

National Health Observances

December

National Drunk & Drugged
Driving Prevention Month
Safe Toys & Gifts Month
Universal Human Rights Month

Week of December 2-7

Tolerance Week
National Older Driver Safety
Awareness Week

Week of December 9-14

Human Rights Weeks

Week of December 16-21

Gluten-free Baking Week

November 28-December 5

Hanukkah

December 25

Christmas Day

What is the EAP?

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a **FREE** and **CONFIDENTIAL** service that can assist you and your eligible family members with **ANY** personal concern, large or small.

Employees and family members can call Cascade 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We can help! Call Cascade to schedule an in person appointment or get the resources you need. For more information, please call us at:

800.433.2320

www.cascadecenters.com



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Holiday Depression and Stress

The holiday season is a time full of joy, cheer, parties, and family gatherings. However, for many people, it is a time of self-evaluation, loneliness, reflection on past failures, and anxiety about an uncertain future.

What Causes Holiday Blues?

Many factors can cause the "holiday blues": stress, fatigue, unrealistic expectations, over-commercialization, financial constraints, and the inability to be with one's family and friends. The demands of shopping, parties, family reunions, and house guests also contribute to feelings of tension. People who do not become depressed may develop other stress responses, such as: headaches, excessive drinking, over-eating, and difficulty sleeping. Even more people experience post-holiday let down after January 1. This can result from disappointments during the preceding months compounded with the excess fatigue and stress.

Coping with Stress and Depression During the Holidays

- **Keep expectations for the holiday season manageable.** Try to set realistic goals for yourself. Pace yourself.

Organize your time. Make a list and prioritize the important activities. Be realistic about what you can and cannot do. Do not put entire focus on just one day (i.e., Thanksgiving Day) remember it is a season of holiday sentiment and activities can be spread out (time-wise) to lessen stress and increase enjoyment.

- **Remember the holiday season does not banish reasons for feeling sad or lonely;** there is room for these feelings to be present, even if the person chooses not to express them.
- **Leave "yesteryear" in the past and look toward the future.** Life brings changes. Each season is different and can be enjoyed in its own way. Don't set yourself up in comparing today with the "good ol' days."
- **Do something for someone else.** Try volunteering some time to help others.
- **Enjoy activities that are free, such as driving around to look at holiday decorations;** going window shopping without buying; making a snowman with children.

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Healthy Holiday Recipe: Roasted Vegetables

Ingredients:

- 1 small butternut squash, cubed
- 2 red bell peppers, seeded and diced
- 1 sweet potato, peeled and cubed
- 3 Yukon Gold potatoes, cubed
- 1 red onion, quartered
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh thyme
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tbsps balsamic vinegar
- salt and freshly ground black pepper

Directions:

Preheat oven to 475 degrees F (245 degrees C).

In a large bowl, combine the squash, red bell peppers, sweet potato, and Yukon Gold potatoes. Separate the red onion quarters into pieces, and add them to the mixture.

In a small bowl, stir together thyme, rosemary, olive oil, vinegar, salt, and pepper. Toss with vegetables until they are coated. Spread evenly on a large roasting pan.

Roast for 35 to 40 minutes in the preheated oven, stirring every 10 minutes, or until vegetables are cooked through and browned.

Serves 12.

(Holiday Depression and Stress....Continued from page 1)

- **Be aware that excessive drinking will only increase your feelings of depression.**
- **Try something new.** Celebrate the holidays in a new way.
- **Spend time with supportive and caring people.** Reach out and make new friends or contact someone you have not heard from for awhile.
- **Save time for yourself!** Recharge your batteries! Let others share responsibility of activities.

Can Environment Be a Factor?

Recent studies show that some people suffer from seasonal affective disorder (SAD) which results from fewer hours of sunlight as the days grow shorter during the winter months. Phototherapy, a treatment involving a few hours of exposure to intense light, is effective in relieving depressive symptoms in patients with SAD.

Other studies on the benefits of phototherapy found that exposure to early morning sunlight was effective in relieving seasonal depression. Recent findings, however, suggest that patients respond equally well to phototherapy when it is scheduled in the early afternoon. This has practical applications for antidepressant treatment since it allows the use of phototherapy in the workplace as well as the home.

National Mental Health Association (NMHA) ©2013

Tips For a Better Night's Sleep

How you feel during your waking hours hinges greatly on how well you sleep. Similarly, the cure for sleep difficulties can often be found in your daily routine. Your sleep schedule, bedtime habits, and day to day lifestyle choices can make an enormous difference to the quality of your nightly rest.

The following tips will help you optimize your sleep so you can be productive, mentally sharp, emotionally balanced, and full of energy all day long.

- **Bedtime.** Create a consistent bedtime schedule, even on the weekends.
- **Establish a Relaxing Bedtime Routine.** Create a relaxing bedtime routine, such as reading a book, listening to soothing music or taking a hot bath.
- **Make Your Bedroom a Place of Comfort and Relaxation.** Keep your bedroom dark, cool and uncluttered. Remove all computers, televisions and work materials out. Consider using blackout curtains, eye shades, ear plugs, and "white noise" devices.
- **Pillow and Mattress.** Make sure your pillow and mattress are not too worn out and are meeting your comfort needs.
- **Exercise Early.** Exercising regularly makes it easier to fall asleep and contributes to sounder sleep. However, exercise at least a few hours before bedtime.
- **Avoid Caffeine Later in the Day.** Caffeine products, such as coffee, tea, colas and chocolate can affect some people up to 12 hours later after consuming.
- **Avoid Alcohol Close to Bedtime.** Alcohol interferes with the normal sleep process causing nighttime awakenings.
- **Finish Eating 2-3 Hours Before Bedtime.** Eating too much may make you less comfortable when settling down for bed.
- **Make Lists of Things to Be Tackled the Next Day.** Make your to do lists before you go to bed, so they're not swimming around in your head.

December is Drunk & Drugged Driving Prevention Month



Driving drunk is never OK. Choose not to drink and drive and help others do the same. Prevent drunk and drugged driving by making responsible choices, such as:

- Designate a sober driver before celebrations begin.
- Never serve alcohol to those under the age of 21.
- Plan safe parties, including providing non-alcoholic drink options to guests and not serving alcohol the last hour of the gathering.
- Be prepared to get everyone home safely in case your plans or individual circumstances change.

Cascade is giving the gift of a free taxi ride.*

Cascade aims to deter individuals from driving impaired and encourages everyone to plan ahead before embarking on their holiday festivities. To ensure safety this holiday season Cascade will reimburse the cost of a taxi ride during the month of December.

**\$15 limit*

How to Get Reimbursed:

Mail your receipt to: Cascade EAP, 7180 SW Fir Loop, Portland, OR 97223 (a copy of your receipt is required to be reimbursed) and include your name, address, city, state, zip, and name of employer.*

**all information will remain 100% confidential*

Cascade Centers, Inc. is not advocating the abuse of alcoholic beverages and/or drugs. If you choose to drink do so with moderation and caution. It is not the intent to promote misuse of drugs, alcohol, alcoholism, hazing, binge drinking or any other form of alcohol abuse.

How to Access Your EAP:

- Call: 800-433-2320
- Email: esupport@cascadecenters.com
- Visit: www.cascadecenters.com