

Understanding & Addressing the Holiday Blues

For LifeSource community partners, patients and families.



WHAT ARE THE HOLIDAY BLUES?

The “Holiday Blues” are short-term feelings of sadness, anxiety, or loneliness that can arise during the holiday season. They are not a medical diagnosis, but they are real and can affect mood, sleep, appetite, and overall well-being.

Common triggers include:

- Missing loved ones or family traditions
- Fewer visits or feelings of isolation
- Changes in routine or health challenges
- Pressure to “be cheerful” despite inner sadness
- Feeling excluded when holiday programs center on one tradition

Signs to Watch For:

- Withdrawal from meals or activities
- Changes in sleep or appetite
- Tearfulness, irritability, or apathy
- Expressions of hopelessness (“I feel forgotten”)
- Physical complaints without clear cause
- Increased confusion or agitation in residents with dementia

How Families & Residents Can Help:

- **Validate Feelings:** Acknowledge sadness or grief without judgment.
- **Offer Presence:** Quiet companionship or listening time can ease loneliness.
- **Encourage Meaningful Activities:** Decorating, storytelling, or writing cards can spark joy.
- **Share Memories:** Legacy projects like scrapbooks or recorded stories honor traditions.
- **Connect Spiritually & Emotionally:** Chaplains, counselors, or peer volunteers can provide support.
- **Include Everyone:** Celebrate diverse traditions (Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Winter Solstice).
- **Use the Senses:** Familiar music, scents, and warm lighting can comfort and calm.
- **Stay Connected:** Cards, calls, or video visits help residents feel remembered.

WHEN TO SEEK EXTRA SUPPORT

If distress persists beyond the holidays or includes hopelessness, withdrawal, or severe mood changes, talk with staff about a referral to a behavioral health provider. Early support protects emotional health and dignity.

A MESSAGE OF COMPASSION

Every interaction matters. A smile, a shared story, or a gentle touch can ease loneliness. Together, we can make the holidays meaningful — even in moments of sadness.

LifeSource thanks you for helping create a season of connection, inclusion, and compassion.

