



For Immediate Release

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Stress & depression: The unwelcome gifts of the holiday season

Compass Mental Health offers advice on how to cope with holiday burdens

PHOENIX, AZ (November 23, 2011) – It’s the most wonderful time of the year! Unfortunately for many, the holiday season can often be stressful and trigger depression and anxiety. The secret to surviving the holidays lie in understanding the causes of stress, recognizing the symptoms, and knowing when to get help.

“The most common source of holiday stress is financial burden,” states Compass Mental Health Chief Clinical Officer Dr. Kevin Alexander. “In today’s economy, financial issues this time of year can overwhelm a family. Even traditions like gift giving and decorating the home affect finances during the holidays.” Other sources include fatigue or trying to do too much, unrealistic expectations, memories of loved ones who have passed away, and overindulgence of food, alcohol and shopping. “The demands we place on ourselves to be with family, travel, buy the best gift, host parties and more can take their toll this time of year and disrupt physical and mental health.”

Although this season is supposed to bring good tidings of joy, it can cause others to suffer headaches, insomnia or oversleeping, weight loss or gain, and anxiety attacks. “In trying to cope, some people may turn to alcohol or food, which further aggravates stress and depression. Instead, a way to deal with holiday stress is to watch what you eat and drink so that you don’t over indulge,” Dr. Alexander says. Making sure you set realistic goals for yourself and family, spending time with loved ones, getting enough rest, exercising and sticking to a budget are also ways to cope with the holiday season.

Learning to say no to the demands from friends, family, and co-workers will also help to avoid feeling resentful and overwhelmed this time of year. Once the holidays have passed, many can feel down or physically ill from stress taking its toll. It helps to know your limitations and when to reach out for help.

Compass Mental Health offers a wide array of out-patient counseling and crisis services that can lessen the burden of the holiday season, including phone consults, in-house counseling and even referrals for in-patient treatment. For a consultation or to schedule counseling, call Compass at 602-633-6200.

About Compass Mental Health

Compass Mental Health provides emergent mental health and substance abuse services for patients throughout Arizona. Our exceptional psychological services are administered through education, knowledge and insight. Compass’s purpose is to improve the health and independence of individuals, couples and families, with services tailored to meet specific needs. For more information, visit www.compassmentalhealth.com or call 602-633-6200.