LifeMatters®
By Empathia

Grief, Stress, and the Holiday Blues

While some people find the holidays the most wonderful time of year, others may struggle. Common reasons why someone may dread the holidays or experience the "holiday blues" include:

- Increased stress, obligations, or time pressure
- Unrealistic expectations (your own or those of others)
- Grief over loved ones who have passed away
- Loss of beloved traditions or changes to how your family celebrates the holidays
- Financial constraints or limited options for travel
- Estrangement from family or other loved ones

Whether you often find the holidays stressful or anticipate that this year will be unusually difficult, these tips may help:

- **Manage expectations.** Be realistic about what the holidays will be like and how much you can do. Make smart financial choices and avoid long-term debt.

- **Acknowledge your emotions.** Accepting that you feel sad, stressed, or lonely will help you manage these emotions. If you are grieving, look for ways to celebrate the person you have lost or pay tribute to their memory.

- **Create a new holiday "normal."** Letting go of holiday traditions or spending the day away from loved ones may be difficult. Consider establishing new holiday traditions or adapting old ones to your current circumstances.

- **Engage in self-care.** Eat right, exercise, and get sufficient sleep. Avoid overindulging in unhealthy foods or excess drinking. Make time for activities that help you relax or manage stress.

- **Connect with others.** When travel is impractical, try holding a virtual holiday celebration with loved ones. Offer support to friends who find the holidays difficult or consider volunteering in your community.

Talking to a supportive friend or family member may help you cope with your feelings about the holiday season. LifeMatters is also available 24/7/365, including on holidays. We're here to help.

1-800-367-7474

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Call collect to **262-574-2509** if outside of North America

Language assistance services in your preferred spoken and written languages are available at no cost by calling 1-800-367-7474.
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Source: The National Mental Health Association (NAMI)

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