



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON

**PRESENTED BY YOUR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE
AND WORKLIFE PROGRAMS**

December 10, 2025

THE HOLIDAYS BRING JOY...

- **Connection and togetherness**

- Meaningful moments with family and friends, creating memories that warm the heart throughout the season

- **Giving and receiving**

- The joy of thoughtful gift-giving and watching loved ones' faces light up with surprise and gratitude

- **Cultural celebrations**

- Traditions and observances from around the world connect us to our heritage and community



...AND STRESS



- **Financial pressure**
 - Holiday expenses can strain budgets and result in debt
- **Time management challenges**
 - Balancing work responsibilities, family gatherings, travel logistics, and childcare often creates scheduling conflicts
- **Emotional burdens**
 - Changes in diet, managing grief for lost loved ones, and navigating family dynamics can take a toll on mental well-being

ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA

Common barriers to care

- Many individuals experience shame or fear of judgment about mental illness, leading to delayed or avoided treatment

Leveraging support systems

- Community and social support play a vital role in healing and should complement professional treatment

When daily functioning becomes impaired, combining social support with mental health services provides the most comprehensive care.

EFFECTS OF MENTAL HEALTH STIGMAS



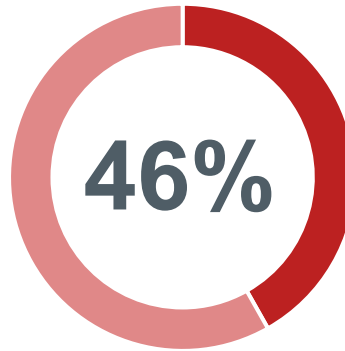
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Treatment
gap

- Many individuals who need mental health care do not receive it, highlighting significant access barriers across various populations
- **Inconsistent care quality**
 - Receiving suboptimal mental health treatment
- **Limited treatments**
 - Challenges in specific treatments for diverse individuals can impact effectiveness
- **Emergency care usage**
 - A higher reliance on emergency rooms indicates a lack of accessible long-term care options

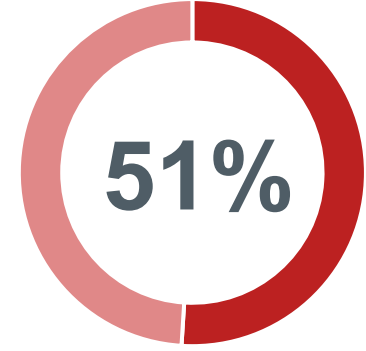
HOLIDAY MENTAL HEALTH IMPACT



Feel pressure
to overspend,
overcommit, or meet
family expectations



Cite financial strain
as their top
holiday stressor



Feel lonely
during the holidays,
even when with
loved ones

COPING WITH HOLIDAY STRESS



- **Take media breaks**
 - Step away from overwhelming news stories and social media when they increase anxiety or distress
- **Allow yourself downtime**
 - Schedule regular breaks and recognize when you need to pause and recharge
- **Recognize when you need support**
 - Pay attention to warning signs and reach out for professional help when needed
- **Nourish your body**
 - Prioritize meditation, balanced nutrition, regular exercise, and adequate sleep

COPING WITH GRIEF DURING THE HOLIDAYS

- **Acknowledge your emotions**
 - It's normal to have a wide spectrum of feelings; allow yourself to feel them without guilt or judgment
- **Honor your loved ones' memories**
 - Establish traditions that pay tribute to them, or reminisce about them with others
- **Adapt or create new traditions**
 - You're allowed to change or forgo existing traditions; do what feels right
- **Prioritize self-care**
 - Get adequate rest, maintain balanced nutrition, and engage in activities that provide comfort and peace



COPING WITH HOLIDAY BLUES

The holidays can bring mixed emotions

It's common to feel sadness, stress, or loneliness amid the cheer

1

Acknowledge seasonal depression

- Embrace light exposure, maintain routines, and prioritize self-care

2

Combat loneliness

- Proactively connect with loved ones
- Volunteer for causes you care about
- Take part in community activities

3

Manage expectations

- Focus on what's achievable and meaningful to you
- New traditions can be just as joyful as old ones

4

Find deeper meaning

- Practice gratitude
- Reflect on personal values
- Contribute to others
- Engage in activities that bring quiet joy

MINDFUL BREATHING EXERCISE

- **Find your space**
 - Sit or lie down in a comfortable position
 - Place one hand on your chest and one on your abdomen
- **Inhale (4 counts)**
 - Slowly inhale through your nose
 - Imagine calm energy entering your body
- **Hold (7 counts)**
 - Hold your breath
 - Notice the quiet stillness within you
- **Exhale (8 counts)**
 - Slowly exhale completely through your mouth, making a soft “whoosh” sound
 - Release all tension and negativity
- **Repeat**
 - Repeat this cycle for several minutes, focusing on the sensation of your breath
 - Feel peace washing over you



**This simple practice can be done
anywhere, any time, to reduce
stress, improve focus, or simply
reconnect with yourself.
Your well-being matters.**

ASK FOR HELP

- **Seek professional treatment**

- Professional care provides tools and strategies for healing and growth

- **Overcome stigma**

- Don't let shame or self-doubt prevent you from getting the support you deserve

- **Stay connected**

- Avoid isolation by joining support groups and maintaining relationships

- **Access workplace resources**

- Take advantage of employee assistance programs and workplace mental health benefits



KEY TAKEAWAYS



- **Acknowledge holiday stress**
 - Recognize and manage the financial, time, and emotional pressures
- **Address mental health stigma**
 - Combat and overcome flawed beliefs about mental health
- **Understand access disparities**
 - Be aware of the significant gaps in mental health treatment access and quality
- **Practice healthy coping**
 - Take media breaks, rest, prioritize physical nourishment, and know when to ask for help
- **Embrace professional support**
 - Seeking therapy is a sign of strength and crucial for healing

RESOURCES

Books

- Feeling Good
 - David Burns, 2012
- Dare: The New Way to End Anxiety and Stop Panic Attacks Fast
 - Barry McDonagh, 2015
- Burnout: The Secret to Unlocking the Stress Cycle
 - Emily and Amelia Nagoski, 2020

Podcasts

- [The Happiness Lab](#)
- [Therapy Chat](#)
- [Ten Percent Happier](#)

Crisis Lines and Websites

- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**
 - Connects you to trained crisis counselors for mental health emergencies
- **Crisis Text Line**
 - Text HOME to 741741 from anywhere in the US, anytime, about any type of crisis
- **International Association for Suicide Prevention**
 - Global directory of crisis centers and resources

Apps

- [Headspace](#) – [Calm](#)

THANK YOU



**Behavioral Health Services
Employee Assistance and WorkLife Programs**

24 HOURS A DAY

800-222-0364

foh4you.com

