

Presenters



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2020 – Perfect Storm of Emotions

- Public health crisis
- Social upheaval over racist systems and racial trauma
- Tense political environment
- Natural disasters
- Personal loss (death, jobs, finances, stability)



Signs of Mental Health Challenges

- Difficulty concentrating
- Feelings of irritability or anger
- Feelings of exhaustion and fatigue
- Feelings of loneliness
- Lack of pleasure in normal activities
- Loss of interest in activities that you normally enjoy
- Sleeping much more or much less than normal
- Trouble making decisions
- Withdrawing from friends and family

Holiday Blues vs. SAD vs. Clinical Depression



Short-term feelings of sadness, anxiety, regret and/or failure that are triggered by the winter holidays.



Mood disorder characterized by symptoms that occur at the same time each year, usually during the darker, shorter days of fall and winter.



Mental disorder characterized by a persistently depressed mood and long-term loss of pleasure or interest in life.

Coping with Holiday Stress

- Be realistic about the holidays.
- Understand that stress and anxiety are natural human responses.
- Share your feelings with someone you trust.
- Give yourself permission to let some things go.
- Keep things in perspective.
- Take care of your physical health.
- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to social media.
- Connect with others.
- Take time every day to enjoy something about the season.
- Know when to ask for help.

Substance Use and the Holidays

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- Impacts of stress on substance use
- Unexpected isolation during the holidays
- Financial strain
- Fatigue



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Many may increase substance use for positive or celebratory reasons as well – this can still have an impact.



Actions for Employers

- Have empathy and give employees grace
- Manage expectations to reduce stress, be flexible with work schedules and encourage PTO use
- Teach employees how to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental distress and substance use
- Talk about it, dispel the stigma –communicate EAP and other resources
- Say thank you and encourage others to give back or volunteer
- Encourage employees to practice self-care and set routines that help us to recharge and get work done safely and effectively

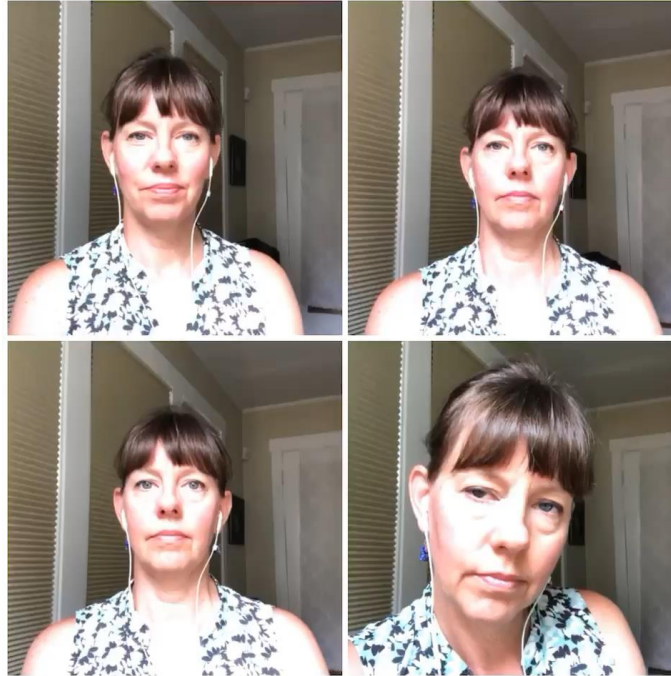


Cliff Saper, PhD

Resources

- **911** for crisis
- **SAMHSA's National Helpline**, 1-800-662-HELP (4357), for individuals and family members facing mental and/or substance use disorders
- **NAMI HelpLine**, 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) or info@nami.org, for peer-support service providing information, resource referrals and support to people living with a mental health disorders
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**, 1-800-273-8255 or chat with someone live through their website at <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>
- **AMITA Heath Behavioral Health Intake**, 1-855-383-2224
- [An Overview of the Holiday Blues](#), and article with tips for managing mood during the holidays
- [Holiday blues: How to support staff separated from family overseas](#)
- [Meditation on Breathing](#)

Meditation on Breathing



Thank you!

Follow up questions? Please contact
impairment@nsc.org!