

## 6 Tips to Beat Senior Holiday Blues

While the holidays are commonly thought of as a time of joy and celebration, they may be a time of sadness and isolation for the elderly, especially if they have lost loved ones or are experiencing health or financial difficulties.

**According to the American Geriatrics Society, there are some things that you can do to help seniors combat holiday depression, such as:**

- 1. Invite Them Along.** Invite them to go with you to holiday gatherings or assist with holiday shopping. Be aware that they may need help with transportation.
- 2. Volunteer.** Volunteer work can lift the mood by taking your mind off your own troubles. Contact local schools, religious organizations or charities to learn about opportunities.
- 3. Discourage Alcohol Consumption.** Alcohol is a depressant and can make a person feel worse instead of better.
- 4. Acknowledge Your Loved One's Feelings.** There's nothing wrong with feeling blue. If your loved one seems blue, talk with him or her about their feelings. Be a good listener.
- 5. Recognize the Signs of Depression.** Symptoms of depression include sadness that doesn't pass; loss of interest or pleasure; changes in appetite or weight; sleeping more than normal; frequent crying; feeling restless or tired all the time; feeling worthless, helpless or guilty; slowed thinking and thoughts of death or suicide.
- 6. A Stray Giggle.** And most importantly, share a laugh with your loved one. Laughter is the best medicine!



Many older people do not realize that they are depressed and it may be up to friends and family to recognize the signs and encourage them to seek assistance. Here are a few signs to watch out for:

- Losing or gaining weight
- Difficulty sleeping
- Being agitated or irritable
- Lack of energy
- Feelings of sadness or worthlessness
- Losing interest in activities
- Difficulty concentrating
- Loses interest in hygiene
- Thoughts of suicide

If you or a loved one is depressed, see a physician. Depression is a very treatable disease and you do not have to suffer.

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