



## *Managing Your Mental Health During This Holiday Season” -December 2023*

*“Happy Holidays” is a familiar phrase we hear often during this time of year. While the holidays can be full of cheer for some, they can also be a time of increased stress for others which can lead to or worsen mental health challenges for others. Why is this? Well, there is no one reason, but sometimes the holiday season can be filled with unrealistic expectations, too many activities, and/or grief from loss or the anniversary of a loss. These situations can lead to feelings of loneliness, sadness, and/or depression. For others, there may be isolation or a turn to unhealthy coping with excessive substance use as a result of these stresses.*

*According to the American Psychological Association (APA, Nov. 2023), almost 90% of adults experience increased stress during the holiday season which can lead to both physical and mental health challenges. The APA’s Chief Executive Officer, Arthur C. Evans Jr., PhD, stated “At this hectic time of year, it is important that people take care of their mental health, especially in communities whose members feel disproportionately burdened or excluded from what is traditionally considered the holiday season.”*



**Dr. Tedra Anderson-Brown,  
Psychiatrist**

*Dr. Tedra Anderson-Brown, Psychiatrist, notes “the causes of holiday challenges are varied and can be anything from financial concerns, overcommitment, missing family, grieving the loss of a loved one, or even experiencing seasonal changes in mood that can happen in winter.” She further states, “it’s important to take note of how you are feeling and know that help is available.”*

*Here are some strategies to help us all cope, decrease stress, and better handle mental health challenges during the holidays:*

- *Make time for rest and relaxation.*
- *Set boundaries and avoid overextending yourself. It's ok to say NO!*
- *Practice mindfulness and start a gratitude journal.*
- *Avoid using any drugs and excessive alcohol use.*
- *Establish a self-care routine and do what makes you happy.*
- *Follow a budget to prevent overspending.*
- *Get outside and enjoy nature.*
- *Start new traditions to celebrate you and honor your loved ones.*
- *Stay connected with positive, healthy friends and family.*
- *Know that it is ok to seek professional help with a therapist and/or join a support group.*

*If you or a loved one are experiencing a crisis, please call :*

- *988, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, or*
- *text TALK to 741741 to speak with a skilled professional who can help.*

*For More Information:*

*Visit, Call or Email Community Health Coalition  
[www.communityhealthcoalition.com](http://www.communityhealthcoalition.com), call (919)470-8680, and/or email  
[contact@communityhealthcoalition.com](mailto:contact@communityhealthcoalition.com).*

*Here's to your health and a joyful holiday season!*



*Improving the Health of Durham  
& NC Communities since 1989*

