If you’re dealing with feelings of stress or depression around the holiday season, know that you aren’t alone. Many people experience this, but also know that there are ways to manage your symptoms.

There is a difference between the holiday blues, which typically go away when the holiday season ends, and more severe depression, which lasts longer and interferes with activities of daily living. If the holiday season passes and you’re still feeling depressed or anxious, it’s best to consult with a medical/mental health professional.

Causes of the Holiday Blues include, but are not limited to:
- Pressure to feel merry
- Remembrances of holidays past
- Reminders of loved ones lost
- Loneliness

What are the types of symptoms that you might experience?
The most common symptom of the holiday blues is an increase in sadness. This is true of people who may or may not be dealing with depression already. Other signs of the Holiday Blues are:
- Increased tiredness
- Loss of interest in things that you usually enjoy
- Difficulty concentrating

Tips to deal with the symptoms of the Holiday Blues:
- **Know that it’s ok to feel what you feel** – Don’t fight it; forcing feelings that aren’t there could potentially make it worse.
- **Limit alcohol** – Excessive drinking can affect your mood and increase any negative feelings.
- **Get plenty of sleep** – Being well-rested can improve your mood.
- **Pace yourself and learn to say “no”** – Over-scheduling and not making time for yourself can increase your stress.
- **Be open to new traditions** – Instead of trying to maintain old habits, allow new traditions to develop. For example, if you’re unable to be with friends or family this holiday, look for volunteer opportunities that allow you to be around others.
- **Exercise** - A daily 10-20 minute walk will get your heart rate up and can also help increase your mood.
- **Seek the sun** – Sunlight can lighten your mood, taking a walk outside will give you both physical exercise and sun exposure.
- **Avoid overeating** – Holiday get-togethers can often lead to overeating, which can negatively affect your mood and well-being.
- **Get support when mourning a loved one** – If you’ve experienced the loss of a loved one, the holidays can be especially painful. It can help to spend time with your friends/family, or by participating in a grief support group.

If you need help, get it!
Contact your Health Care Provider or a Mental Health Professional and ask for guidance and/or a referral to local resources such as support groups etc.

Helpful Websites:
- [www.psychologytoday.com](http://www.psychologytoday.com)
- [www.healthline.com](http://www.healthline.com)
- [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)