



DECEMBER 2022

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# HOLIDAY GUIDE

COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Take care of your mental and physical health this holiday season.



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## HOW TO MANAGE

# HOLIDAY STRESS

Holiday stress can stem from many things including worrying about finances, work deadlines, family, health, grieving loved ones or missed gatherings, and more. Physical stressors, such as losing sleep, an increased busy schedule, poor eating and drinking, and seasonal illnesses can contribute to mental stress as well.

## Recognizing Stress

Common signs you may be experiencing stress can include:

- Increased blood pressure or heart rate, backaches, headaches, muscle spasms, heartburn, chest pain, nausea
- Excess anxiety, worry, guilt, nervousness, racing thoughts, forgetfulness, feeling overwhelmed, increased frustration and annoyance, mood swings, social withdrawal, and depression

## Managing Stress:

Managing stress levels is easier when you start small. Practice the tips below to start reducing stress in your life:

- Set boundaries: say no to people or situations that increase your stress levels
- Practice self-care: Meditate, read, turn off screens, connect with others, or get exercise for at least 20 minutes a day
- Reach out: talk to family and friends so they can offer support
- Plan ahead: plan out your social calendar ahead of time, make a list of meal plans, and set goals and intentions about how you will manage finances or holiday shopping
- Avoid drugs and alcohol: substance use can increase the stress you already feel





# COPING WITH GRIEF

The holiday season can be extremely hard if you are grieving the loss of a loved one, a pet, lost relationships, or traditions. No matter what loss you are grieving, the tips below can help you cope and support your well-being during this difficult time:

## **Feel your grief**

You may hesitate to feel grief during the "jolliest" time of year, but you should recognize your emotions. Do not hide or fight feelings out of fear of affecting others' joy. Your grief is valid; to heal, you must express your emotions.

## **Manage your plans**

Do not feel pressured to attend every event you are invited to after your loss. Communicate with family and friends about what activities you want to do. It is ok to say no to an event, but a social balance is important, so you do not isolate yourself.

## **Acknowledge change but preserve the past**

Recognize the holidays may look different since your loss. Do not try and force old ways. Instead, create ways to merge past traditions with new ones. doing this will allow you to honor those you miss while also moving forward in the healing process.

## **Ask for support when you need it**

Communicate with friends and family when you are struggling. Let your support system know about changes in your holiday routine and do not be afraid to ask others to accompany you to events, ceremonies, or plans so you are not alone. If you are needing additional support, consider reaching out to a resource below:

Hospice SLO: (805) 544-2266; [hospiceslo@hospiceslo.org](mailto:hospiceslo@hospiceslo.org)  
1304 Pacific Street, SLO; [www.hospiceslo.org](http://www.hospiceslo.org)

Wilshire Hospice: (805) 269-0141; [griefsupport@whilshirehcs.org](mailto:griefsupport@whilshirehcs.org)  
277 South Street, Suite R, SLO; [www.wilshirehospicecc.org](http://www.wilshirehospicecc.org)

Adapted from Hospice SLO



# CONQUERING THE HOLIDAY BLUES



## 64% of people say they are affected by the holiday blues

Not to be confused with a clinical mental health diagnosis, the holiday blues are **temporary** feelings of anxiety, depression, sadness, fatigue, loss, and/or loneliness that surround the holiday season. Holiday blues can affect anyone but are especially triggered when someone experiences increased stress levels, expectations, and pressures of the holiday season.

### Avoiding the "blues":

- **Stick to normal:** rely on your everyday routines, plans, and lists to keep you organized and focused.
- **Get enough sleep:** a good night's rest decreases symptoms of fatigue and tension
- **Do not isolate:** surround yourself with supportive friends and family.
- **Practice self-care:** reading, music, meditating, cooking - the opportunities to recharge your emotional wellness are endless!
- **Get physical:** exercise has been proven to help reduce anxiety and depression.
- **Don't overextend or overschedule:** set reasonable expectations for yourself when it comes to cooking, shopping, social gatherings, holiday cards, etc.
- **Set a budget:** financial stress may worsen feelings of anxiety.
- **Eat healthy and limit your alcohol intake:** consume nutritious food, eat consistently, and avoid excessive drinking to decrease the chances of negative moods and low energy levels.

Adapted from NAMI

# SOBRIETY

## TIPS FOR STAYING SOBER DURING THE HOLIDAYS

### Have a plan

Plan ahead for gatherings that serve alcohol. What will you do or say if you are feeling triggered or if someone offers you an alcoholic drink? If you are not ready to talk about your sobriety, that's ok! When you arrive at a gathering look for non-alcoholic beverage options. People will feel less inclined to offer you an alcoholic drink if you are already enjoying a beverage.



### Have a backup plan

It is possible you may find yourself in a situation where you feel the urge to drink or use drugs. Having an "escape" plan can ensure you maintain sobriety. Find a sober friend to accompany you to gatherings. If they cannot be there for you in person, ask if you can call or text them in case you need support.

### Volunteer

Serving others during the holiday season can help you get outside of your head, increase your sense of worth, and build positive connections and relationships into your life. Look for regular opportunities to volunteer like serving meals at a shelter, visiting the animal shelter, or spending time with an elderly neighbor in need.



### Take care of yourself

As simple as it sounds, taking good care of yourself can make a huge difference in maintaining your sobriety. Get enough sleep, eat regularly and nutritiously, partake in physical exercise, and practice self-care. When basic needs are being met, you will feel less irritable, tired, and anxious and more likely to think clearly about staying sober.



# SUBSTANCE USE

## HOW TO REGULATE ALCOHOL AND DRUG INTAKE

Holiday stress can be made worse by using alcohol and/or drugs. Being aware of your own substance use, as well as others, can ensure that everyone has an enjoyable season.

### **Remember the reason for the season**

The holidays do not revolve around alcohol or drugs. They are about spending time with loved ones. Focus your party on something other than substances like good conversation, food, gingerbread building, cooking decorating, reindeer games, movies, or a gift exchange.

### **Provide options and respect boundaries**

If you are hosting a party, offer a variety of nonalcoholic drinks like water, juices, or sodas as well as low-alcohol alternatives for guests. Never pressure someone into drinking alcohol; if they say no, respect their decision.

### **Know your limit**

Make sure you are self-aware of your own substance limits. Do not try and "keep up" with others when drinking and avoid binge drinking by sticking to the one-in-one rule: one drink per hour. If you plan on drinking more than that, make sure you are eating and drinking plenty of water.

### **Check IDs and plan for DDs**

The holidays can be ruined quickly by underage drinking and drunk driving. If you are hosting a party, do not serve persons under age 21 or allow guests to drive home after drinking too much. Provide designated drivers or offer to call a transportation service like Uber or Lyft so everyone can get home safely.

# SAFE STORAGE

## OF HOUSEHOLD MEDICATIONS AND SUBSTANCES

### Keep your household safe

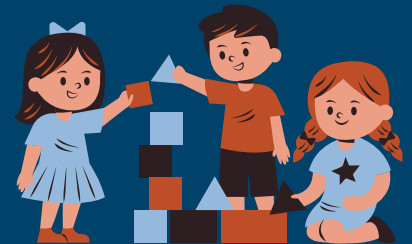
- Keep substances in child-resistant packaging and fully reseal them after each use
- Store and dispose of cannabis products and wrappers in areas not easily seen or accessible to children or pets
- Store substances & prescription medications in a lock box to prevent family members and/or visitors from taking them
- Do not share your medications
- Dispose of all expired, unwanted, and unused medications at your local pharmacy or “take back” event



**In pets:** watch for stumbling, urinary problems, lack of energy, drooling, vomiting, and/or agitation

### How to dispose of medications

- Pharmacies offer free medication disposal services both in person and through the mail
- Before disposing of your medication, remove the label or scratch off or scribble over personal information
- Do not flush unwanted medications down the toilet! Drugs poured down the sink or flushed down the toilet can seep into groundwater, pass through treatment systems, or enter rivers and lakes



**In children:** watch for loss of coordination, sleepiness and/or difficulty with breathing

### In case of emergency...

- Call California Poison Control at 800-222-1222 if you suspect a potential poisoning
- If the individual collapses, has a seizure, has trouble breathing, or can't be awakened call 911 right away
- Call your pet's local veterinarian or the Animal Poison Control Center at 888-426-4435 if your pet consumes substances





# SLO COUNTY RESOURCES

## SHELTERS

### **ECHO Shelters:**

630 Atascadero Avenue  
Atascadero, CA

134 Black Oak Drive  
Paso Robles, CA

805-462-3663  
[echoshelter.org](http://echoshelter.org)

### **40 Prado**

40 Prado Road  
San Luis Obispo, CA  
805-544-4004  
[capslo.org/40-prado](http://capslo.org/40-prado)

## FOOD ASSISTANCE

### **SLO Food Bank**

805-238-4664  
[slofoodbank.org](http://slofoodbank.org)

### **CalFresh- Department of Social Services**

805-781-1600  
[slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Social-Services/CalFresh](http://slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Social-Services/CalFresh)

## TOY DRIVES

### **Paso Robles Toy Bank**

805-674-3022  
[prtoybank.org](http://prtoybank.org)

### **Toys for Tots**

805-391-4430  
[atascadero-ca.toysfortots.org](http://atascadero-ca.toysfortots.org)

## RECOVERY RESOURCES

### **Central Coast Area Narcotics Anonymous**

1-800-549-7730  
[centralcoastna.org](http://centralcoastna.org)

### **Central Coast Intergroup (Alcoholics Anonymous)**

805-541-3211  
[sloaa.org](http://sloaa.org)

## MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

### **Cal Poly Counseling Services (Students Only)**

1 Grand Ave, Building 27  
San Luis Obispo, CA  
805-756-2511  
[chw.calpoly.edu/counseling](http://chw.calpoly.edu/counseling)

### **Cuesta College Mental Health Services (Students Only)**

Building 3100, Room: 3150  
Highway 1  
San Luis Obispo, CA  
805-546-3171  
[cuesta.edu/student/resources/healthcenter/mentalhealth](http://cuesta.edu/student/resources/healthcenter/mentalhealth)

### **Transitions- Mental Health Association (T-MHA)**

784 High Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA  
805-540-6500  
[t-mha.org](http://t-mha.org)

## MORE...

### **Center for Family Strengthening (CFS)**

3480 Higuera Street  
Suite 100  
San Luis Obispo, CA  
805-543-6216  
[cfsslo.org](http://cfsslo.org)

### **The Link Family Resource Center**

805-466-5404  
[linkslo.org](http://linkslo.org)

### **Family Care Network**

1255 Kendall Road  
San Luis Obispo, CA  
805-781-3535  
[fnci.org](http://fnci.org)

### **Community Action Partnership San Luis Obispo (CAPSLO)**

1030 Southwood Drive  
San Luis Obispo, CA  
805-544-4355  
[capslo.org](http://capslo.org)

### **SLO Salvation Army**

815 Islay Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA  
805-544-2401  
[sanluisobispo.salvationarmy.org](http://sanluisobispo.salvationarmy.org)





# HOTLINE NUMBERS

## 24/7 CRISIS LINES

### **Central Coast Hotline**

1-800-783-0607 (text or call)

### **National Suicide Prevention Hotline**

Dial 988

### **Friendship Line (People Aged 60+)**

1-800-971-0016

### **Crisis Text Line**

Text 'HOME' to 741-741

## LGBTQ+

### **Trevor Lifeline 24/7 (LGBTQ+ Youth)**

1-866-488-7386

TrevorText: Text TREVOR to 1-  
202-304-1200

### **Sage LGBTQ Elder Hotline**

1-877-360-5428

### **The LGBTQ National Hotline**

1-888-843-4564

### **Trans Lifeline**

1-877-565-8860

## MILITARY & VETERANS

### **Military & Veterans 24/7**

Dial 988 or 1-800-273-8255  
and press 1

Textline 838255

### **Tragedy Assistance**

1-800-959-8277

### **Vets 4 Warriors**

1-855-838-8255

### **Military OneSource**

1-800-342-9647

### **Intransition Psychological Health Resources Center**

1-866-966-1020





# SLOBEHAVIORALHEALTH CLINICS

## SAN LUIS OBISPO

Drug and Alcohol Services (Adult)  
2180 Johnson Avenue  
805-781-4275

Drug and Alcohol Services (Youth)  
277 South Street., Suite T  
805-781-4754

Mental Health Services, Martha's  
Place Children's Assessment  
Center (Youth 0-5 years old)  
2925 McMillan Avenue, Suite 108  
805-781-4948

Mental Health Services (Youth)  
1989 Vicente Avenue  
805-781-4179

Mental Health Services (Adult)  
2178 Johnson Avenue  
805-781-4700

24/7 Crisis Stabilization Unit  
2180 Johnson Avenue  
805-781-4275

Prevention and Outreach Programs  
277 South Street, Suite T  
805-781-4754

## GROVER BEACH

Drug and Alcohol Services (Adult)  
1523 Longbranch Avenue  
805-473-7080

## ARROYO GRANDE

Mental Health (Youth)  
345 S. Halcyon Road  
805-473-7060

Mental health (Adult)  
1350 East Grand Avenue  
805-474-2154

Services Affirming Family Empowerment (SAFE)  
1086 Grand Avenue  
805-474-2105

## ATASCADERO

Drug and Alcohol Services (Adult)  
3556 El Camino Real  
805-461-6080

Mental Health Services (Adult and Youth)  
5575 Hospital Drive  
805-461-6060

## PASO ROBLES

Drug and Alcohol Services (Adult)  
805 4th Street  
805-226-3200

Mental Health Services (Youth)  
805 4th Street  
2nd Floor, Suite 203  
805-237-3070





SLOBEHAVIORALHEALTH.ORG

1-800-838-1381

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FROM ALL OF US AT  
COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH,

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!