

Behavioral Health Ministries Team News

It's November and that means we are entering the holiday season, now that Halloween is in the books. The first of the Christmas advertisements are hitting the television airways and I heard a Christmas carol playing in the background of a store just the other day. As joyous as this season is supposed to be, it can be darned tough on so many folks. There is pressure and expectations of the perfect meal or the perfect gift, wrappings, gatherings and so on.

Then there are the folks who are simply grateful to get a free meal offered from the Salvation Army or another church group, sharing food as well as fellowship. There are the families who cannot provide the shiny most wanted toy of the season for their children, there are fresh relationship breakups and then there are the forgotten elderly or mentally ill folks who spend just another day alone.

Some people suffer from SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder) which brings on feelings of depression, low energy, decreased interest in the things they used to enjoy. The darkening of days with less sunlight can also be a cause of SAD.

Loneliness can happen at any time of year. So, what are some things we can do to boost our spirits when our Christmas or holiday spirit is fizzled out? Here are a few suggestions to combat loneliness, feeling blue, and low levels of depression.

- If you have symptoms of depression lasting longer than a couple of weeks or if you've been on an antidepressant and are still not very perky, call your medical professional and let them know!
- Being grateful and expressing gratitude in prayer or in person is a guaranteed mood lifter. Practicing gratitude releases endorphins, the good mood hormones which help us feel better. Daily practice of gratitude will make a difference in almost everyone's life.

- Take a walk. Go outside every day if you can. Fresh air and nature are a balm for your soul.
- Volunteer. People who volunteer, even a few hours, notice an increase in their mood. Why? Because social interaction is vital to our wellbeing.
- And of course, pray. Nurturing your spiritual life in prayer and gratitude reminds us how much we are beloved of God.

These are but a few ideas to help through not only the holidays but every day.

God's Peace, Rev. Kris+