University of Phoenix College of Social Sciences Counseling Survey

Roughly two-thirds (66%) of U.S. adults say mental health is a very or extremely serious issue, and two-thirds (67%) of Americans cited personal experience dealing with mental health issues.

45% of U.S. adults say they have experienced sadness or depression around the fall and winter festive season.

Family can be friend or foe
47% of those who experienced seasonal sadness or depression during the holidays cite spending time with family and friends as a way to deal with it.

But roughly a quarter each of US adults say family or relationships are the issues for which they’d seek counseling.

Reluctance to seek treatment and barriers to counseling remain
While almost half of U.S. adults (48%) say they would be likely to seek counseling for their friends and family around the festive time of year, only two-in-five (40%) would be likely to seek out counseling for themselves. Of the U.S. adults who have sought counseling, 42 percent have experienced barriers or obstacles to care including:

- Financial limitations: 68%
- Uncertainty regarding effectiveness of counseling: 32%
- Access to health insurance coverage: 32%
- Social stigma: 31%
- Reluctance to face problems: 29%

Roughly 2 in 5 of those who experienced seasonal sadness or depression cited:

- Personal Grief: 44%
- Loneliness: 43%
- Financial Strain: 38%

Marriage/Relationship Issues: 24%
Family Issues: 22%

Those prone to mental health issues such as depression or anxiety can be more vulnerable to seasonal triggers such as the financial and emotional stress that can accompany the festive time of year, which makes awareness and access to treatment critically important from November through January.

Tammy Woody, Ed.D., dean of faculty for University of Phoenix College of Social Sciences

Tips To Keep The Holiday Season Festive

Take Inventory.
Acknowledge your feelings and realize it’s okay to express them. The holiday season doesn’t automatically do away with feelings of sadness. That’s why it is important to devote quality time for yourself to step back and take stock of how you feel.

Stay Active.
Keep your mind and body moving. Physical activity in any form can improve your sense of well-being and overall health. Activities like painting, sculpting, drawing, and photography are relaxing and rewarding hobbies that stimulate your mind and body.

Try Something New.
The holidays can be a reminder of painful memories of our past. While it’s important to reflect, celebrate today by incorporating a new tradition in your holiday plans this season.

The 2015 survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Poll on behalf of University of Phoenix September 28-October 8, 2015, among 1,014 U.S. adults ages 18 and older. For more about University of Phoenix College of Social Sciences, visit www.phoenix.edu/socialsciences.