

COPING WITH LONELINESS DURING THE HOLIDAYS



You're not alone if you are expecting, preparing or even dreading the thought of experiencing loneliness during the holidays. Many people spend the holidays alone. Whether you are alone by choice or unforeseen circumstances, it is natural to feel a sense of loneliness.

It's OK to feel lonely. Loneliness can help you gain insight into what you need at a particular moment. What's important is that you don't let feelings of loneliness lead to unhealthy coping mechanisms. Keep the present in perspective. New traditions, even those you partake in alone, can be just as fulfilling as fondly remembered old ones.

The tips on the next page can help you cope with loneliness during the holidays. If you're feeling overwhelmed by emotions and need mental health support we can help.

THREE WAYS TO COPE WITH LONELINESS DURING THE HOLIDAYS

1. Do things that bring you joy.

Give yourself permission to seek out moments of pleasure. Focus on the things you really enjoy. This could be a favorite hobby, reading a good book, taking a relaxing bath, going to a movie, eating a delicious meal, or learning something new. Doing something for yourself is a form of self-care. Consider creating a holiday season bucket list of things you want to do. Make cookies. Take a holiday light tour. Go for a sleigh ride.

2. Reframe your expectations.

Social media, TV shows, movies and commercials present the expectation that the holidays are about being surrounded by family, feeling bright and jolly, full of mirth and joy. It's easy to feel as though you're not measuring up.

Looking at the holiday season from a different angle may help you remove the emotional pressure. Reassess your expectations for how the season will go instead of how others say it should go. Decide for yourself what a particular holiday is about. If you're going through a difficult time, you could see the holidays as a time to take care of yourself and heal.

3. Share your time.

Volunteering is a proven buffer against stress and depressive symptoms. Sharing your time with others can be particularly effective in decreasing feelings of isolation. When we focus on helping others it helps us feel better about ourselves. You might donate your time at a local animal or homeless shelter, donate clothing you no longer use, or send someone a card.

Even performing small acts of kindness, like giving someone a compliment, paying for a stranger's coffee, offering to pick up groceries for a neighbor, or chatting with someone you haven't seen in a while can go a long way towards making both you and them feel more connected.

If you would like more information, education, or would like to discuss support this holiday season, please reach out to your provider or a member of our team. Your provider or we will provide you with ideas and support to keep you healthy and safe this holiday season.

WE CAN HELP.

Our outpatient program is designed to meet the unique needs of older adults experiencing depression and/or anxiety related to life changes that are often associated with aging. Anyone can make a referral to our program, including self-referrals, provider referrals, or community referrals.

Call us today at