


December 2024


<p>BVP's Mental Health Team would like to wish all of our families a Happy &amp; Healthy Holiday Season! The holidays are a time for reflection, growth and gratitude. We are grateful for our diverse community of scholars, families, educators, support staff and leadership. A community filled with meaningful traditions that touch us, connect us and expand us.</p> <p>This time of year is often a time of reflection, celebration and spending time with loved ones. However, we recognize that this is not the case for everyone and that holidays can also increase stress and, for some, exacerbate mental health concerns. It is important that we are aware of ourselves and the impact holiday stress can have on our overall well being.</p> <p>This month the BVP Mental Health Team would like to share resources on managing holiday stress, taking care of your mental health during the holidays, community resources to support families &amp; highlight seasonal depression awareness month.</p>
<p><b>SEASONAL DEPRESSION AWARENESS MONTH SUPPORTS YEAR ROUND WELL BEING</b></p>
<p>Despite the long, dark days, December can be the most wonderful time of the year for most people. But it's also the time for the winter blues for many others. For this reason, December has been designated as Seasonal Depression Awareness Month.</p> <p>Seasonal Depression Awareness Month is an obscure observance intended to educate the public about <a href="#">seasonal depression</a>, also known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), and the various ways to alleviate its symptoms.</p>

# Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD): More Than the Winter Blues

As the days get shorter and there is less daylight, you may start to feel sad. While many people experience the "winter blues," some people may have a type of depression called seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

The first step is to determine how much your symptoms interfere with your daily life.

**Do you have mild symptoms that have lasted less than 2 weeks?**



- Feeling down but still able to take care of yourself and others
- Having some trouble sleeping
- Having less energy than usual but still able to do your job, schoolwork, or housework

**These activities can make you feel better:**



- Doing something you enjoy
- Going outside in the sunlight
- Spending time with family and friends
- Eating healthy and avoiding foods with lots of sugar

**If these activities do not help or your symptoms are getting worse, talk to a health care provider.**

**Do you have more severe symptoms that have lasted more than 2 weeks?**



- Social withdrawal
- Oversleeping
- Gaining weight
- Craving foods with lots of sugar like cakes, candies, and cookies

**Seek professional help:**



- Light therapy
- Psychotherapy (talk therapy)
- Medications
- Vitamin D supplements

For help finding treatment, visit [nimh.nih.gov/findhelp](https://nimh.nih.gov/findhelp).

If you or someone you know is in immediate distress or is thinking about hurting themselves, call or text the **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** at 988 or chat at [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org).



[nimh.nih.gov/sad](https://nimh.nih.gov/sad)

## MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES/MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE HOLIDAYS

- [Guide to Managing Mental Health Around the Holidays](#)
- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline- if you are experience thoughts of suicide or self harm there is HELP! Please dial 988 and you will be connected with local support.
- [SAMHSA- Supporting your mental health during the holiday season](#)
- [NAMI- Maintaining Mental Health During the Holiday Season](#)
  - [Mental Health During the Holidays](#)
- [American Psychiatric Association: 7 Ways to Cope with Holiday Stress](#)
- [Hate the Holidays? 8 Ways to Cope and Find Joy This Year](#)
- [A Teens Survival Guide for the Holidays](#)

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

### FOOD RESOURCES:

- [Free Food Resources](#)
- Jericho Road Food Resource Center: 600 Douglas Pike Smithfield, RI 401-231-1980

- [Progreso Latino](#) Food Pantry: Central Falls @Knights of Columbus 20 Claremont St.
- [Elisha Project](#)- 200 Main St. Pawtucket, RI
- [NRI Food Pantry](#)- Cumberland
- [RI Community Food Bank](#)

#### **Other Resources (utilities/toys/financial assistance)**

- [Find Help](#)
- [Project Hope](#)
- [Blackstone Valley Community Action Program](#)
- [Progreso Latino Social Services](#)
- [RI Free Christmas & Holiday Assistance](#)
- **Salvation Army Pawtucket**, Location is 102 High Street, Pawtucket, RI 02860, Dial (401) 723-9533 for intake.. Many social services are run. They include Christmas gifts, toys, and clothing for children. Other programs may help with bills, rent, medications, and much more.
- **Town of Cumberland:** Address is 45 Broad Street Cumberland, RI 02864 Main phone - (401) 728-2400
  - Of course they only support town residents. The season program has free Thanksgiving, Christmas toys, baskets and gifts.
- **Toys for Tots in Providence and across Rhode Island**  
 This is a partnership of the United States Marine Corps, volunteers, and countless charities. Children from low income families or those in poverty can get free Christmas gifts, presents, Legos, video games, clothes and other items. This may be clothes, shoes, winter gear, games, books and more during the holidays. Find more details
  - The Providence County region applications are here.  
<https://providence-ri.toysfortots.org/local-coordinator-sites/lco-sites/request-toys.aspx>
  - Other Rhode Island Toys for Toys programs operate too. Select a county from here.  
<https://www.toysfortots.org/donate/toys-city-county.aspx?txtState=RHODE%20ISLAND>
- [Community Care Alliance](#)
- [Empty Stocking Fund](#)