

Replacing Holiday Stress with Holiday Joy

Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas from the Spink Area Support Network. While the holidays bring so much JOY from family, friends, celebrations, and beautiful decorations they can also cause undue stress. Our agricultural community this year may feel particularly more stress than normal as the harvest season will be continuing late into the year. This may leave a spouse to plan a holiday celebration or shop by themselves when they normally have someone else to help. Financial hardships are also being felt this holiday season in our agricultural communities as markets have been low and uncertain, late planting due to flooding, late harvest, farm transfer issues, production challenges, bad weather and wet conditions, natural disasters, and more. It is important to remember our strong farming culture and community during this time. Give a lending hand or help out as this year is particularly stressful to many.

This list below is 5 ways to cope with holiday stress and turn it into holiday joy.

1. Get Moving!

Exercise releases endorphins, which are the feel-good neurotransmitters in your brain. Regular exercise relaxes has many benefits for your body's health – mentally, emotionally and physically. Even taking a short walk before or after meals can help you. If the weather isn't conducive to a walk, have a short dance party in your living room.

Benefits of exercise:

- Increased self-confidence
- Decreased anxiety
- Better sleep
- Decreased stress levels
- Better physical shape
- Increased daily focus
- More energy

2. Be Social

A part of human nature is the desire to fit in or be part of a group. Therefore, taking the time to socialize and spend time with other people is an important part of staying healthy. Talking to family and friends calms your nervous system. The holidays are a time for family and friends to come together and it's a great time to relieve stress through interaction.

Benefits of socializing:

- Reduce stress
- Feel supported
- Help develop a more active lifestyle
- Stay mentally alert
- Reach your goals

3. Give Back

During the holidays it's easy to focus on material things and inward thoughts but often these lead to stressful thoughts as we strive to "keep up with the Joneses". A wonderful thing to do during these times is give back to those less fortunate. You can volunteer your time serving food at a local shelter, donate warm clothing to the homeless or even donate money to your favorite non-profit. Focusing on others can often lead to feelings of connectedness and help you appreciate the things you have, which can lead to reduced stress levels.

4. Take Control

The holidays can be a very busy time with family obligations, meal preparations and much more. Having too many things on your plate, at one time, can increase stress levels due to a lack of time. For your health, learn how to say no. Learning how to prioritize your commitments and choosing what you can handle are important.

5. Just Breathe

Breathing pulls fresh oxygen from the air into the blood stream. This oxygen feeds all the body's organs including the brain and central nervous system. Deep, relaxed breaths in through the nose calms the nervous system and helps the body deal with stress. When you're feeling stressed, try pulling a few deep breaths in through your nose and exhaling through your mouth. Yoga also focuses on breath control and can be a helpful activity to reduce stress levels.

As the holiday season rapidly approaches, focus on the things you can change and not on what you cannot control. If you do feel particularly stressed this holiday season please utilize the local mental health resources in the list below. Also, remember you are NEVER alone. So many farmers and producers are feeling isolated and stress. Please know there is always a way forward. Happy Thanksgiving! Happy Harvest Season! Merry Christmas!

Local Resources

- **Avera Farm:** Farmers, ranchers and people who live in rural communities
 - You can 1-800-691-4336 24 hours a day.
 - The call is free and confidential. The hotline is staffed by trained assessment counselors who put callers in touch with local mental health resources.
 - Now offering **FREE** counseling services for farmers and their families-at no cost. With the current state of the industry, we understand that farm families can feel overwhelmed in times of stress, instability, and uncertainty. We're here to help. Call 605-225-1010 for more information.
- **3 Wise Women Counseling & Recovery Services, Redfield:** Counseling, Mental Health Services, Chemical/Addiction Services.
- 1005 1st St. West, Suite #2, Redfield, SD
 - **Marcie Robertson LAC**, (605)450-6031, Licensed Chemical Addiction Counselor
 - **Tonya Jungwirth LPC-MH**, (605)460-1616, Licensed Professional Counselor-Mental Health
 - **Anne Jockheck LPC**, (605)450-1111, Licensed Professional Counselor
- **Community Mental Health Centers in South Dakota**
 - Individuals who meet programmatic and financial eligibility guidelines or who have considerable personal circumstances, may qualify for state funded services.

- Northeastern Mental Health Center: Jo McCool, MS, LPC, QMHP, **Northeast Mental Health**, Aberdeen, (605)229-1000
 - Community Counseling Services (Hand, Beadle, Kingsberry) Huron: 605.352.8596
- **NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness**
 - NAMI South Dakota
 - <https://namisouthdakota.org/>
 - NAMI Aberdeen
 - Amy Sanderson at NE Mental Health @ 605-225-1010
- **Helpline Center South Dakota**
 - South Dakota's leader in suicide prevention and response. If you or someone you know is having suicidal thoughts please call 1-800-273-8255 anytime, day or night. All South Dakotans have access to the crisis line all day, every day. The service is free and confidential.
 - Call 211 or Text your zip code to 898211
 - You are not alone. Every day people turn to 211 for information and support – whether financial, family, health, or disaster-related. The call or text is free and confidential.
 - Students from high schools across South Dakota can text to talk with caring staff. Help is available 24/7.
 - Text4Hope serves all high schools in South Dakota. Teens can text icare to 898211 to talk with a caring staff from the Helpline Center. Help is available 24/7.
- **Redfield Clinic & Community Memorial Hospital:** (605)472-0510
 - Telehealth: Mental Health Services
- **Veteran Services**
 - Veterans Crisis Line
 - <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/> or call 1-800-273-8255
 - Veterans & Substance Abuse
- <https://www.drugrehab.org/veterans-and-substance-abuse/>