

Dealing with the Holiday Blues

Mental Well-Being

The holiday season is often seen as a time of joy and celebration, but for others, especially caregivers, it can bring challenges, increased responsibilities, and a heightened sense of stress. Juggling caregiving duties during the festive season can be overwhelming, which is why it's important for caregivers to prioritize their mental and emotional well-being during this time.

What can you do to shake the holiday blues?

Communicate Openly

If you are feeling overwhelmed or depressed, don't hesitate to talk about it. Research from NYU's Langone Medical Center suggests that people dealing with depression during the holidays receive more support from family and friends. Take advantage of the holidays to reach out, stay connected, and seek the help you need.

Manage Expectations

It may be impossible to accomplish everything you used to do or want to do during the holiday season. Cut yourself some slack and scale back on activities that might be causing you more stress, like writing holiday cards or making elaborate gifts. Remember that it's OK to prioritize your well-being over unrealistic expectations.

Perform Acts of Kindness

Take your mind off your own troubles by helping others in need. Volunteer at a local soup kitchen, organize a caroling session at a nursing home or children's hospital with friends, or perform any act of kindness for a stranger. Sometimes altruism can be the best medicine for the holiday blues.

Maintain a Healthy Lifestyle

Holiday cookies, treats, and drinks can be tempting, but too much sugar and alcohol can impact both your energy levels and mood. Try to stick to a balanced diet rich in lean meats, leafy greens, whole grains, and good fats. Moderating your indulgences can help you maintain a positive mindset.

Budget Wisely

While holiday shopping can be fun, spending more than you need can stress you out. Be mindful of your budget and avoid the regret of high credit card bills. Thoughtful and meaningful gifts don't have to be expensive, and your loved ones won't love you any less for being financially responsible.

Rediscover Joyful Activities

Reconnect with activities or hobbies you used to like. Whether it's playing a game, watching a favorite TV show or movie, listening to music, or dancing, rekindling past hobbies can bring a sense of familiarity and joy during the holiday season.

Prioritize Self-Care

Being a caregiver doesn't have to be a solo job. Ask your family members to help you in your caregiving responsibilities and carve out some time for yourself. Use this time to wind down and do something that brings you peace and relaxation. Remember to take care of yourself amidst the hustle and bustle.

If you are experiencing more than a transient case of the holiday blues, a persistent feeling of sadness over a long period of time, as well as loss of interest in things that previously brought you joy, notify your primary care physician as soon as possible.

Source: <https://www.vnshealth.org/patient-family-support/health-library/dealing-with-the-holiday-blues/>

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