

December is National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month

People celebrate the holidays by spending time with their loved ones. However, the festivities that accompany this time of year also increases the likelihood that a driver will get behind the wheel while they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Fatalities that occur during the holidays is most often the result of impaired drivers on the roadways. These numbers especially skyrocket the week sandwiched between the holidays, Christmas and New Year's Day, which results in about 300 people losing their lives to drunk driving fatalities annually. This is why December is designated as National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month, where the time is used to raise awareness of the dangers of driving under the influence, especially to people who are between the ages of 21 and 34 since this is the population most likely to die from impaired driving.

Drinking alcohol or involvement in drug use can cause a person's thinking, reasoning, and muscle coordination to become impaired, which are all abilities needed when it comes to properly operating a vehicle. Even the decision to drink one glass of alcohol before driving is enough to put you and others in danger of being involved in a vehicle collision. The legal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) a person can drive with is .08 and even at this level, there's a number of side effects a person could begin to experience including reduced ability to concentrate, short-term memory loss, poor management of speed control, and impaired perception. The higher your BAC gets, the consequences start to become more serious too, leading to loss of vehicle control and severe impairment of being able to process visual and auditory information.

Please celebrate this month responsibly and avoid operating any vehicles while under the influence. The choices you make towards this matter not only will have an impact on your life, but could affect the lives of other people as well. To reduce incidences of drunk driving this holiday season, you may want to consider finding someone to be a designated driver or coordinating a ride home if you know beforehand that you won't be sober to get behind the wheel.

Source

"National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month". *tss safety*, 6 Dec. 2022.
<https://tss-safety.com/national-drunk-and-drugged-driving-prevention-month/>. Web. 21 Nov. 2023.

Youth: A Resource Guide for Professionals, Families and Communities

If you or a loved one are experiencing a crisis, or any other problems, contact us at (715) 779-3741 to begin services or to help answer any questions you may have. Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00am -4:30pm

If this is an emergency, call 911, or if you are experiencing a mental health crisis, call the Bayfield County Mental Health Crisis Line 24 hours a day at 1 (866) 317-9362.



Dial 988

If you are facing a suicidal crisis or are in emotional distress, dial 988 to contact the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. The lifeline will connect you to a local crisis center, where you'll talk to a crisis counselor who can provide emotional support and can help find crisis resources for you as well. This lifeline offers free, confidential support—24 hours a day, 7 days a week

CERTIFIED PEER SPECIALIST SERVICES

A Peer Specialist is an individual with lived recovery experience who has been trained and certified to help their peers gain hope and move forward in their own recovery. By sharing experiences, peers bring hope to people in recovery and promote a sense of belonging within the community (SAMSHA)

PEER SUPPORT IS..

- Delivered by individuals who have common lived experiences.
- People with mental health and/or substance use disorders have a unique power to help one another based on shared connection and deep understanding of this experience.
- Peer Specialists offer support, strength, and hope to their peers, which allows for personal growth, wellness, and recovery. (SAMSHA)
- Peer support is ongoing, available, and flexible.
- Peer support enhances other health care services by creating emotional, social and practical assistance necessary for staying healthy and managing. (Peers for Progress)

WHAT SERVICES DO PEER SPECIALISTS PROVIDE?

Peer specialists support their peers both individually and in small groups.

- Help peers create individual service plans based on recovery goals and steps to achieve those goals
- Use recovery-oriented tools to help their peers address challenges
- Assist others to build their own self-directed wellness plans
- Support peers in their decision-making
- Offer a sounding board and a shoulder to lean on...and more!

PROVIDING HOPE

Modeling recovery, engaging, and connecting are just some of the ways peers make a difference in the lives of others. The bond that is essential in peer support means that both the person giving support and the person receiving support benefit from the relationship. (MHA)

SERVICES INCLUDE:

Education and skill- building

- ⇒ Wellness planning
- ⇒ Crisis planning
- ⇒ Self- advocacy skills
- ⇒ Budgeting

Services that help

- ⇒ Identify strengths and use the strengths to reach goals
- ⇒ Identify and overcome barriers to participate in community resources

Connect with resources

- ⇒ Visiting community resources to familiarize
- ⇒ Teaching and modeling skills needed to utilize resources
- ⇒ Wrap around services
- ⇒ Cultural wellness and healing

Building relationships and encouraging community based activities

- ⇒ Employment
- ⇒ Relationships
- ⇒ Physical activity
- ⇒ Self- directed hobbies

Using SAMHSA's Eight Dimensions of Wellness to guide a holistic approach to recovery, a Certified Peer Specialist will work with you to discuss meaningful goals in one or more of these important dimensions; financial, social, spiritual, occupational, physical, intellectual, and emotional. Each of the dimensions contribute to your overall wellness and individual recovery.

The Holiday Blues

Being overwhelmed by feelings of sadness during the holiday season—typically the months of November and December—is what's commonly known as the holiday blues or holiday depression.

While the holidays are usually seen as a time to be happy and rejoice, not everyone feels this way. For some people, this time of the year can be filled with painful reflection, sadness, loneliness, anxiety, and depression.

Even people who have a love for the holidays can feel blue due to how hectic and busy this season can turn out to be. The expectations and demands that come with the holidays can put a lot of stress on people, resulting in physical and mental exhaustion.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), people with mental health conditions are a population prone to experiencing the holiday blues, as 64% of people with an existing mental illness see their condition worsen once the holidays come around.

Read below to learn more about the holiday blues including symptoms, causes, and ways to cope; this information comes from the website, verywellmind (<https://www.verywellmind.com/holiday-blues-4771716>).



Signs & symptoms to look out for

The most common symptom that people encounter because of holiday depression is a prolonged or continuous feeling of sadness that begins because of the holiday season. The feeling itself is one that may vary in intensity and duration for each individual. For example, even people who periodically feel down, can still experience moments where they feel more upbeat.

If you notice any of the following signs, you may have holiday depression:

- Changes to your appetite or weight
- Depressed or agitated mood
- Difficulty sleeping
- Feelings of worthlessness, guilt, or unimportance
- Feeling more tired and worn out than what's usual
- Feeling tense, uneasy, or anxious
- Inability to concentrate
- No longer experiencing feelings of pleasure towards things you once enjoyed

Causes

There are a multitude of reasons why a person may find themselves experiencing holiday depression. Possible causes include:

- **Not getting enough sleep:** A hectic and packed schedule because of the holidays can result in a lack of sleep, which can contribute to higher levels of stress.
- **Excess food consumption and alcohol use:** In times of stress and sadness, sometimes people rely on unhealthy habits to cope. Reliance on drinking alcohol and overeating isn't an effective way to deal with stressors, instead it may make the symptoms for the holiday blues even more pronounced.
- **Financial struggles:** You can overextend yourself financially this holiday season. If you spend more money than what you initially were prepared to spend, this can add on the extra burden of financial stress.
- **Isolation:** Spending the holiday season alone, without family and friends can lead to feelings of loneliness.
- **Unrealistic expectations:** Sometimes setting your hopes high for the holiday season can backfire, leaving you overwhelmed by holiday stress and sadness instead. There's often the expectation that everyone is supposed to feel nonstop joy and cheer during the holidays, which can often put pressure on people to feel how they believe everyone else does during this time of year, becoming another stressor for the person to worry about.

Because of the new year that follows right after the holidays, people may begin to reflect on how the past year had gone for them and remember moments of regret or failure they experienced. When people think back on goals and things they wanted to achieve, they may feel upset if the expectations they had for themselves weren't met.

Seeking treatment

It's very unlikely your doctor will prescribe medications to you for symptoms of holiday depression, unless you already have a major depression diagnosis. Quite often holiday depression is something that can be managed by adopting lifestyle changes and finding social support. If this is the case, your doctor may send you to a mental health professional for psychotherapy.

Though the holiday blues usually have fairly mild symptoms and last for a short duration of time, talking to a mental health professional does help. If you choose to go to a therapist, they might try cognitive behavioral therapy, in order to identify negative thinking patterns responsible for feelings of sadness and depression, they'll then work with you to replace those thoughts with ones that help you to feel more positive emotions like happiness instead.

Receiving therapy can help a person to develop an array of skills that can be used not only for managing short-term symptoms of the holiday blues, but long-term symptoms as well. Some of the skills that can be strengthened from participating in therapy include stress management, communication, and relationship skills.

What you can do to cope with the Holiday Blues

In addition to talking to a doctor or mental health professional about what symptoms of the holiday blues you are experiencing, there's a number of other things that you can do to help make the holidays more bearable.

Drink in moderation

Alcohol is a depressant, meaning that drinking too much can magnify any negative feelings that are currently plaguing you. This doesn't mean you should pressure yourself into going cold turkey though, instead consider limiting your consumption and don't turn to alcohol as a means to try escaping or avoid thinking about difficult emotions.

Don't distance yourself from others

One of the major risk factors for social isolation is depression. The problem with being sad is that people find themselves wanting to stay at home and be alone. And if you choose to isolate yourself apart from the presence of family during the holidays, it can be difficult to find the motivation to reach out for social support.

Start exercising regularly

Trying to stick with and maintain a workout routine can be difficult when you feel down, but by engaging in regular physical activity, you'll notice the role it has in preventing and reducing the symptoms of depression.

So while being active can be a challenge if you are stressed, busy, or sad, it's important to keep in mind that you don't need to glue yourself to a exercise machine, in order to reap the benefits of physical activity.

Don't say "Yes" to everything

Around the holidays you may find more people coming to you seeking your help and making demands that fill up your schedule. During the holiday season, invites to parties can easily become stressful social events that you feel obligated to attend and small favors asked by friends can balloon into a much larger project than you first anticipated. To avoid overcommitting, come up with some limits you'll stick to and learn how to say "no" to others.

Set aside time for yourself

Even with how hectic the holidays can be, find some time to relax. While a 15 to 20 minute break doesn't seem that significant, if you do a relaxing activity you like, it'll help to uplift your mood and also do wonders for your stress levels. You can spend your leisure time taking a nap, reading a book, listening to music, taking a bath, watching TV, or doing some other activity you have fondness for.

Try to have realistic expectations about the holidays

Being excited about the holiday season and making plans for what you want to do is perfectly fine; however, it's important that the expectations you set for yourself are realistic and reachable.

Holidays can change, just like people do. Kids grow, people move, and new people can enter into our lives. The key is to focus on connections we have with others, start new traditions, and remember past holiday memories while enjoying the time we have right now. Instead of trying to do everything picture perfect this holiday season, focus your attention towards living in the moment and spending time with your loved ones.

The Importance of Handwashing

One of the best ways to protect yourself and your family from getting sick this winter is by washing your hands. In celebration of December being National Handwashing Awareness Week, which is December 5-11, here are some handwashing tips; the information below comes from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([click here to read original article](#)).



How germs can spread

Washing your hands can help you stay healthy, as it prevents respiratory and diarrheal infections from spreading. Germs are likely to spread from person to person or be picked up from surfaces onto people when you do the following:

- Touch areas of your face like your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Use unwashed hands to prepare or eat food/drinks
- Touch surfaces or objects that a lot of people previously came in contact with
- Blow your nose, cough, or sneeze into hands, then go on to touch other people's hands or common objects right after

Key times to wash your hands

If you want yourself and your loved ones to be healthy, you can do this by routinely washing your hands. You should wash your hands during these key times when you are likely to pick up and spread germs:

- Before, during, and after food preparation
- Before and after consuming food
- Before and after caring for someone who's sick (vomiting or diarrhea)
- Before or after providing treatment to a cut or wound
- After using a toilet
- After changing diapers or cleaning up after a child, who had been on the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching animal feed, animal waste, or the animal itself
- After handling food or treats meant for pets
- After touching any kind of garbage

Follow these five steps to wash your hands

Not only is washing your hands easy to do, but it's actually one of the most effective ways to prevent germs from spreading. Clean hands can put a stop to germs being spread from person to person and within our communities—this includes places like people's homes, the workplace, schools, and childcare centers.

Every time you wash your hands, try to follow these five steps:

- 1) Get your hands wet with clean, running water, turn the tap off, and apply some soap.
- 2) Rub your hands together to lather the soap. Don't just lather your palms, but also the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under the tips of your nails.
- 3) Aim to scrub your hands with the soap for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? It takes about 20 seconds to hum the "Happy Birthday to You" song from beginning to end twice.
- 4) Turn on the clean, running water to wash your hands.
- 5) Dry your hands with a clean towel or let them air dry.

Use hand sanitizer when you don't have access to soap and water

For clean hands, using soap and water is the best way you can get rid of germs in most situations. If you are not in the immediate vicinity of a place that has soap and water, an alternative you can use instead is an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially ones that contain at least 60% alcohol. To find a hand sanitizer that meets this requirement, read the product label until you find one that contains the right level of alcohol in it.

There are many situations that hand sanitizers can reduce the number of germs on you; however, it's also true that:

- Hand sanitizers do not have the capability to get rid of every germ
- Hand sanitizers are less effective when hands are viably greasy or dirty
- Hand sanitizers might not get rid of harmful chemicals, especially if you have pesticides or heavy metals on your hands

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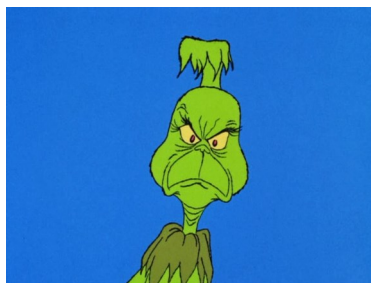


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OR VISIT **988lifeline.org** TO CHAT

•REMORSE•

Name it to Tame it



If you have ever seen the TV special, "The Grinch Who Stole Christmas!" you probably know what "remorse" is. The story revolves around the Grinch, the main character, who hates Christmas due to all the noise and fuss the holiday receives from the residents of Whoville, who live right below his cave located on Mt. Crumpit. While the Grinch confides in his dog, Max how much he loathes Christmas, he gets an idea of how to stop Christmas from coming to Whoville, once and for all. His idea is to masquerade as Santa and steal all the Whos Christmas decorations, food, and presents, believing that without the material possessions this will break the Whos spirits and they will be unable to celebrate Christmas. However, even with the Grinch being able to successfully pull off this plan, he finds that he has failed, as the Whos sing "Welcome Christmas" despite the Grinch taking everything associated with the holiday away from them. The Grinch then comes to realize that Christmas doesn't revolve around material possessions, but instead is a time of showing kindness and good will to others. This allows the Grinch to see the errors of his ways and he begins to feel remorseful about stealing all the Whos possessions, resolving to return everything.

Before he can do so though, the sleigh with the stolen items begins to slide down Mt. Crumpit. Luckily, the Grinch gets ahold of the sleigh before it can disappear off the mountain top. At first, the Grinch has a hard time keeping the sleigh from crashing down; however, due to the Grinch's strong remorse over the situation and want to make things right, his heart grows three sizes that day, giving him the strength of 10 Grinches plus two and he's able to save the sleigh. The story ends with the Grinch returning all the things he stole and the Whos inviting him to take part in their Christmas festivities. This is a great example of remorse—as it's a key emotion felt by the Grinch, helping him to realize what he did to the Whos was wrong and upon coming to this conclusion, he does what he can to fix his mistake.

To learn more about remorse, including tips of how to overcome remorse and the importance of sincerely apologizing to another person, visit the links below:

<https://psychcentral.com/blog/stop-beating-yourself-up-8-tips-to-overcoming-remorse#1>

And

<https://www.verywellmind.com/how-to-apologize-more-sincerely-3144467>