

Health and Wellness Newsletter

December 2023



Unwrapping Wellness: Managing Holidays and Mental Health



From the hustle and bustle of preparations to expectations around social gatherings and gift-giving, there are many challenges that can impact our mental health during the holidays. Research on holidays and mental health finds 68% of people feel financially strained, 66% feel lonely, and 63% feel under pressure during this time

of year. Forty percent of people who already struggle with a mental health condition say the holidays make their condition "a lot" or "somewhat" worse. Learning ways to safeguard your mental health during the holidays can help you navigate the season with resilience and enjoy this time of year.

Why does mental health suffer around the holidays?

Throwing the perfect party, giving the best gift, preparing large meals—the holidays come with a lot of pressure, and as those pressures rise so do feelings of stress and overwhelm that can impact our mental health. Naturally, we want to feel like we're part of the culture and community around us, so we may start to chase those expectations. And with the holidays seeming to start sooner every year, we may experience stress, holiday anxiety, or holiday depression because we're chasing a target that feels like it's always moving.

Some other contributors to holiday blues and other mental health challenges include:

Loneliness

A common message about the holidays is that it's a season of togetherness. If you don't have a close family or you have complicated relationships with loved ones, you may feel isolated rather than joyful—and it may seem easier to withdraw than engage, which can compound loneliness.

High expectations

The holidays come with societal pressures around decorating, meals, gift-giving, and socializing, which can feed anxiety.

Adapted from Autumn Walker (14 Nov 2023) *Unwrapping Wellness: Managing Holidays and Mental Health*. Retrieved from: <https://www.lyrahealth.com/blog/holidays-and-mental-health/#:~:text=Research%20on%20holidays%20and%20mental%20health%20finds%2068%25%20make%20their%20condition%20%2E2%80%9C%20a%20lot%20or%20somewhat%20worse,https://www.solutions-eap.com | 1-800-526-3485>

Recorded Parent Presentations Available

If you were unable to come to hear Robert Hackenson's presentation for parents on November 13th, you can access recorded versions of both the "Seeing through the Vapor" and the "Parenting in a Digital World" presentations at the links below. When you open the link, scroll to the presentation and **enter the password: newtown**. All parents will have access for 30 days!

"Seeing through the Vapor": [Yaping Awareness Presentation for Parents in Newtown CT - Dynamic Influence](#)

"Parenting in a Digital World": [Parenting in a Digital World](#)

Links can also be found on the school district webpage: www.newtown.k12.ct.us

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Link to full article:

[Managing Holidays & Mental Health](#)

It's not too late to get protected!

Click these links to find flu and COVID vaccines available locally:

[Find Local Flu Vaccines](#)

[Find Local COVID Vaccines](#)



Register for December 6th QPR Suicide Prevention Training

HOPE IN ACTION

QPR SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING
Uniting Research & Compassion to Save Lives



Join us for an immersive training that equips you with life-saving skills to prevent suicide and become a Merchant of Hope.

In this training, you will:

- Recognize warning signs of suicide
- Use the "Question, Persuade, Refer" (QPR) approach to connect individuals to help
- Become a beacon of hope for others

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2023
7:00-8:30 p.m.

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED
SCAN THE QR CODE OR
REGISTER [HERE](#)



SAINT ROSE OF LIMA CHURCH CAMPUS
HOLY INNOCENTS FAITH FORMATION CENTER
38B CHURCH HILL ROAD
NEWTOWN, CT 06470

ST. ROSE OF LIMA CHURCH

SPONSORED BY:



Contact Nancy Rhodes, parishnurse@strosechurch.com with any questions

3 Ways to Prevent Underage Drinking During the Holidays

Keep these pointers in mind to help prevent underage drinking this holiday season:

- Start the conversation about underage drinking prevention.** Regardless of how old your kids are, start the conversation with them now about underage drinking prevention. They may have more exposure to alcohol during the holiday season - set boundaries and align on your expectations. Here are some tips for having age-appropriate conversations about alcohol. The holiday season is a busy time filled with get-togethers and to-do list items. Even though you've likely got your hands full during this time of year, don't be any less diligent with your kids when it comes to underage drinking prevention. Peer pressure and opportunities to engage in underage drinking tend to heighten during the holidays.
- Be consistent with communication.** Strong, consistent communication with your kids is key. Ensure you and your spouse or partner are on the same page when communicating expectations. As part of regular discussion, ask them open-ended questions to help prepare them for situations where alcohol is present.
- Don't create an opportunity for underage drinking.** For adults, holiday parties may include alcohol. If you're hosting an adult holiday party where alcohol is present, make sure you have other plans for your kids. Should it be an event where all ages are included, remember that your kids are always watching and model responsible behavior.

For more parenting tips, visit the Connecting page of our website:

[Connecting With Your Kids About Underage Drinking](#)

(Reminders from familytalkaboutdrinking.com)

Remember that parents are the #1 influence on their children's attitudes towards alcohol and drugs.)

COVID Testing Guidelines

Take an at-home test:

- If you begin having COVID-19 symptoms like fever, sore throat, runny nose, or loss of taste or smell, or
- At least 5 days after you come into close contact with someone with COVID-19, or
- When you're going to gather with a group of people, especially those who are at risk of severe disease or may not be up to date on their COVID-19 vaccines

4 free COVID test kits available to all families.

Click this link for more info:

<https://www.covid.gov/tests>

It's soup season!
Here's a healthy and delicious recipe to try:

[Lemon Chicken Orzo Soup](#)

