



December 9, 2004

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For Immediate Release

## **TIS THE SEASON FOR HOLIDAY CHEER, AND HOLIDAY BLUES**

For many of us, the hustle and bustle of the holiday season is an enjoyable time. For others it evokes a rushed uncomfortable feeling, perhaps loneliness or added stress, something that many refer to as the holiday blues.

“For some, anxiety levels go up around the holidays,” notes Jeff Dismukes of the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. “It is not uncommon to experience a change in mood, or to feel a little down.

“There are a variety of reasons for this,” he added. “Often, there is stress from the pressure to have a great holiday season or perfect event. Sometimes there are financial pressures. Others wrestle with the feeling that they need to meet the expectations of someone else. The weather, the time changes, all these can raise a person’s stress or anxiety levels.”

These feelings are usually temporary and often go away as quickly as they come on. Some people, however, do have illnesses which can make them more susceptible to

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stressful environments and anxiety. Those with diagnosed panic or anxiety disorders, even if actively receiving treatment, can experience adverse effects.

There are some things that you can do to potentially alleviate holiday stress. Try to maintain as normal a routine as possible, get plenty of sleep, maintain a balanced diet, get moderate exercise, and avoid the consumption of alcohol or use of tobacco products.

Also, remember to take time for yourself and balance your needs with holiday obligations.

If you have a friend or a loved one who suffers from a diagnosed condition, or if you simply notice an increased stress level, it is important to be supportive. For those experiencing a particularly difficult time with feelings of panic, anxiety or stress, or who have other concerns and need someone to talk to, the ODMHSAS operates a 24-hour toll-free Reach-out hotline at 800-522-9054.

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Editor's Note: If you would like to make arrangements to interview a Department representative concerning this or other issues related to mental health, substance abuse, or domestic violence and sexual assault, please contact Jeff Dismukes at 405-522-3907.