



Caring Matters

County of Sacramento

December 2017

Tips for Beating the Holiday Blues



While the holiday season can be a time of added stress for many of us, older adults are at an increased risk for depression during the holidays. You may notice a change in the older adult's mood or you may notice a decline in their physical activity. They may show symptoms of fatigue or sadness, or have no interest in the holiday or in their surroundings. Additionally, they may not have the same level of excitement and anticipation that they had during previous holiday seasons. It is not the actual holiday that causes this depression, but the fact that holidays often bring up memories of earlier, happier times, as well as the absence of parents, siblings and friends who have died, and the distance of loved ones who have moved away. Traditional reunions and rituals that were observed in the past may not be possible, and in their absence, the holidays may seem devoid of meaning. There are several things you can do to help the older adults in your life through this difficult time.

DO:

Spend time with the older adults in your life. Visit as much as possible during the holiday season. If you are unable to visit, telephone or send cards and letters frequently.

Involve older adults in a range of activities. Involve them in as many holiday preparations as possible. Older adults with physical limitations can be included in kitchen activities by asking them to do a simple task, such as peeling vegetables, folding napkins or arranging flowers. With assistance, they can wrap presents, help create shopping lists and write Christmas cards.

Create new traditions and memories. Everyone likes to have things to anticipate. Create new traditions in which older adults are easily able to participate, such as taking a drive to look at holiday lights, stringing popcorn, wear silly holiday sweaters or watching a special holiday program.

Minimize overwhelming situations. Large groups of people are sometimes overwhelming and tiring for the older adult. Whenever possible, plan activities with small groups of people. When making plans, take into account the senior's need to rest often or take afternoon naps.

DON'T:

Ignore the older adult's sadness. Don't pretend that these problems don't exist. Provide an environment in which you welcome the sharing of past holiday traditions with people that they may miss. Be sure to acknowledge that the holidays can be difficult for everyone, and let them know it's okay to talk about their feelings of loss and sadness.

Make every decision. As much as possible, allow seniors to have input in the decision-making process surrounding the holidays. Ask them to help make decisions about what they want to do for the holidays and where they want to celebrate.

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IHSS Public Authority

Welcome to the new IHSS Public Authority Newsletter! We've gone electronic with our newsletter, and welcome your suggestions for content or general feedback.

Contact Us

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Tips for Beating the Holiday Blues, Continued

DON'T:

Forget to listen. When visiting the older adults in your life, don't forget to listen. It is common for most visitors to end up doing most of the talking during a visit. But be sure to take the time to really listen. This is one of the most generous gifts you can offer an older person. Truly listening helps individuals feel appreciated, valued and loved.

Overlook the need to seek help. It's very important to encourage the older adults in your life to seek help for depression. Assist them in finding appropriate services to manage their depression, sadness and fatigue.

As the caregiver or family member of a depressed older adult, make it your responsibility to get involved. You can make a significant difference and remove or lessen the holiday blues for seniors suffering from depression.

Adapted from ExpertBeacon.com

Upcoming FREE Classes

IHSS Public Authority regularly holds classes on a variety of subjects related to caregiving! All classes are open to both Providers and Recipients, and are held on Thursday evenings as scheduled below. Classes begin at 5:30pm and end by 7:30pm. Take a look at some upcoming classes:

December 7th—How to Talk to your Doctor. Presented by IHSS PA staff, this class will discuss ways to help your Recipient manage medical appointments and medications.

If you have questions regarding the IHSS Educational classes, please contact **Mary-Ann Cowan** at (916) 876-5682 or send an email to HHS-PA-Education@sacounty.net.

Congratulations to Core Class Graduates!

We have so many amazing Providers who attend the IHSS Public Authority's free educational classes! While the classes are free, Providers attend the classes on their own time. Those who attend classes enjoy learning how to be better Providers for their Recipients, and learn valuable skills that they can also incorporate into their own lives.

We would like to congratulate the Providers who have recently completed all required Core Classes:

Antoinette Balthaser

Sheila Dudley

Obadiah Dudley

Danielle Garcia

Svetlana Pashkova

Christina Salcido

June D.

Seyedeh A.

Each "graduate" will receive an IHSS Public Authority goodie bag and certificate of completion. Thank you, Core Class graduates!!!