



# NEWSLETTER

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DECEMBER 2024

SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER (SAD) AWARENESS MONTH, NATIONAL STRESS-FREE FAMILY HOLIDAYS MONTH, HUMAN RIGHTS DAY (DEC 10)

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM ALL OF US AT PROJECT FRONTIER!**

Our wish for you at the end of this year is for health, peace, and encouragement. We look forward to working with all of you even more in 2025!



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As the year comes to an end, we have some important topics to cover that can help you and your loved ones navigate the winter season. This month, we're focusing on Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) Awareness Month, National Stress-Free Family Holidays Month, and Human Rights Day on December 10th.

## SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER (SAD) AWARENESS MONTH

### What is it?

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that occurs at a specific time of year, usually in the winter when daylight hours are shorter. Symptoms include fatigue, depression, hopelessness, and social withdrawal.

### Recognizing Symptoms:

- Persistent low mood
- Loss of interest in everyday activities
- Irritability or anxiety
- Feelings of guilt or worthlessness
- Sleeping more than usual
- Craving carbohydrates and weight gain

### Coping Strategies:

- Stay active: Engage in regular physical activities to boost your mood.
- Maintain routine: Stick to a regular schedule for sleep and meals.
- Seek support: Talk to a mental health professional if you're struggling.
- Stay connected: Keep in touch with family and friends for social support.





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## NATIONAL STRESS-FREE FAMILY HOLIDAYS MONTH

Encouraging stress reduction and family harmony during the holiday season.

### UNDERSTANDING STRESS

Stress is our body's response to pressure or threat. It can be triggered by various factors, including work, relationships, financial concerns, and even positive events like holidays or promotions. While short-term stress can be beneficial by helping us to focus and perform under pressure, chronic stress can have detrimental effects on both our mental and physical health.

### SIGNS OF STRESS

Recognizing the signs of stress is the first step toward managing it. Common signs include:

- Emotional: Anxiety, irritability, depression, mood swings
- Physical: Headaches, muscle tension, fatigue, sleep disturbances
- Behavioral: Overeating or undereating, substance abuse, social withdrawal
- Cognitive: Difficulty concentrating, memory problems, negative thinking

### COPING STRATEGIES

Here are some effective strategies to help manage stress:

1. Exercise regularly: Physical activity can boost your mood and reduce stress.
2. Practice mindfulness: Techniques like meditation and deep breathing can help calm your mind.
3. Stay connected: Maintain social connections with friends and family.
4. Set realistic goals: Break tasks into smaller steps to avoid feeling overwhelmed.
5. Take breaks: Short breaks during work can help you recharge.
6. Seek professional help: If stress becomes unmanageable, consider talking to a therapist.



Newsletter Question:

**What is one thing you'll do this holiday season to promote your own self-care?**

Email your answer  
to [efaulkender@nkesc.org](mailto:efaulkender@nkesc.org)  
for a chance to win a prize!





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## NATIONAL STRESS-FREE FAMILY HOLIDAYS MONTH CON'T

The holiday season can be a particularly stressful time.  
Here are some detailed [Self-Care Tips](#) to help you navigate the festive season:

### Plan Ahead

- Create a schedule: List commitments and prioritize tasks.
- Delegate tasks: Ask family or friends for help.

### Budget Wisely

- Set a budget: Plan spending on gifts and decorations.
- Homemade gifts: Make personal, cost-effective presents.

### Prioritize Sleep

- Maintain a routine: Keep a consistent sleep schedule.
- Create a relaxing environment: Keep your bedroom cool, dark, and quiet.

### Say 'No' When Needed

- Set boundaries: Decline overwhelming invitations.
- Practice assertiveness: Politely refuse extra responsibilities.

### Practice Gratitude

- Daily gratitude journal: Note three things you're grateful for.
- Express gratitude: Thank those who make a difference.

### Engage in Relaxing Activities

- Hobbies and interests: Enjoy activities like reading or crafting.
- Nature walks: Spend time outdoors to reduce stress.

### Mindful Eating

- Balanced diet: Include fruits, veggies, and whole grains.
- Pay attention: Note what and how much you eat.

### Stay Active

- Regular exercise: Engage in activities like walking or yoga.
- Family activities: Encourage physical activities with family.

### Digital Detox

- Limit screen time: Engage in face-to-face interactions.
- Unplug before bed: Avoid screens an hour before sleep.

### Practice Self-Compassion

- Be kind to yourself: Accept that it's okay to feel stressed.
- Positive affirmations: Boost self-esteem with affirmations.

## MAINTAINING PEACE AND JOY

### Practice Gratitude

Take turns sharing what you're thankful for together around the dinner table.

### Set Boundaries:

Politely decline invitations or tasks that you know will overwhelm you.

### Mindfulness Practices:

Engage in mindfulness exercises to stay grounded.



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## FUN SELF-CARE ACTIVITIES

- **Holiday Movie Marathon:** Relax with favorite holiday films and popcorn.
- **DIY Spa Day:** Use face masks, take a bubble bath, and do your nails.
- **Creative Crafting:** Make decorations, knit, or use coloring books for kids and/or adults.
- **Holiday Storytime:** Read holiday-themed books together.
- **Crafting Ornaments:** Make ornaments with simple materials like paper and glitter.
- **Snow Play (or Fake Snow):** Build a snowman or make fake snow with baking soda and water.
- **Holiday Baking:** Bake and decorate cookies or cakes together.
- **Family Game Night:** Play board games or holiday-themed games like charades.
- **Holiday Music Dance Party:** Dance to a holiday playlist.
- **Decorating Together:** Decorate the house or tree as a team.
- **Gratitude Jar:** Add slips of paper with things you're grateful for.
- **Holiday Lights Tour:** Drive or walk together to see neighborhood light displays.

## RESOURCES FOR FURTHER SUPPORT:

- **National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH):** [Stress Management](#)
- **American Psychological Association (APA):** [Stress Resource Center](#)
- **Mental Health America (MHA):** [Stress Resource Page](#)

## HUMAN RIGHTS DAY (DEC. 10)

### What is Human Rights Day?

It commemorates the day in 1948 when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It serves as a reminder of the importance of human rights globally.

### Mental Health as a Human Right:

Mental health is an integral part of overall health and well-being, and everyone has the right to access mental health care and support.

### How to Observe the Day:

- **Educate yourself and others:** Learn about human rights issues and share this knowledge.
- **Volunteer:** Participate in local or global human rights initiatives.
- **Advocate:** Use your voice to support human rights causes on social media or in your community.

For more information, visit the [United Nations page on Human Rights Day](#).

AS WE HEAD INTO THE FESTIVE SEASON, LET'S TAKE TIME TO CARE FOR OUR MENTAL HEALTH AND SUPPORT THOSE AROUND US. REMEMBER, A LITTLE KINDNESS AND UNDERSTANDING CAN GO A LONG WAY IN MAKING THE HOLIDAYS JOYFUL AND STRESS-FREE FOR EVERYONE!