Coping with the Holiday Blues

The holiday season has arrived, and, for many, that means enjoying time with family and friends and gathering to observe Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, Bodhi Day, and other religious holidays.

Many look forward to the month of December and all the festivities it brings; but for some, the holidays are anything but merry. Unrealistic expectations, inability to be with family, missing loved ones who have passed away, and other stressors can bring about the "Holiday Blues" – temporary feelings of depression and anxiety during the holidays that can be associated with extra stress or even memories that accompany the season.

You can help your members cope with the Holiday Blues by encouraging them to:

- Stick to their normal routines as much as possible
- Get enough sleep
- Eat a nutritious diet
- Take time for themselves, but don't isolate themselves.
- Spend time with supportive, caring people
- Get exercise – even if it's just a short walk
- Set reasonable expectations and goals for holiday activities, such as shopping, cooking, entertaining, attending parties or sending holiday cards
- Listen to music or find other ways to relax
- Participate in a volunteer effort or help a local charity
- Attend worship services
- Seek out opportunities to add laughter to their day.

Learn about the health benefits of laughter:
- The Healing Benefits of Humor and Laughter - va.gov
- Stress relief from laughter? It's no joke - Mayo Clinic

Learn more about the Holiday Blues
- Brochure: Information for you if you're feeling a bit blue this holiday season.
- Tips for Managing the Holiday Blues | NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness

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