Enjoying Thanksgiving Despite Depression

by YVONNE BANKS

Top Tips for Enjoying Thanksgiving With Depression

Many families look forward to getting together for the holidays in anticipation of seeing their loved ones; however, for some people, Thanksgiving can be a time of sadness and stress. Depression makes many people not feel like celebrating at all. To make matters worse, depression can be more severe in the winter months when our days are shorter.

As a result, many people experience unmet expectations when the holidays come around.

Knowing what is triggering your depression isn't enough to help you climb out of the well of despair. You have to do everything you can to be proactive to fight against depression during the Thanksgiving season.

Making Thanksgiving More Manageable

- **Volunteer work –** Volunteering for a soup kitchen or food drive and helping others in need could lift your spirits. Volunteering, giving back to your community, and sharing a festive holiday with others can be so rewarding.
- **Deal with sad memories –** The holidays bring up painful memories for many people. You cannot ignore them; acknowledging them will help with the healing process. Take a little time for yourself and express your feelings and emotions to yourself, through something like journaling or prayer.
- **Seek help –** If Thanksgiving is causing your depression to deepen, talk to someone. Seek counseling from a mental health professional, a trusted religious leader, or family or friend. You do not have to deal with it alone.
- **Make plans –** Don't be one to sit at home alone on Thanksgiving. Difficult as it may be, pick yourself up and go be with family or friends. It's okay to acknowledge your loneliness and sadness, but get out of your house and do a little mingling. It may be the ticket to making you feel better.

- **It's okay to say 'no' –** While you should make an effort to participate in some Thanksgiving festivities, don't feel guilty about saying no once in a while. Choose what you know you can accomplish but don't feel obligated to do more than you want to.
- **Take time for you –** Keep yourself healthy by taking a break when you need to and relax. Do things that you enjoy.
- **Be realistic –** Don't try to make your Thanksgiving get-together picture perfect. Trying to force it go smoothly will likely have the opposite effect. However, you can create great memories by offering a relaxed time for everyone. Take time for every family member to share something they are thankful for.
- **With extended families –** Schedule visits way in advance, and then stick to your commitment to make the trip. Communicate openly to avoid problems later.