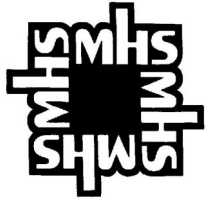


## Resources

***For immediate help, go to emergency room or urgent care.***  
*Contact your family physician or insurance provider for a referral.*



**Mental Health Services for  
Clark County**  
937-399-9500



**UNITED  
SENIOR SERVICES**  
Active | Involved | Independent  
(937) 323-4948



**Suicide Hotline**  
**1-800-273-8255**  
Veterans press "1"

[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)



**24-Hour  
Information  
& Referral**  
937-323-1400



**nami** Clark, Greene and  
Madison Counties  
National Alliance on Mental Illness

937-322-5600

## Facts About Late-Life Depression

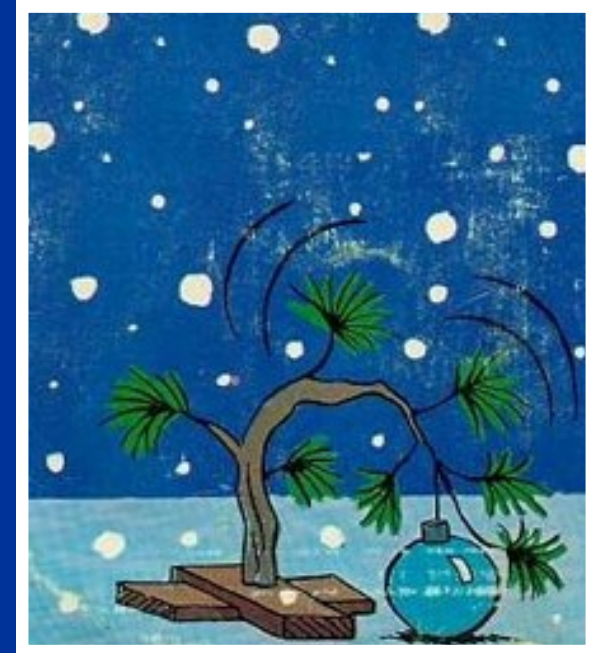
- Depression is not a normal part of aging. It is different from temporary "blues" or mourning for a lost loved one, in that it lasts longer, and doesn't let up from day to day.
- Symptoms can include anxiety, irritability, loss of pleasure in activities, feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness, and worsened physical pain. Prolonged sadness, more typical in depressed younger people, may not be as common in older people.
- Other triggers for depression include the loss of a loved one, the loss of social networks of friends and acquaintances because of a move, and even the hubbub of the holidays.



Visit [www.mhsc.org](http://www.mhsc.org) or scan this code with your smart phone for a free anonymous mental health screening.

**Clark County Suicide  
Prevention Coalition**

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# A Guide to Fighting The Winter Blues

*What Seniors & Their Caregivers  
Should Know*

Expectations may be high to feel jolly during the holiday season. However, some seniors experience situations and health concerns which may lead to just the opposite—feelings of depression. Some seniors may feel overwhelmed by the death of a loved one, the loss of a job or important relationship, and may begin to question the meaning of life.

All of these “triggers,” as they are called, can combine with the added pressures and interrupted routines of the holiday season to create an even greater risk of depression. Such feelings may pass as Christmas, Hanukkah and New Year’s Day fade into memory. But, these painful feelings may not pass, and instead, may lead to more serious depression lasting weeks or months. That’s when it’s important to get help.

Seniors in their 70s, 80s and 90s may not consider that increased tiredness, sleep problems, or changes in appetite and mood swings are actually signs of depression. Physical problems or life crises may be used to explain away the real symptoms of depression.

Some people may have been taught to ‘pick themselves up by their bootstraps’ and not to cry when things went wrong. It may be really hard to talk about having emotional problems or about experiencing depression. Seniors may feel like they need to be stoic and power through it.

Younger generations have grown up with research showing depression to be a physical illness rooted in brain chemistry and genetics, not personal failings or weakness. What can be done for someone who develops temporary or prolonged depression? The easiest prescription is for everyone to get up, get dressed, get out of the house, and connect with others.

## The DO's of managing holiday blues:

**Do** follow the three basics for good health:

- ◆ eat healthy foods.
- ◆ get plenty of rest.
- ◆ exercise regularly.

**Do** set realistic goals:

- ◆ organize your time.
- ◆ make lists.
- ◆ prioritize.
- ◆ make a budget and follow it.

**Do** create new traditions or different ways to celebrate.

**Do** allow yourself to feel a range of emotions, particularly at holiday times.

**Do** spend time with people who care about you.

**Do** enjoy free community activities.

**Do** spend time with new people or a different set of friends or family. Contact someone with whom you have lost touch.

**Do** focus on the positive. Make a list of positive memories to balance sadness felt about what is different or has changed.

**Do** something for or with someone else, like a neighbor or pet.

**Do** give yourself a break—plan to prepare (or buy) one special meal, purchase one special gift, and take in one special event. The rest can be ordinary, but will seem special because of the time of year and the people you're with.

**Do** treat yourself as a special holiday guest.

**Do** limit the number of alcoholic beverages you drink.

**Do** indulge in holiday foods, but enjoy those high in sugar and fat in moderation.

**Do** have realistic expectations of yourself and others.

**Do** watch your holiday spending.

**Do** pay close attention to your emotional and physical symptoms which may put you at risk for depression.

**Do** consult with your doctor or a mental health professional. Treatment is available and affordable.