



Depression and Bipolar
Support Alliance

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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'Tis the Season to Be Depressed?

Chicago, IL-- It's December and it's Saturday morning, do you feel energized and ready to start the day? Do you feel nostalgic and lonely -- and just can't get motivated? Or are you overwhelmed with despair and feel like staying under the covers all day?

While the holiday season is supposed to be a time of joy, celebration and good will -- for many people, it's a time for feelings of sadness, loneliness and isolation. Anyone is susceptible to holiday depression, regardless of age, gender or background. And there are many reasons for depression during the holiday season. For many people, holiday activities are added to all of their other responsibilities that may include both work and family.

Holidays are also referred to as a time to be with family. However, many individuals don't live within what was once considered a "traditional" family setting. Divorce, death, separation, remarriage can cause people to feel a real disconnect with the holiday season. And additional stress, fatigue, spending, unrealistic expectations and pressure can lead to a season that's not too merry.

If you suspect that you may be depressed or have already been diagnosed with depression, it may be a real struggle to keep your life on track -- not only during the holidays but especially during the winter when there are much fewer hours of daylight.

Signs of Depression include:

- Prolonged sadness or unexplained crying spells
- Significant changes in appetite and sleep patterns
- Worry, anger, irritability or anxiety
- Loss of energy, lethargy
- Feelings of guilt or hopelessness
- Inability to take pleasure in former interests
- Excessive consumption of alcohol or use of chemical substances
- Thoughts of death or suicide

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If you experience these symptoms for more than two weeks or if any of these symptoms interfere with work or family activities, contact your doctor.

The following are some tips to help you cope with depression during the holidays:

- **Keep your expectations manageable** by setting realistic goals. One person can only do so much. Don't put your entire focus on one or two days – spread out your activities and lessen the stress! Set limits on your time, energy and spending!
- **Focus on the present.** Don't dwell on "yesterday" – try and look toward the future while keeping your attention on the present. Don't expect to feel completely happy, grateful and joyful throughout the holidays. There may be those inevitable moments of fatigue, anxiety or depression – try not to let them throw you completely off course.
- **Make the holiday your own.** Create a new tradition that has personal meaning to YOU. Take part in a "Buy Nothing Day" or celebrate the winter solstice.
- **Watch what you eat.** If you struggle with depression during the holidays, say "no" to excessively rich foods and alcohol. Get up and walk away from the table. Too much sugar and caffeine can interfere with normal moods and contribute to emotional imbalance.
- **Take time to exercise.** If it's too cold outside for brisk walk – walk through the mall before the stores open. Exercise can help lift your mood.
- **Relax!** Take time for yourself. Holidays can mean over-stimulation, which can trigger depressive or manic symptoms.

For more information on depression or bipolar disorder, contact the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance at **800-826-3632** or log on to www.DBSAlliance.org.

The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) is the nation's leading patient-directed organization focusing on depression and bipolar disorder. The organization, which has more than 1,000 support groups nationwide, fosters an understanding about the impact and management of these life-threatening illnesses by providing up-to-date, scientifically-based tools and information. Assisted by a 65-member scientific advisory board, comprised of the leading researchers and clinicians in the field of mood disorders, DBSA supports research to promote more timely diagnosis, develop more effective and tolerable treatments and discover a cure. More than 4 million receive information and assistance each year.

For more information about DBSA, please visit: www.dbsalliance.org or call: **800/826-3632**.

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