



DECEMBER WELLNESS

DEALING WITH DEPRESSION DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Happy holidays? The most wonderful time of the year?

Unfortunately, the idea that holidays are filled with joy, laughter, friends and happiness is not necessarily true for everyone. The pressure to put on a facade of being happy during the holidays may only magnify feelings of anxiety or depression.

By planning ways to add joy into the holidays, and taking the time to take care of yourself, holidays can be less stressful and more enjoyable.

Here are some tips to try this holiday season:

~ **Prepare a neutral response:** If you are anticipating family conflict this holiday season, one suggestion is to prepare a neutral response in advance. For example, a response such as: “I can see how you would feel that way”, can help avoid confrontation.

~ **Help those less fortunate:** Taking time to be grateful for the things you have, and helping those who do not have as much, can ease feelings of depression.

~ **Know it's not uncommon to feel angry or sad when grieving:** Grieving the loss of a loved one is difficult, and can really be felt during the holidays. It may help to reach out to support groups or to talk out your feelings before or during the holiday season.

~ **Pay attention to your sleep habits:** Your sleep schedule may become disrupted during the holidays. Since some studies have shown a link between depression and lack of sleep, it may be helpful to practice tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Examples include: avoiding large meals within a few hours of bedtime, keeping your bedroom free from distractions such as a TV, and having a routine time to wake up each morning and go to bed each night.

~ **Take note of your light exposure:** SAD, or seasonal affective disorder, is something that occurs for many during the months of limited sun exposure - which happens to fall during the holidays. The lack of sunshine may be contributing to, or may be the cause of, depression during the holidays. Taking walks during the hours of sunlight may help brighten your mood.

For more information, click here: [11 Tips for Avoiding Holiday Depression Triggers](#)

West Suburban Health Group Website: westsuburbanhealth.com

Health Provider Websites: Fallon: fchp.org Harvard Pilgrim: harvardpilgrim.org

Tufts: tuftshealthplan.com Blue Cross Blue Shield: bluecrossma.com