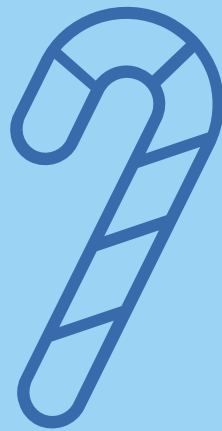
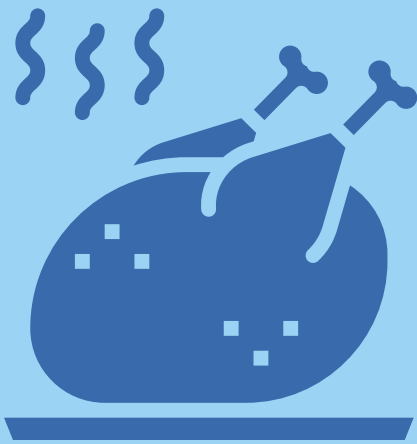




TIPS TO AVOID THE HOLIDAY BLUES



Information is provided by the Mohawk Council of
Akwesasne Wholistic Health and Wellness Program

TIPS TO AVOID THE HOLIDAY BLUES

The holiday season usually is a joyful time. Many Akwesasne families look forward to gathering with relatives and friends, exchanging gifts, and celebrating traditions. In a normal year, the holidays can even be a bit stressful.

However, the on-going COVID-19 Pandemic and social distancing have brought a new kind of stress to the holiday season. Worries and anxiety about the increase in cases of COVID-19 and its impact can be overwhelming, especially at what is supposed to be a “happy” time of year. Although the past year is very different than any we have experienced before, it is possible to find some peace and even joy during this time.

Our heightened anticipation and excitement for our upcoming HOLIDAY SEASON may turn into feelings and levels of depression, commonly called THE HOLIDAY BLUES.

Symptoms of THE HOLIDAY BLUES can include headaches, insomnia, uneasiness, anxiety, sadness, loneliness, and unnecessary conflict with family and friends. Part of what happens in the holiday season, in terms of mood changes and anxiety, may occur because of the stressfulness of holiday events. Overdrinking, overeating, and fatigue may also contribute to THE HOLIDAY BLUES becoming an unwelcome holiday guest.

The demands of the season are many: shopping, cooking, travel, houseguests, family reunions, office parties, more shopping and extra financial burden.

Here are some tools to help you prevent or manage THE HOLIDAY BLUES. We hope these tips help you and your loved ones enjoy the holiday season.



TIPS TO AVOID THE HOLIDAY BLUES

1. Be reasonable & realistic with your schedule. The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like how it was pre-pandemic. Even though your holiday plans may look and feel different again this year, find creative ways to celebrate.
2. Decide upon your priorities and stick to them. Organize your time wisely. Do not overbook yourself into a state of exhaustion - this can make us more cranky & irritable.
3. Remember, no matter what our plans, the holidays do not automatically take away feelings of aloneness, sadness, frustration, anger, and fear.
4. Set aside grievances and differences. Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all of your expectations. Set aside grievances until a more appropriate time for discussion. And be understanding if others get upset or distressed when something goes awry. Chances are they're feeling the effects of holiday stress and depression, too.
5. Use technology to your advantage. FaceTime or ZOOM with family and friends to keep family rituals going while staying within our social bubbles. Set a date and time for everyone to connect virtually to make cookies together, decorate the tree, say a prayer, have a meal, or open presents together.



TIPS TO AVOID THE HOLIDAY BLUES

6. Feeling like you are under scheduled or under planned for the holidays? Volunteer to serve at holiday community events. Work with any number of groups that help underprivileged or hospitalized children at the holidays. There are many, many opportunities for doing community service. No one can be depressed when they are helping out their community.
7. Plan unstructured, low-cost fun holiday activities: free community events, window-shopping, or viewing of holiday decorations. Drive around to see people's Christmas lighting on their homes, take a trip to the countryside, etc.--the opportunities are endless.
8. If you drink, do not let the holidays become a reason for over-indulging and hangovers. This will exacerbate your depression and anxiety. Contrary to popular opinion, alcohol is a depressant.
9. Give yourself a break; create time for yourself to do the things YOU love and need to do for your physical and mental wellness: aerobic exercise, yoga, massage, spiritual practices, taking long fast walks or any activity that calms you down and gives you a better perspective on what is important in your life.
10. Most of all, if you find yourself feeling blue just remember: The sky is partly sunny, and the glass is half full. The power is yours. Revel in the things you are most grateful for, and pride yourself in having courage to face each new day with hope and determination.



THE POSITIVITY PLEDGE



Today I awaken as my best self, filled with focus and resolve. I will rise above my challenges.

For more information regarding THE HOLIDAY BLUES, please contact the Wholistic Health & Wellness Program at (613) 575-2341 Ext. 3115



EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBER LIST

WHOLISTIC HEALTH & WELLNESS PROGRAM

613-5752341 ext. 3115

AKWESASNE FAMILY WELLNESS PROGRAM

613-937-4322 (24 hour line)

AKWESASNE MOHAWK POLICE

613-575-2000

AKWESASNE MOHAWK AMBULANCE

613-575-2000

SAINT REGIS MOHAWK TRIBAL POLICE

518-358-9200

SAINT REGIS MOHAWK MENTAL HEALTH

518-358-3145 (direct line)

CORNWALL HOSPITAL

WITHDRAWAL MANAGEMENT

613-938-8506

NORTHSTAR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Citizens Advocates

209 Park St. Malone, NY 12953

518-483-3261

Mental Health & Substance Abuse

MASSENA MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

1 Hospital Drive Massena, NY 13662

315-764-1711

CLAXTON HEPBURN MEDICAL CENTER

214 King St. Ogdensburg, NY 13669

ST. LAWRENCE PSYCHIATRIC CENTER

1 Chimney Drive Ogdensburg, NY 13669

315-541-2001

CHAMPLAIN VALLEY PHYSICIANS HOSPITAL

75 Beekman St. Plattsburgh, NY 12901

NATIONAL SUICIDE

PREVENTION LIFELINE

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

FIRST NATIONS AND INUIT

HOPE FOR WELLNESS HELP LINE

1-855-242-3310

KIDS HELPLINE

1-800-668-6868

MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS HOTLINE

1-866-996-0991

