

Managing Emotions During the Holidays in the Black Community

James Lee, Jr., MD
Black Psychiatrists of America

Health Equity Webinar

December 12, 2023



MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

The purpose of the MHTTC Network is technology transfer - disseminating and implementing evidence-based practices for mental disorders into the field.

Funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the MHTTC Network includes 10 Regional Centers, a National American Indian and Alaska Native Center, a National Hispanic and Latino Center, and a Network Coordinating Office.

Our collaborative network supports resource development and dissemination, training and technical assistance, and workforce development for the mental health field. We work with systems, organizations, and treatment practitioners involved in the delivery of mental health services to strengthen their capacity to deliver effective evidence-based practices to individuals. Our services cover the full continuum spanning mental illness prevention, treatment, and recovery support.

The MHTTC Network uses affirming, respectful and recovery-oriented language in all activities. That language is:

STRENGTHS-BASED
AND HOPEFUL

INCLUSIVE AND
ACCEPTING OF
DIVERSE CULTURES,
GENDERS,
PERSPECTIVES,
AND EXPERIENCES

HEALING-CENTERED AND
TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE

INVITING TO INDIVIDUALS
PARTICIPATING IN THEIR
OWN JOURNEYS

PERSON-FIRST AND
FREE OF LABELS

NON-JUDGMENTAL AND
AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS

RESPECTFUL, CLEAR
AND UNDERSTANDABLE

CONSISTENT WITH
OUR ACTIONS,
POLICIES, AND PRODUCTS

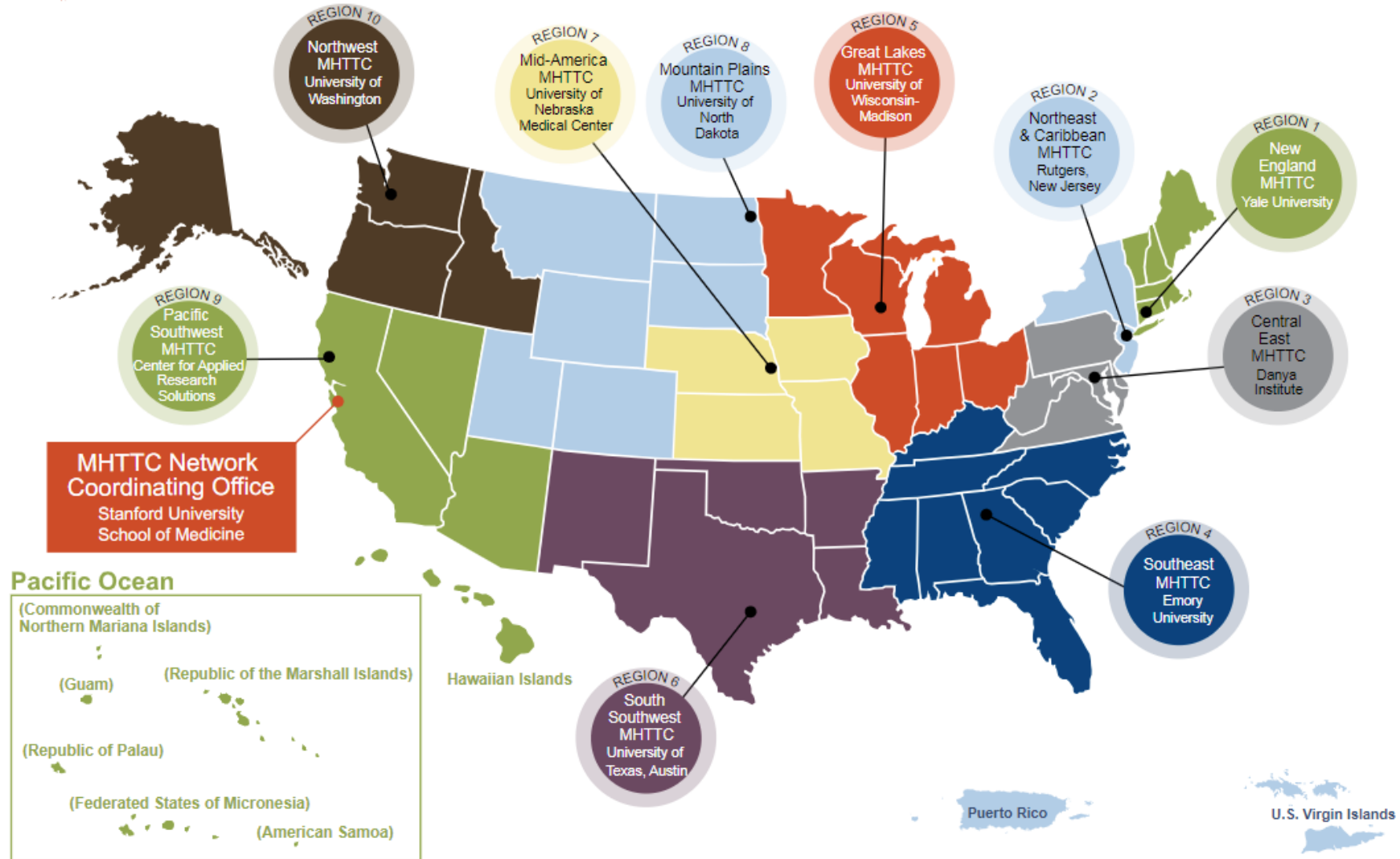


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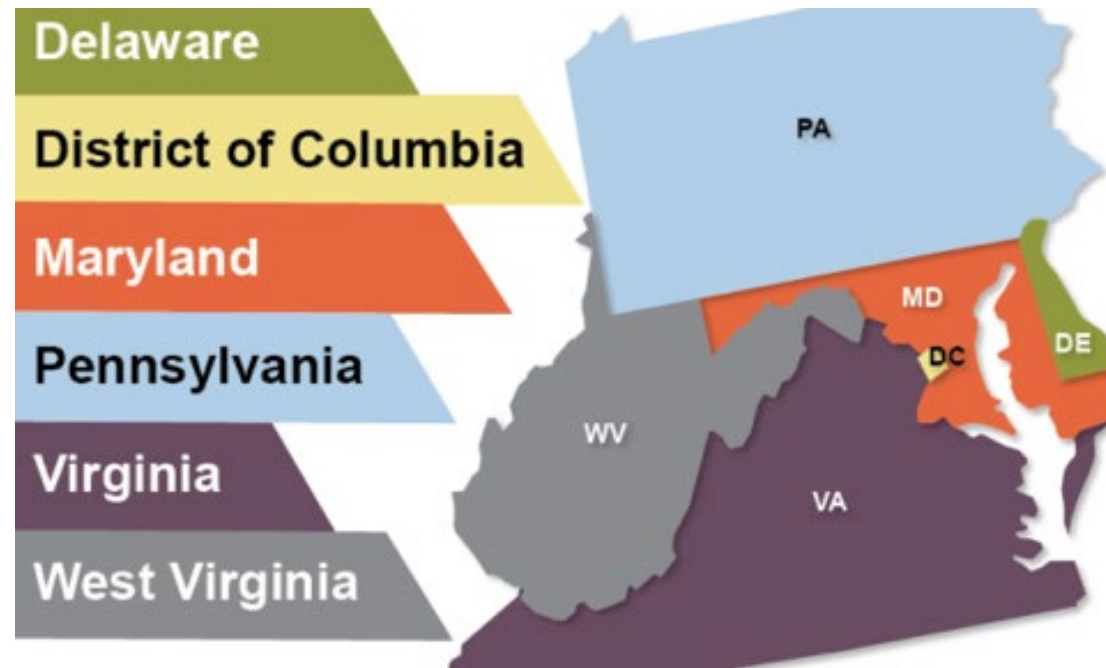
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MHTTC Network



Central East Region 3



Central East (HHS Region 3)

MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

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Acknowledgment

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At the time of this publication, Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D., served as Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

The opinions expressed herein are the views of the authors and do not reflect the official position of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), SAMHSA. No official support or endorsement of DHHS, SAMHSA, for the opinions described in this document is intended or should be inferred.

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Presented 2023

Managing Emotions During the Holidays in the Black Community

Presenter: James Lee, Jr., MD
Black Psychiatrists of America

Health Equity Webinar

Moderator: Annelle Primm, MD, MPH
Black Psychiatrists of America, Council of Elders

December 12, 2023

Today's Webinar

- December is a month full of celebrations of various religions and cultures.
- Family gatherings during this period may intensify grief associated with loss of loved ones in recent months or years.
- Today's program will offer guidance on how to manage grief during a time typically associated with joy.
- We thank the SAMHSA CE-MHTTC for its partnership on the BPA Health Equity Webinar series.
- Content has both Central East region and national relevance.
- Our featured speaker is James Lee, Jr., MD

OBJECTIVES

- Identify what are the “Holiday Blues”
- Review how stress can lead to anxiety and depression
- Discuss best methods for coping with emotional changes during the holidays

Holiday Blues

- Usually occurs between Thanksgiving and New Year's
- Common features include sadness, irritability, and worry as well as headaches, sleep problems, and fatigue among other *negative emotions and physical problems*
- For some, these are temporary symptoms that cause distress
- For those who have mental health problems, symptoms of their illness can also worsen during the holiday season

Mental Health and the Holiday Blues:

<https://www.nami.org/Press-Media/Press-Releases/2014/Mental-health-and-the-holiday-blues>

Holiday Blues in Families

- Children and teenagers can also experience the Holiday Blues
- Grumpiness/Moodiness
- Social Withdrawal
- Anger
- Expectations to dress up, participate in traditions/activities, and express appreciation for unwanted gifts can feel overwhelming

Holiday Blues or Depression:

<http://blogs.cornell.edu/ccesuffolkfhw/2015/12/22/holiday-blues-or-depression/>

Stress, anxiety and depression

- Stress is the physiological demand placed on the body when one must adapt, cope or adjust (Nevid & Rathus, 2003). It can be healthful and essential in keeping an individual alert; however, intense or prolonged stress can be overwhelming on the body.
- Anxiety is the body's normal reaction to stress.
- Anxiety becomes problematic when it interferes with everyday level of functioning at home, work, or school.
- **ANXIETY DOES NOT HAVE TO BE CAUSED BY A PARTICULAR STRESSOR OR CONFLICT!**

However... There can be reasons

- Increased expectations during the holidays
- Increased financial stressors (some self-imposed)
- Coping with grief or the loss of a loved one
- Loneliness, lack of social contacts

- Recent survey by NAMI: 24% of people with a diagnosed mental illness said the holidays worsens their condition
- 40% stated that it “somewhat worsened” their condition
- Common features include changes in sleep, headaches, fatigue, sadness, irritability, lack of motivation
- Many of the things we are expected to do during the holidays can be anxiety provoking

What can I do differently this year?

- Don't worry about how things should be...
 - Everyone isn't perfect and you shouldn't be expected to be either
- Be realistic...
 - You can't be everything to everyone. Whether there are physical, financial, or social limitations... it is OK to say "NO"

Continued...

- We can't choose family
 - Although time spent with family is a major emphasis during the holidays, sometimes you have to put your own mental health first.
- Keep your own well-being in mind
 - Don't get lost in the hustle and bustle of the holidays. Treat yourself, allow for some down time as well.

More...

- Volunteer
 - Being altruistic and helping others can be fulfilling for some. If distance or finances limit you in some way, actually “DOING” can be worth it’s weight in gold.
- Remember “the reason for the season”
 - Culturally, we have placed emphasis in many different areas. To remember what is truly important might help to reduce some of the expectations and underlying anxiety.

Really... What can I do??

- Keep usual routines and schedules as much as possible
- Get plenty of sleep
- Exercise
- Take care of yourself

Really... What can I do?? (Cont.d)

- Utilize supports
- Eat and drink in moderation
- Set reasonable expectations and goals
- Engage in relaxing activities such as listening to music
- Avoid alcohol when feeling stressed or down. Alcohol is a depressant.

Conclusion

- Multiple reasons why people become overwhelmed during the holidays.
- We have to keep things in perspective... Limitations may have to be set, we have to be real with ourselves and those around us.
- Never be afraid to express your emotions. It may be helpful to discuss how you feel with a friend or relative. If the feelings continue, please seek the help of a professional.

Resources/ Websites

- What We Know About the Holiday Blues: <https://evidencebasedliving.human.cornell.edu/blog/what-we-know-about-the-holiday-blues/>
- Mental Health and the Holiday Blues: <https://www.nami.org/Press-Media/Press-Releases/2014/Mental-health-and-the-holiday-blues>
- The Myth of the Holiday Blues
<https://evidencebasedliving.human.cornell.edu/blog/the-myth-of-the-holiday-blues/>
- Tips for Managing the Holiday Blues: <https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/November-2015/Tips-for-Managing-the-Holiday-Blues>

Questions



Appreciation



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Let's connect:

