

PROJECT NAF

Nurturing Asheville & Area Families



Jasmine L. Shepard, Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative Outreach Worker, for developing slides for the Project EMPOWER Program, and to the Asheville City School System for the opportunity to present the Project EMPOWER Program to the Asheville City School System Board (November 2012).

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Do You Have *Peace & Joy?*

The holiday season often brings two unwelcome guests — stress and depression. Not surprising huh?

The holidays present a myriad array of demands: parties, shopping, baking, cleaning, entertaining, and decorating, to name a few. But with some practical tips you can minimize the stress that accompanies the holidays, and you may even end up enjoying the holidays rather than feeling "I will be glad when it is all over."

What causes the holiday blues?

Sadness is a truly personal feeling. What makes one person feel sad may not affect another person. Typical sources of holiday sadness include: stress, fatigue, unrealistic expectations, over-commercialization, financial stress, and the inability to be with one's family and friends.

Three Main Triggers: Holiday stress and depression is frequently associated with relationships, finances, and physical demands. (EmpowHer.com)



Belinda Grant, Executive Director of NAF.
Photo: Urban News

Tools for Dealing with Holiday Depression and Stress

BY BARTON GOLDSMITH, PH.D.



- 1) Keep your expectations balanced. Remember that everything doesn't have to be perfect and don't worry about things that are out of your control.
- 2) Don't try to do too much. Fatigue, over scheduling, and taking on too many tasks can dampen your spirits. Learn to say no, delegate as much as possible, and manage your time wisely.
- 3) Don't isolate. If you're feeling left out, then get out of the house and find some way to join in. There are hundreds of places you can go to hear music, enjoy the sights, or help those less fortunate.
- 4) Don't overspend. Create a reasonable budget and stick to it. Remember it's not about the presents, it's about the presence.
- 5) It's appropriate to mourn if you're separated from or have lost loved ones. If you can't be with those you love make plans to celebrate again when you can all be together.

- 6) Many people suffer depression due to a lack of sunlight because of shorter days and bad weather. Using a full spectrum lamp for twenty minutes a day can lessen this type of depression called SAD (seasonal affectiveness disorder)
- 7) Watch your diet and remember to exercise.
- 8) It's normal to eat more during the holidays, but be aware of how certain foods effect your mood. If you eat fats and sweets, you will have less energy, which can make you feel more stressed and run down. It can be very helpful to take a walk before and/or after a big holiday meal.

Be aware of the Post Holiday Syndrome. When all the hustle and bustle suddenly stops and you have to get back to the daily grind it can be a real let down. Ease out of all the fun by planning a rest day toward the end of the season.

How Can You Turn Holiday Stress into Peace & Joy?

- Count your blessings.
- Concentrate on what you have and not on what you don't have
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Don't worry about the things you can't control
- Exercise and eat good, nutritional foods
- Avoid caffeinated beverages
- Try to get eight hours of sleep each night
- Do something just for yourself
- Spend quality time with friends and family

Source: www.mayoclinic.com/health/stress/MH00030

Project EMPOWER Services

Cultural Enrichment Activities; College Tours; Goal Setting; Teen Talk Radio (Wres 100.7).



After-school curriculum sessions are held from 3:45-5:30 p.m.

on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, at Asheville Middle school in collaboration with the In Real Life afterschool program.

In-school curriculum sessions are held twice a week, from 2:45-3:30 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday for a one month period, at William Randolph School.



Let's Say **NO** to Teen Pregnancy!

Did You Know?

NC's national ranking for teenage pregnancy is #14 in the entire country

More than 10,000 North carolinians between the ages of 10-19 become pregnant each year.

In the U.S., rates of HIV, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and unintended pregnancy are disproportionately high among youth of color, particularly young



African American and Latina women, when compared to other youth.

The Solution

To help prevent negative sexual health outcomes, youth of color need accurate, comprehensive, culturally competent programs which reflect the realities of their lives.

Source: Advocates for Youth

Don't Forget!

With your busy schedules and holiday demands don't forget:



Lay Your Baby **On Back** to Sleep and **Stomach** to Play