

Holiday Happiness

Don't Let the Humbugs Bite

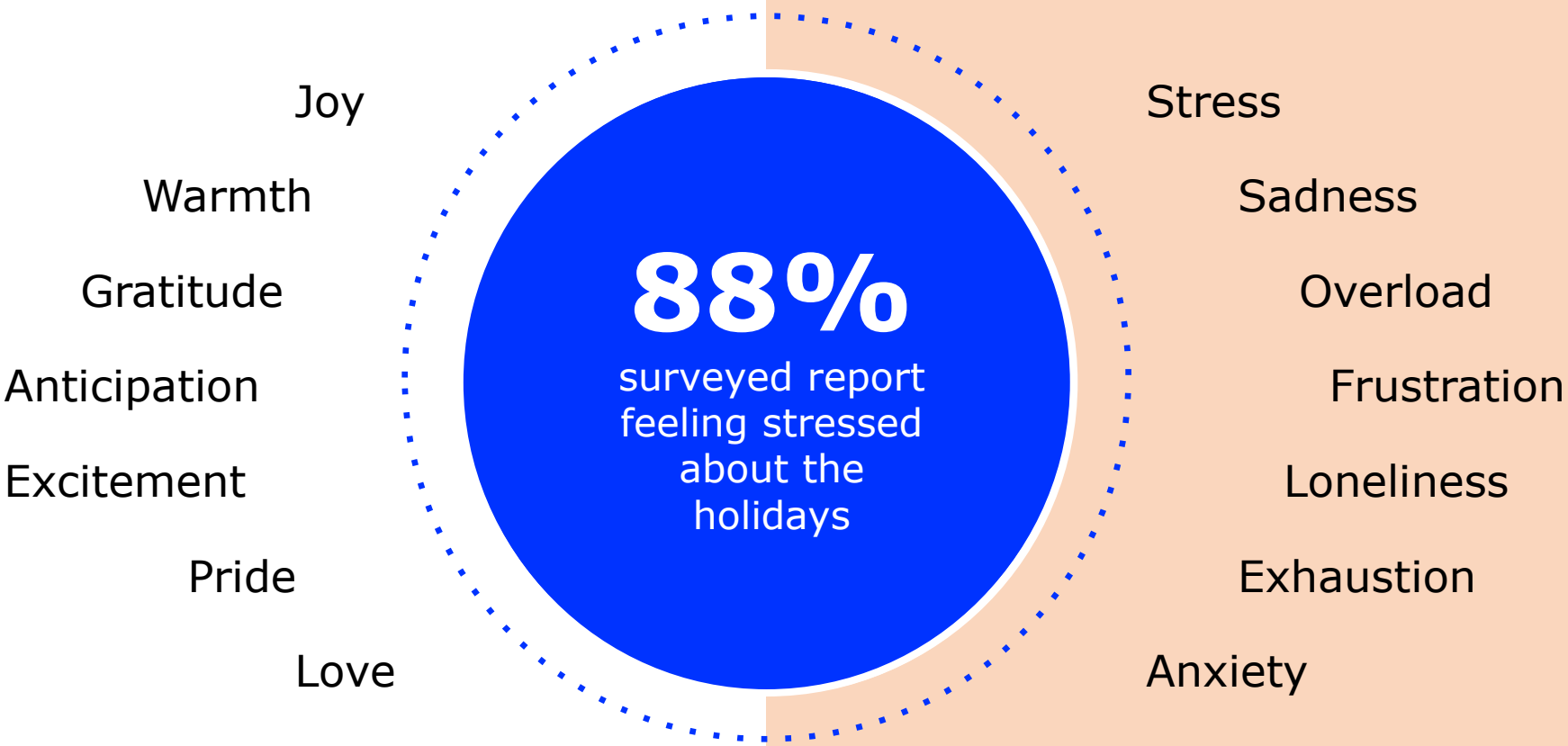
Presented by your Employee Assistance Program (EAP)



Seminar goals

- Discuss how the holiday season can affect our emotions
- Understand how the “holiday blues” differ from depression
- Review factors that contribute to or trigger holiday blues
- Learn self-care strategies that can help during the holidays
- Know the benefits of your Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The emotional rollercoaster



Holiday blues

Signs of the holiday blues include:

- Feeling over-stressed, overwhelmed
- Physical and emotional exhaustion
- Feeling sad, discouraged, disappointed
- Struggling with guilt or shame
- Anxiety or nervousness
- Being irritable, angry
- Changes in sleep or appetite
- Trouble concentrating, making decisions
- Withdrawing from others



(Cherry, 2020)



Is it depression?

- Holiday blues are a temporary change in mood related to a particular set of circumstances.
- Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) occurs in a regular pattern tied to the time of the year.
- Holidays can worsen existing mental health issues.
- If feelings persist, seek help.



Depression
is a condition
with a persistent
set of symptoms
regardless of
the season.

What triggers holiday blues?

- Demands, expectations
- Family, relationships
- Financial pressure
- Reflections on the past
- Loneliness or isolation



The stress associated with these triggers can be magnified by the fact that we can't or don't address them.



Know your struggles

- Acknowledge past triggers
- Be proactive, not reactive
- Develop a holiday self-care plan



Taking an honest assessment of your holiday stressors means you can consider how to gain control of them before the holidays begin.



Manage your expectations

- Set realistic goals
- Limit exposure to the hype
- Let go of perfectionism
- Imagine alternatives



Focus on the fun of making new memories instead of trying to recreate the past. You don't need to reach a past standard for an experience to be meaningful.



Dealing with family

- Plan strategies in advance for tensions and conflict
- Work on finding forgiveness to release past hurts
- Set limits to balance your needs with your family's
- Remember and incorporate whatever brings out the best in your family



Bring an empathetic, optimistic mindset to gatherings, but also your boundaries and an exit plan.



Don't go it alone

Be willing to make the first move

- Practical support: Share the load
- Social support: Alleviate loneliness
- Emotional support: Talk about it



You may be surprised to find that when you honestly express your feelings, others often respond in kind.



Navigating grief during the holidays

**Emotions of loss may be felt more deeply
against backdrop of the holidays...**

- Grief, pain
- Emptiness
- Anger
- Loneliness

**Supports to help
you find your way**



Prepare



Plan



People



Purpose

Make yourself more stress-resistant

Take care of yourself

- Release the grip of obligation
- Eat, drink, spend in moderation
- Keep self-care on your to-do list
- Make time to nurture yourself



My perfect “less than perfect” holiday

What would you do if no one were watching?
If there were no ads on TV telling you how to celebrate? If there were no pressure from family members shaping your agenda?

**What would bring you joy
and help you share it with others?**

Remember the “reason for the season”

Give the gift of...

- **Gratitude:** Power of thanks
- **Kindness:** Offer compassion
- **Wonder:** Notice the magic



Benefits of the EAP

- Face-to-face sessions
- Confidential
- Prepaid
- Unlimited telephonic consultation
- Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Household benefit
- Home/life support such as elder care, child care and pet care
- Convenience services
- Financial services
- Legal services

Benefits vary by employer. Please check with your HR for your specific EAP benefits.

References

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Thank you



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