Holiday Mental Health Promotion & Suicide Prevention Through Awareness and Preparedness

Miriam Silman, MSW & Beck Whipple
November 16, 2022
Roadmap

The Reality of Holiday Stress: Yes, It’s Real!

How Stress Impacts the Brain & Body

What To Do? Mental Health Preparedness (CODE RED)
Self-Awareness Reminder

• Pay attention to your own needs & responses

• Take care of yourself however you need to during the presentation and after; you may be impacted even after you leave

• Use coping skills that help you metabolize your responses to trauma

• Find a safe space in which you can process your experiences – this may mean using coping strategies including talking to colleagues, friends, family, or a professional provider
Holiday Stress
Tips to Minimize Holiday Stress

• Acknowledge your feelings without judgment or shame
• Connect with others you like and trust
• Set realistic expectations: re: people, money, time, enjoyment
• Make a plan
• Set boundaries: it’s okay to say “no”
• Avoid “all or nothing”
• Take a break: breathing, mindfulness, grounding, movement, etc.
• Volunteer, do something pro-social
Loss Reminders/Trauma Reminders
1. Amygdala
2. Hypothalamus
3. Adrenal glands release adrenaline and cortisol
4. Heart rate, blood pressure & breathing rate increase
5. Prefrontal Cortex
6. Hippocampus

Brain Body Stress Response
Brain Energy Allocation
When Regulated

Cognition
Social/Emotional
Regulation
Survival

Brain Energy Allocation When Experiencing Harm

Cognition
Social/Emotional
Regulation
Survival

Adapted from Holt & Jordan, Ohio DoE based on Perry, B. (2006); Courtesy of Leora Wolf-Prusan, Pacific Southwest MHTTC
Sleep is Your Superpower
Resilience

“Resilience is not a thing or an attribute, but a flow. It moves through the body, and between multiple bodies when they are harmonized.”

-- Resmaa Menakem (2017)

“Resilience is my ability to stay related to my challenges.”

-- Thomas Hubl (2021)
Our Shared Humanity

“My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together.”

Desmond Tutu
PREPARATION IS THE KEY
Universal

Defined as affecting or done by all people or things in the world or in particular group; applicable to all.
Building Your Own Code Red Safety Plan
What is **CODE RED**?

**COntact**  
**DElay Decisions**  
**RElax**  
**Distract**
CODE RED

On my very, very worst day, when things aren’t working out, I can...

**CONTACT**
Who can I reach out to help me?

**DELAY DECISIONS**
What are my reasons for living?

- Always call 911 if you are in immediate danger of harming yourself.
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988
- Crisis Text Line: Text “KY” to 741-741

**RELAX**
What helps me calm down?

**DISTRACT**
What can keep my mind off things upsetting me?
CODE RED: CONTACT

LIST THE PEOPLE YOU CAN TURN TO WHEN YOU NEED SOMEONE

• Friends
• Family
• Counselors
• Trusted People

I’LL BE THERE FOR YOU
CODE RED: DELAY DECISIONS

LIST THE THINGS YOU CAN THINK ABOUT TO GIVE YOU MOTIVATION & HOPE

Reasons for Living

• Aspirations
• Dreams
• Future
• Accomplishments
• Career
• Goals
CODE RED: RELAX

ANYTHING YOU CAN DO TO FEEL MORE CALM
Breakout Room Activity
CODE RED: DISTRIBUTE

ANYTHING YOU CAN DO TO KEEP YOUR MIND OFF THE CURRENT SITUATION
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTACT</th>
<th>DELAY DECISIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELAX</td>
<td>DISTRACT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- CONTACT
- RELAX
- DISTRACT
CODE RED

IF THESE SKILLS ARE NOT WORKING FOR YOU OR A FRIEND, CONTACT CRISIS SERVICES.

Always call 911 if you are in immediate danger.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
9-8-8

Crisis Text Line:
Text “KY” to 741-741
CODE RED SAMPLES

CONTACT
Who can I reach out to help me?

1) Name: 
   Phone Number: 614-555-0124

2) Name: Aunt Lissa
   Phone Number: 740-555-4321

RELAX
What helps me calm down?
- Walking the dog
- Taking a warm shower
- Lying in my bed and taking deep breaths

DELAY DECISIONS
What are my reasons for living?
- To take care of my dog
- Go to college
- My family
- Play basketball this winter
- Talking to my friends
- Ask mom to take me for a car ride
- Play a video game

DISTRACT
What can keep my mind off things upsetting me?

Always call 911 if you are in immediate danger of harming yourself.
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 9-8-8
Crisis Text Line: Text “KY” to 741-741

Always call 911 if you are in immediate danger of harming yourself.
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 9-8-8
Crisis Text Line: Text “KY” to 741-741

Who can I reach out to help me? What are my reasons for living? What helps me calm down? What can keep my mind off things upsetting me?
Miriam Silman, MSW
Trauma & Resilience Advisor
Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities
Cabinet for Health and Family Services
miriam.silman@ky.gov

Beck Whipple
Statewide Suicide Prevention Coordinator
Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities
Division of Mental Health
beck.whipple@ky.gov