure to get enough sleep.

GET EXERCISE. Even if it is only taking a short walk.

MODERATE THE MERRIMENT. Eat and drink in moderation. Don't drink alcohol if you are feeling down.

BUDGET. Don't overextend yourself financially in buying presents. Set reasonable expectations.

ACCEPT YOUR FEELINGS. Many people experience sadness during the holdiays. Be kind to yourself. Seek support. Talk to someone.

