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## **SRMC's Behavioral Medicine and Wellness Center Offers Tips for Managing the Holiday Blues**



For some people, the added stress of the holiday season can lead to temporary feelings of sadness, loneliness, anxiety and depression. Salem Regional Medical Center's Behavioral Medicine and Wellness Center offers some tips for managing the holiday blues.

The holidays are often a time of joy and excitement, but this is not the case for everyone.

"For some people, the added stress of the holiday season can lead to temporary feelings of sadness, loneliness, anxiety and depression," said Jamie Benner, Program Manager for Salem Regional Medical Center's (SRMC) Behavioral Medicine and Wellness Center.

According to Benner, a number of things can trigger what's known as the 'holiday blues,' from the extra pressures of shopping and decorating to financial worries.

"Thoughts of missing loved ones or unpleasant memories from past holidays can also creep in," she added. "The good news is that by planning ahead and following some simple strategies, most people can manage these feelings and get back to enjoying the season."

### **Tips for Managing the Holiday Blues**

- **Acknowledge and Accept Your Feelings:** The holidays can be a particularly difficult time for people coping with a loss, such as the death of a loved one. If you are feeling sad, allow yourself the time you need to cry or express your emotions.
- **Reach Out for Support:** If you are feeling sad or lonely because you are far away from family or loved ones during the holiday season, consider getting involved in community events or volunteering for a local organization during the holidays.

- **Don't Overextend Yourself:** Set reasonable expectations for yourself and what you are able to accomplish. Don't be afraid to say no or ask for help.
- **Set a Budget:** Before you begin your holiday shopping, set a budget and stick with it. Start shopping early to avoid last minute impulse purchases.
- **Take Breaks:** Set aside some alone time each day to relax and take a break from your holiday preparations.
- **Plan in Advance:** Set a schedule for shopping, decorating, baking and other holiday activities to help keep your stress level under control.
- **Manage Family Differences:** Family tensions and differences can add to your stress and make holiday celebrations less enjoyable. Try putting differences aside during the holidays and waiting until another time to address them.

"While experiencing some feelings of anxiety or sadness during the holidays is normal, if your stress or depression persists for weeks and makes it difficult for you to function, it is important to seek help from your doctor or a mental health care professional," Benner advised.

#### **About SRMC's Behavioral Medicine and Wellness Center**

SRMC's Behavioral Medicine and Wellness Center (BMWC) offers intensive outpatient programs for adults facing a range of mental health conditions, including depression; anxiety; mood changes; and grief, loss and trauma. The BMWC is located at 2020 East State Street, Suite J, in Salem, 330-337-4935.