



*healthy choices*



*live well. be well.*

# Finding Joy in the Holidays

While the holidays are a time for celebration, they can also be a source of grief, anxiety and sadness. Readyng ourselves to cope with holiday stress requires a mindset shift. One way to make the holidays happier is to focus on joy.

## Prioritizing your mental health and wellbeing

### Focus on what's important:

Sometimes holiday plans don't go as expected. Focus on what really matters to you and release the rest. This helps you stay centered on joy and reduces unnecessary stress.

### Prioritize self-care:

Deep breathing, exercising and setting limits on commitments during the holidays can increase self-awareness. Taking care of yourself ensures you have the energy and positivity to enjoy the season.

### Stay connected:

Sharing stories, helping others and being present can strengthen relationships. This allows you and others to laugh, feel supported and overcome feelings of anxiety, sadness, loneliness and grief.

### Check in with yourself:

Acknowledging and validating your feelings can help you address negative emotions and make space for positive ones. Taking a step back can help ensure you don't become overwhelmed.

### Engage in self-care activities:

Remembering to prioritize activities that enhance your wellbeing, such as exercise, adequate sleep, nutritious food, reading or a relaxing bath can help you find moments of joy during the holiday busyness.

### Volunteer and connect:

Helping others can be a powerful way to lift your spirits. Volunteering at events like food, toy and winter clothing drives can help you meet new people, overcome feelings of loneliness and increase your overall positivity and health.

### Create meaningful traditions:

Establishing new ways to celebrate can bring comfort and joy. Whether it's celebrating at a different location, preparing a special dish or honoring the memory of a loved one, creating unique memories can foster a positive outlook.

Suicide is one of the leading causes of death for all ages. In 2024, suicide was among the top 9 leading causes of death for people ages 10-64. In 2022, suicide was the 2nd leading cause of death for ages 10-14 and 25 – 34. In Illinois, suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for ages 10-34 and 6th leading cause for ages 35-54.

During November and December, people can be impacted by "holiday blues" when holidays can bring painful reminders and difficulties for survivors of loss and those struggling with mental health.



Understanding the issues concerning suicide and mental health is an important way to take part in suicide prevention, help others in crisis, and change the conversation around suicide.

## ***If you need to talk, the 988 Lifeline is here.***



At the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, we understand that life's challenges can sometimes be difficult. Whether you're facing mental health struggles, emotional distress, alcohol or drug use concerns, or just need someone to talk to, our caring counselors are here for you. You are not alone.

### ***24/7 Crisis Hotline: 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline***

***988lifeline.org Call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org. Veterans, press 1 when calling.***

### **Member Assistance Program (MAP)**

YOUR WORKPLACE WELLNESS & MAP PARTNER

Counselors are available, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

H&H Health Associates are here to help with counseling, resources, guidance and support.

1.800.832.8302

Call the Welfare Fund office at 314.835.2700 for more information.

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