

Ask an Expert – Combating Loneliness During the Holidays

Cindy Jenkins

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The holiday season brings mistletoe, caroling, eggnog, gift giving, family, and friends. However, for a variety of reasons, it can also bring loneliness. A recent survey from the American Association of Retired Persons found that 31% of respondents said they had felt lonely during the holiday season sometime in the past five years, and 41 percent worried about a family member or friend feeling alone. Though loneliness is common, there are things you can do to enjoy the season, no matter what your situation. Consider these tips.

Service: Think of someone in need or a good cause to support when you are feeling down. This can help improve your mood and sense of self-worth. Among adolescents, service has shown to improve conflict resolution skills and vocational capacity. An act of service can be as easy as helping a family member, friend, or neighbor. If you are looking for a service opportunity, an internet search can help you find needs in your area.

Social relationships: We all need friends, family, and loved ones. However, even those with loved ones around them can feel lonely at times or have bouts with mental health issues. If you start feeling lonely this year, reach out to friends or family members. Something as simple as sending a text or engaging in a conversation can lift your spirits.

Self-love: Some psychologists believe that our level of self-love is connected to our ability to love others, and that in order to love yourself, you need to know and take care of yourself. Doing something nice for yourself can help

increase your happiness. For example, give yourself a gift, write in your journal, watch a movie, or enjoy nature. Whatever it is, do something that is meaningful to you and makes you happy.

Gratitude: Even when circumstances seem bleak, practicing gratitude can help you remember the good things you have in life. Studies show that gratitude is associated with well-being and can be used to help face difficult times. To increase your gratitude, write a note or verbally express appreciation to those around you, or make a list of things for which you are grateful.

There are many things that can help combat feelings of loneliness and poor mental health during the holiday season. Implementing ideas from the examples provided may help improve your mood and make the holidays happier.

For a list of references and citations, [click here](#).

Contact

Cindy Jenkins
cindy.jenkins@usu.edu

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