

HealthProCHOICES

A newsletter for participants in the Health Professionals' Services Program (HPSP)

November 2019



“Gratitude is the inward feeling of kindness received. Thankfulness is the natural impulse to express that feeling. Thanksgiving is the following of that impulse.” – Henry Van Dyke

Upcoming Testing Holidays

The following Oregon observed holidays are test exemptions days on which you do not need to check to see if you need to test:

Thanksgiving Day - Thursday, November 28 and Friday, November 29	New Year's Day - Wednesday, January 1
Christmas Day - Wednesday, December 25	

Holiday Travel

The holidays are quickly approaching. Please remember that we require two weeks notice of travel plans so we can identify testing sites. Remember that we need zip codes and dates of travel. Also, please remember to carry your paper chain of custody forms with you on your travels. Get your requests in early if you have already made your holiday plans.

In Memory

Kerry Speed, MA, CADC III, MAC, QMHP passed last month. Kerry was a group monitoring consultant and periodic monitoring consultant. She owned and operated Juniper Behavioral Consulting. Kerry completed her Masters of Arts in Addiction & Mental Health Counseling, Advanced Practice from the Hazelden Betty Ford Graduate School of Addiction Studies and worked in Minnesota as a Primary Therapist before moving to Oregon. Kerry and her talent are missed.

HPSP Outreach

The HPSP Team is scheduling informational sessions on HPSP. If the administrators of your health care workplace are interested in learning more about HPSP, please ask them to contact Christopher Hamilton, Ph.D. ((503) 802-9813;chamilton@reliantbh.com) for more information or to schedule a meeting.

Upcoming Events

IDAA 2020

The next **International Doctors in Alcoholics Anonymous** will be August 5-9, 2020 in Spokane, Washington. For more information please visit www.idaa.org.



Health Professionals' Services Program
www.rbhmonitoring.com

HPSP: 888.802.2843

Holiday Depression and Stress

Source: National Mental Health Association

The holiday season is a time full of joy, cheer, parties, and family gatherings. However, for many people, it is a time of self-evaluation, loneliness, reflection on past failures, and anxiety about an uncertain future.

What Causes Holiday Blues?

Many factors can cause the “holiday blues”: stress, fatigue, unrealistic expectations, over-commercialization, financial constraints, and the inability to be with one’s family and friends. The demands of shopping, parties, family reunions, and house guests also contribute to feelings of tension. People who do not become depressed may develop other stress responses, such as: headaches, over-eating, and difficulty sleeping. Even more people experience post-holiday let down after January 1. This can result from disappointments during the preceding months compounded with the excess fatigue and stress.



Coping with Stress and Depression During the Holidays

- Keep expectations for the holiday season manageable. Try to set realistic goals for yourself. Pace yourself. Organize your time. Make a list and prioritize the important activities. Be realistic about what you can and cannot do. Do not put entire focus on just one day (i.e., Thanksgiving Day) remember it is a season of holiday sentiment and activities can be spread out (time-wise) to lessen stress and increase enjoyment.
- Remember the holiday season does not banish reasons for feeling sad or lonely; there is room for these feelings to be present, even if the person chooses not to express them.
- Leave “yesteryear” in the past and look toward the future. Life brings changes. Each season is different and can be enjoyed in its own way. Don’t set yourself up in comparing today with the “good ol’ days.”
- Do something for someone else. Try volunteering some time to help others.
- Enjoy activities that are free, such as driving around to look at holiday decorations; going window shopping without buying; making a snowperson with children.
- Try something new. Celebrate the holidays in a new way.
- Spend time with supportive and caring people. Reach out and make new friends or contact someone you have not heard from for awhile.
- Save time for yourself! Recharge your batteries! Let others share responsibility of activities.

Can Environment Be a Factor?

Recent studies show that some people suffer from seasonal affective disorder (SAD) which results from fewer hours of sunlight as the days grow shorter during the winter months. Phototherapy, a treatment involving a few hours of exposure to intense light, is effective in relieving depressive symptoms in patients with SAD.

Other studies on the benefits of phototherapy found that exposure to early morning sunlight was effective in relieving seasonal depression. Recent findings, however, suggest that patients respond equally well to phototherapy whether or not it is scheduled in the early afternoon. This has practical applications for antidepressant treatment since it allows the use of phototherapy in the workplace as well as the home.

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