



Ascension Counseling Center

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HOLIDAY BLUES

What are the Holiday Blues?

The Holiday Blues are when we feel sad, tired, lonely, or have difficulty with our usual level of functioning during the holidays. Thanksgiving and Christmas are the most common times for Holiday Blues. Symptoms of Holiday Blues may include headaches; sadness or unhappiness; stress; fatigue; sleeping too much; not being able to fall asleep or stay asleep; changes in appetite (eating too much or too little); agitation or anxiety; feelings of guilt; poor concentration; or not being interested in things that used to give you pleasure, such as food, work, friends, hobbies, or entertainment.

How Are the Holiday Blues Different from Depression

Although the symptoms for the Holiday Blues and Depression may be the same, the key to telling them apart is how strong the feelings are and how long they last. The feelings with Holiday Blues may be unsettling, especially if those around you are full of holiday cheer. However, they are short-lived, lasting only a few days to a few weeks around the holiday season. Emotions usually subside after the holiday season and a daily routine is resumed. With Depression, however, the symptoms are present nearly every day at least most of the day for more than 2 weeks and cause impairment that interferes with daily functioning (work, self-care, social activities).

What Are the Factors that Contribute to Holiday Blues or Make Them Worse?:

There may be many factors that contribute to Holiday Blues or make them worse. First is psychological. This may be the first holiday season without your spouse or a loved one. If you're already feeling depressed or isolated, seeing others who are having a good time often makes the situation worse. Being alone while others are spending more time with family can be hard. You may see images of happy couples and families having what appears to be "perfect" holidays.

Second is relational or family dynamics. You may be unable to be with your family because they have other plans that don't include you or be unable to be with your family due to

If you want to achieve greatness, stop asking for permission.

~ Anonymous

work, financial, time or travel restrictions. You may experience pressure to be with your family when you really want to spend time alone or with your immediate family, but the extended family expects you to be there with them.

You may be rekindling or resurrecting strained relationships between various family members that surface when everyone gets together. You may have residue stress left over from past negative experiences during the holidays—old fights, memories, or conflicts that haven't been resolved. Or you may experience stress from having to visit so many households and celebrate with four sets of re-married parents, all with conflicting expectations of your time.

Another contributor to Holiday Blues is finances. Buying gifts, holiday clothing, attending social functions, throwing holiday parties, all within a short period of time can lead to over-spending. Financial pressure can come from friends, family, and children to keep up with everyone else, to have the latest toys or games, to have the most lights on the house, to have the latest party dress, or throw the best parties.

Finally, physical issues contribute to Holiday Blues. Those whose health is already strained sometimes don't take extra caution. Extra time and energy required for shopping, cooking, baking, cleaning, and socializing, entertaining house guests, make presents, spending cards can result in poor health.

What Can You Do To Reduce The Problems Caused By Holiday Blues?

- Have realistic expectations. Don't expect too much from the holidays. You won't get the picture-perfect celebration you didn't get as a child.
- Talk about what you're experiencing with a friend, family member or professional. Surround yourself with supportive people. Avoid the negative ones, even if they are family. Acknowledge feelings of grief or loss.
- If you're feeling lonely, get out and around people. Volunteer to make the holidays better for others.
- Don't use Christmas as a time for family therapy. It is not the time to solve problems that exist the other 364 days of the year. Declare an amnesty with whichever family member or friend you are feeling past resentments. Don't let your relatives dump their laundry list of grievances and resentments they have about you.
- Give yourself permission to leave early or arrive late if someone will be drinking or is someone who has hurt you in the past.
- Prepare in advance to answer the hurtful or intrusive questions you know will be coming.
- For families in financial need who have older family members, shop the after Christmas sales and give gifts after Christmas.

NEWS, TRAINING & OUTREACH

Free Flood Support Group

Every Monday for 5 weeks from 6–7 PM, beginning on Monday 11/7. Meets at Ascension Counseling Center.

National Certified Counselor

Congratulations to Carolina Hernandez, PLPC, on becoming a National Certified Counselor (NCC).

Louisiana Counseling Association Conference

Stacy House, Carolina Hernandez, Courtney Brehm, Lisa Weber-Curry, Stephanie Turner, Ryan Schuette, Tatiyana Brown, Ava Gerald, Daryl Hebert, and Suzanne Hamilton attended the three day LCA conference in Baton Rouge.

ASSESSMENT: HOARDING DISORDER

This information cannot take the place of a professional evaluation.

- Persistent difficulty discarding or parting with possessions, regardless of their actual value.
- This difficulty is due to a perceived need to save the items and to distress associated with discarding them.
- The difficulty discarding possessions results in the accumulation of possessions that congest and clutter active living areas and substantially compromises their intended use. If living areas are uncluttered, it is only because of the interventions of third parties (family members, cleaners, authorities).
- The hoarding causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning (including maintaining a safe environment for self and others)
- The individual may or may not recognize that hoarding-related beliefs and behaviors are problematic.

PERSON-CENTERED STATEMENT

At Ascension Counseling Center you are at the center of your own care. Our goal is to treat you with dignity and respect. If you are not satisfied with the services that you are receiving, please let the receptionist know that you would like to speak to Lisa Weber-Curry, Clinical Manager (225/450-1172) or Suzanne Hamilton, Director (225/450-1160).

www.AscensionParish.Net/MH

**ASCENSION COUNSELING
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**HELPING INDIVIDUALS AND
FAMILIES CHANGE BEHAVIORS AND
CHANGE LIVES.**

The mission of Ascension Counseling Center is to provide individuals, couples, and families who reside in Ascension Parish with counseling services to improve their cognitive, emotional, and behavioral functioning to improve their lives.

HOURS

Business Hours

Mon - Thur: 8 am - 5:30 pm; Fri: 8 am - noon

Counseling Hours

Mon - Thur: 7 am - 8 pm; Fri: 8 am - noon

Psychiatrist Hours

Monday and Tuesday: 8 am - 6 pm

GROUPS / EVENTS

Mondays:

- ***Adult Substance Abuse Treatment group***, 6 - 8 pm, Gonzales.
- ***Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment group***, 4 - 6 pm, Gonzales.

Tuesdays:

- ***KKAY 1590 Radio 10 AM:***
- ***Adult Substance Abuse Treatment group***, 6 - 8 pm, Gonzales.

Thursdays:

- ***Adult Substance Abuse Treatment group:*** 6 - 8 pm, Gonzales.
- ***Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment group***, 4 - 6 pm, Gonzales.



SERVICES WE OFFER

COUNSELING

We offer outpatient mental health counseling for children, adolescents, adults, couples, and families in a comfortable setting with licensed professional counselors. Individuals come to us with a variety of issues of daily living, including academic failure, academic conduct problems, difficulty completing homework, difficulty falling or staying asleep, depression, anxiety, failure to perform up to potential at work, substance use, divorce, relationship conflict, poor communication skills, and more. To see if we can help you or someone you love, contact Dawn at 450-1158.