# Managing Holiday Blues

## What are holiday blues?

Holiday blues are temporary feelings of sadness, loneliness, and even anxiety that occur during the holiday season. These feelings are not usually a sign of a serious mental health concern and occur due to increased stress. If these feelings persist and become unmanageable, or if you are thinking of harming yourself or others, contact a mental health professional.

## Causes of holiday stress

- Social pressure: you *should* "be cheerful," "in the holiday spirit," and "want to spend time with others"
- Unrealistic expectations - expecting perfection can lead to disappointment and frustration
- Uncertainty
- Less sunlight and shorter days
- Grief - mourning the loss of people, pets, and things we love

- Sudden increase in social/family events can lead to stressful conversations, disagreements, and reminders of other stressors
- Lack of social support
- Spending more money
- Increase in drinking and other substance use
- Changes in diet, sleep, and daily routine
- Experiences of discrimination and marginalization

### Stress can lead to:

Fatigue
Changes in mood
Low motivation
Withdrawal from things you usually enjoy
Sleep difficulties
Difficulty concentrating

## Support your wellbeing this holiday season!

- Acknowledge your feelings.
- Maintain your routine as much as possible (sleep, exercise, eating).
- Set a budget for holiday spending and stick to it.
- Say no when needed. Setting or maintaining boundaries can be supportive/helpful to wellbeing.
- Set realistic expectations. Things will not be perfect, events may not go as planned, and disagreements will happen. All of this is normal.
- Surround yourself with helpful social support. Don't isolate.
- Make time to recharge. Watch a favorite show, go for a walk, listen to your favorite music or podcast, practice mindfulness, read, call a friend (see here for more tips).
- Reach out for help when you need it.
  - Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: Dial 988
  - 1-800-662-Help (4357)