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MCHD HEALTH BLOG

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MORGAN COUNTY HEALTH DEPT.



HOLIDAYS AND MENTAL HEALTH

The holiday season has quickly arrived, as it seems to every year. Bringing joy and happiness to all, but to many it also brings stress, anxiety, and feelings of depression. The holidays can be an even tougher time for those who already live with mental health and substance use conditions. It is ok to not be ok, but learning how to manage those feelings and knowing where to turn when those feelings start to take over is important. Here are some tips from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) to prioritize and support your mental health during the holiday season:

- Accept your feelings. It's ok to be happy, sad, or whatever other emotions you feel. Allow yourself time to feel your emotions, don't push them off until you can't handle them.
- Develop a plan for when your emotions get overwhelming. Your plan could be to do an activity that makes you happy, set up a movie night with a friend, calling a family member, or going for a walk. Make a plan ahead of time so you are prepared when that moment happens.
- Practice self-care. Take time to take care of you! The holidays are often a time to think of others, but remember that you matter too. Schedule time for yourself.
- Make time to connect with others. If you won't be with family during the holidays, find a community to connect with. This could be a local club, support group, or faith community. Connecting with others can reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.
- Practice healthy habits. Holiday celebrations can often trigger the use of alcohol and other substances. Have a plan to navigate social events if you struggle with substance use. Check in on those who may be struggling as well.
- Know when to ask for help. Mental health struggles can sometimes be overwhelming and difficult to handle yourself. It is important to know that there is help available to you.

If you find that you are struggling and need help here are some of the resources available: SAMSHA's national helpline 1-800-662-HELP (4357). In crisis or know someone that is? Call or text 988- the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. Just remember that you are not alone! Have a safe and healthy holiday season.