



HOLIDAY BLUES

What are the Holiday Blues?

Temporary feelings of sadness, fatigue, or stress triggered by the holiday season. Unlike clinical depression, the holiday blues are situational but can still impact mental health and job performance.

Common Triggers for Sheriff's Office Staff:

- Working on the holidays and missing family events
- Increased workload from holiday-related incidents
- Financial strain or challenges in gift-giving
- Reflecting on personal losses or difficult moments

1 in 4 police officers show symptoms of depression, and these symptoms can intensify during the holiday season.

You are not alone. Law enforcement officers and support staff report a 45% increase in stress during the holiday season.

75% of first responders feel working holidays negatively impacts their ability to participate in family traditions.

Police officers are at an increased risk of suicide, with rates 54% higher than the general population.



Tips for Managing Holiday Stress

1. Prioritize Self-Care:

- Get adequate sleep, even during irregular shifts.
- Maintain a healthy diet and hydrate.
- Schedule brief moments for mindfulness or breathing exercises.

2. Stay Connected:

- Use video calls or messages to stay in touch with loved ones if you are working.
- Bond with colleagues. Organize small holiday gatherings or potlucks at the station.

3. Set Realistic Expectations:

- Acknowledge that missing a family event does not mean missing the season's spirit.
- Plan alternative celebrations that fit your schedule.

4. Know When to Seek Support:

- If feelings of sadness or stress linger, reach out for help. It is a sign of strength, not weakness.



HCSO Support Options:

Peer Support Network

Chaplain Services

Behavioral Health Division

Employee Assistance Program

Through Aetna



Hotlines & Online Resources

- CopLine (1-800-267-5463): A confidential hotline for law enforcement and their loved ones.
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (988): 24/7 mental health support.
- NAMI: Offers a wealth of resources tailored to first responders. (703-524-7600; www.nami.org)
- HCSO Behavioral Health Division (346-286-3150): BHD services include an in-house clinic that offers confidential, no cost mental health services to HCSO employees.
- HCSO Peer Support Network (346-286-3175): Comprised of trained HCSO employees who offer peer-to-peer assistance.
- Aetna EAP (1-833-657-2111): Employee Assistance Program, a free service through Aetna insurance for Harris County employees and their household.

Apps for Stress Management

Headspace: Offers mindfulness exercises and meditations tailored to stress.

Calm: Provides tools for relaxation and better sleep.

First Responder Support Network: A dedicated app for law enforcement.

Remember: You Are Not Alone

The holiday season is a meaningful opportunity for us to pause and contemplate our core values and priorities. No matter where we find ourselves—whether navigating the busy streets, working in a detention facility, or facilitating communications within the center—each of your contributions plays a crucial role in enhancing the well-being of the community as a whole. During this reflective time, it is essential to prioritize your well-being while also fostering an encouraging and supportive atmosphere among your colleagues. Together, we can create a nurturing environment that uplifts everyone during this special season.

Happy Holidays from your team. Stay safe, stay strong, and know you are appreciated.