

Tips and Tools to Deal with Holiday Blues

The holiday season can be a great time to connect with family and friends, but it can also be a time of stress, anxiety, disappointment, and sadness. There are some strategies we can share with our students to help manage their feelings, expectations, and behaviors over the holidays. The tips and tools below are great to share during health-education classes, student assemblies, dorm meetings, or as part of individual meetings with counselors and Health and Wellness staff.



Get enough exercise and eat healthy foods

Involve recreation and cafeteria staff in promoting healthy lifestyles, foods, and activities over winter break.



You can't control the actions or words of others, only your response

Encourage students to take a step back and think before acting. Practice potential scenarios the student may face with family and friends, and healthy ways to respond.

Tool: [Psychoeducational Group Activities: Emotional Awareness](#)



Get enough sleep

Educate on the positive emotional health benefits of getting enough sleep.

Tool: [Sleep...Are you getting enough?](#)



Stay Sober

Maintaining sobriety can be very tough for some students over the holidays. Engage the TEAP program to help students at risk develop a relapse prevention plan.

Tool: [TEAP Resources](#)



Find Enjoyment

Encourage students to focus on the positive, and focus on gratitude. Talk with students about giving to others like volunteering at a shelter, or helping to feed the homeless.

Tool: [Psychoeducational Group Activities: Gratitude Exercise](#)



Keep Expectations Low

Remind our students that no family is perfect, no partner is perfect, and no holiday is perfect. Some things may not go as planned, and there may be bumps and mess-ups, but it won't be the end of the world.



Reduce Stress

Teach students simple stress-reduction tools, like how to remove themselves from a situations and how to breathe deeply. Plan ways they can cope when things get too stressful.

Tools: [One Mind PsyberGuide](#) (mental health/relaxation apps)
[-Staying on Top of Stress Brochure](#)
[-Ho Ho Uh Oh! How to Cope with the Holiday Blues](#)
[-Cope Up!](#)



Ask for Help

Let students know it is OK to ask for help. If they find themselves sad and lonely and can't seem to shake the feelings, reach out to a friend or family member to share their feelings. If there is not a friend or family member, contact the center to speak with someone in Health and Wellness, a counselor, or trusted staff member.

Tool: [988 Crisis Line](#) (English and Spanish resources)
& [Provide Center/Staff Contact Info to Students](#)