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Post-Holiday Blues? Here's how to bounce back strong

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After the whirlwind of back-to-back festivities, there's a stillness that settles in, quiet yet heavy. It's the kind of silence that feels out of place, almost unsettling, like a void after all the noise and laughter. This feeling, so common yet deeply personal, is what many call the postholiday blues.



In this article, we'll break down what post-holiday blues are and provide practical ways to cope and bounce back.

Definition

Health and wellness website Health.com defined postholiday blues in a 2023 report as "the short-term feelings individuals may experience after the holidays, including sadness, loneliness, fatigue, disappointment, sluggishness and mental distress."

The website further implied that during the holidays, people pour their time and energy into things like decorating and cooking, crafting a whirlwind of activity and purpose. But when the festivities end, it's like stepping off a merry-go-round — suddenly, we're still unsure of where to go next, leaving us feeling a little lost.

The holidays can stir up mixed emotions and many face mental health challenges during this time. A study featured by health and wellness website, VeryWell Mind, titled "The Christmas Effect on Psychopathology" found that psychiatric emergencies decrease during Christmas, possibly due to the season's sense of connection. However, these challenges tend to rise again after the holidays.

Coping

The key to overcoming the post-holiday blues is to recognize these feelings early and prevent them from lingering, as the good news is they often fade on their own. A 2023 report by VeryWell Mind highlighted a few signs to watch for as the adrenaline rush of the holidays winds down: you may feel anxious, unmotivated, irritable, moody, stressed or even depressed. Struggling with sleep or feeling worried about finances are also common after the festivities. Being mindful of these signs can help you address them before they take hold.

According to Health.com, simple steps can support emotional and mental recovery after the holidays, such as getting at least seven hours of sleep each night for better mental and physical health, eating a balanced diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables to combat stress and avoiding alcohol and drugs, which can amplify negative emotions.

Regular physical activity, even something enjoyable with friends, can improve mood and ease anxiety. Staying connected with loved ones helps reduce feelings of loneliness, while planning future activities, like a trip or small event, keeps the excitement alive. Lastly, trying something new, whether it's cooking, a dance class or another fun hobby can reignite motivation and lift your spirits.

As school resumes, students slip back into their uniforms, office workers brave the morning commute and family homes grow quieter as loved ones return to their routines. In this transition from the holiday warmth to everyday life, it's important to remember that moments of connection and joy don't have to end with the season.

Carry the holiday spirit with you, be it through small acts of kindness, shared meals, or simply checking in on each other — because the essence of togetherness can brighten even the most ordinary days. And before you know it, the cycle begins anew, and the festivities will be right around the corner once more.