



Mindful Wellness

www.healthyhaywood.org

Winter 2010 - Issue 3

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Haywood Community Connections

452-2370
haywoodconnections.org

REACH

456-7898
reachofhaywood.com

Smoky Mountain Center

1.800.849.6127
smokymountaincenter.com

KARE

456.8995
karehouse.org

Haywood Christian Ministries

456.4838

NAMI

National Alliance on Mental Illness
1.800.541.2682
456-6897
naminc.org

A Health & Human Services Directory

211
nc211.org

Is a Stress-Free Holiday Possible?

For most Americans, the time from Thanksgiving in late November through New Years on, January first is a time of celebration. As Thanksgiving approaches and stores are already decked out for the Holiday Season, anticipation builds, and expectations run high. Reality often does not measure up to fantasies. Is it any wonder that many people suffer from the blues during the holiday season? Too often we may expect perfection from ourselves and others without realizing we are expecting far too much and being unrealistic. Is it possible to set aside expectations and take the season as it comes – enjoying what brings us the most pleasure while avoiding or at least not taking as seriously those things that cause us stress? Perhaps a little prior meditation and preparation can go a long way in helping us change the way we view the holidays. Here are some areas to explore:

Relationships. There can be conflict in relationships at any time, but tensions are often heightened during the holidays. If there are certain triggers that you know will cause you stress, think of ways to avoid them. For example, Special holiday dinner is always cold because everyone wants to wait for this one person who is habitually late. You might excuse yourself from attending and spend time with family on another occasion. You might consider holding an open house where people can drop in any time they wish between certain hours. If you are the host, you might send invitations and state that “dinner will be served promptly at seven” which requires you to follow through and serve dinner at seven. The point is, if you plan ahead there are often options that can lessen stress.

Story CONTINUES on NEXT PAGE.....

How to Access Mental Health Services

- Ask a friend if they can recommend a professional they have heard about.
- Ask a ministerial staff member
- Check with your insurance
- Check the phone book or check online –

Key Word Search

Therapist
Mental Health
Counseling

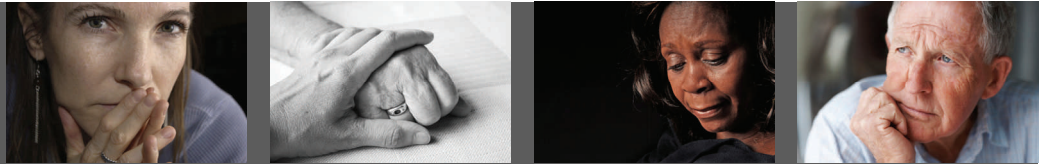
Everyone Has Challenges – You’re Not Alone – Help is Available

Know someone who would like to receive this quarterly e-mail newsletter?
Contact the coordinator today – OR – Forward this e-mail on .

The Mental Health Action Team meets the second Thursday of each month at Whitman’s Bakery from 3-5

Coordinator Information: sduginske@haywoodnc.net 828.452.6675 www.healthyhaywood.org

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Certified Healthy Carolinians Partnership



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Finances. Holidays are a time when added expenses of gifts, travel, and entertainment can put a strain on the budget, and heighten stress levels. Watching a game or movie with friends while enjoying soup or sandwiches and warming up with some hot chocolate can be just as enjoyable as a five course meal and a lot less expensive. Who said you have to serve turkey and all the trimmings or bake Grandma's German chocolate cake just like she used to do? The answer is NO ONE. We impose these tasks upon ourselves. Who makes you buy a gift for every aunt, uncle and cousin? NO ONE. The truth is, they may be hoping you won't buy them a gift, so they won't feel obligated to buy one for you in return. Decide in advance what you can afford, and stop there. If you can't afford any presents, don't buy them. Give gift certificates that entitle the recipient to a "free back rub", "free babysitting", etc. These are things you can do for someone you love, and they won't cost anything except your time and will be much appreciated. Don't take on a financial burden because of what other people might think. They are entitled to their thoughts but you are also entitled to yours – and you are the one who will be working all year to pay off a debt if you allow yourself to be controlled by what others might think about you.

Time. Shopping, baking, cleaning, decorating, entertaining.....the list goes on. Exhausting yourself will increase your stress level. Buy a pie or cake, pare down your guest list, those celebrating Christmas may consider buying one Christmas tree instead of trying to put one in every room, skip the big fancy dinners. It is possible to enjoy the holidays without demanding so much of yourself. Ask yourself, "Who do I most want to spend time with?" You don't have to have everyone you know over for a meal. If you can have a great time with a few girlfriends enjoying tea and scones, why set yourself up to host a big party and invite everyone on your block? Do those things that will be most enjoyable yet most simple to do. Don't let exercise and sleep (good antidotes for stress) take a back seat to chores and errands. Learn to say "NO". You cannot be everything to everybody. Don't even try. You will be setting yourself up for trouble. Don't take on any more than is comfortable for you. Make time for yourself. A long relaxing bubble bath, soothing music, a good book – these are things that can make a world of difference.

Memories. While holidays can be stressful because of who we are with, they can also be difficult because of who is missing. If someone close to you has recently died or you can't be with loved ones, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. It's okay to cry and express your feelings. Know that you can't force yourself to be happy if you are not; however, also know that seeking out friends may lift some of your sadness. Seek out community, spiritual or other social events. Others can offer support and companionship, but they cannot read your mind. It's up to you to reach out. Volunteering to help others less fortunate can often help you realize your own blessings and bring rewarding friendships.

You can do a great deal to avoid or relieve holiday stress; however, there are times when the combination of stress from holidays, work, troubled relationships, or poor health can become overwhelming, and the overall quality of life is impacted on an ongoing basis. This is a time to seek treatment. Smoky Mountain Center has an emergency number that can be reached 24/7 – 1-888-315-2880.

The holidays are meant to be enjoyed. Remind yourself that the people who care about you the most love you for who you are. You do not need to put yourself under any type of pressure in order to please them. Know too that genuinely caring for people does not mean you have to agree with their thoughts, traditions, or lifestyles. Respecting and caring for others does not mean you have to adopt their philosophies or live up to their expectations. It does mean you should be kind. Listen to what others have to say. Enjoy their company. These are things they need and will appreciate and perhaps the best gifts they will receive. Lighten up on yourself and others. Don't expect so much; enjoy life as it comes.....and you may just have a stress-free, happy holiday.

Author Yvonne Gold is the Project Coordinator at Haywood Community Connections and member of Healthy Haywood's Mental Health Action Team

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