



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 30, 2019

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Keeping Happy and Not SAD During Winter

(MALDEN)--Winter is one of the hardest times of the year for many, and feelings of sadness, loss, or isolation are very common especially among older adults. The holidays are over, the days are cold and short, less light for Vitamin D, there are fewer nutrient-rich foods around and it's harder to get exercise than in the nice months. It's all a recipe for high anxiety and suffering from a type of depression called Seasonal Affect Disorder, or SAD.

People suffering from SAD can set themselves into a depression, which is the most common ailment in those aged 60 and over. Mystic Valley Elder Services clinical team offers some positive steps that may help you feel healthier this winter.

1. **Acknowledge your feelings and let yourself off the hook.** It is okay not to feel cheerful all the time.
2. **Reach out.** Being alone and lonely are not the same thing but if you are feeling particularly isolated, please seek out your community. Book clubs, activity groups in your building, senior centers, volunteering, and civic or religious organizations are good places to start. Broaden your friendships.
3. **Do not abandon healthy habits.** Be kind to your body and mind by maintaining your self-care practices. Eat well and get plenty of sleep.
4. **Take a breather.** Make some time for yourself. Even if you spend plenty of time on your own, dedicating time to spend *on* yourself will help you return to yourself.
5. **Seek professional help if you need it.** You may find it empowering to face the winter with your own health and wellbeing in mind. However, despite your best efforts, you may feel persistently sad or anxious, unable to sleep, and dismayed by even routine tasks. If these feelings last for a while, ask for help.

If you need professional help, Mystic Valley Elder Services operates a Mobile Mental Health program for older adults who need professional mental health services but are unable to leave their homes for treatment or counseling. Through its Mobile Mental Health program, clinical caseworkers provide outreach to elders experiencing mental health conditions that impact their

functioning and ability to get their needs met. To find out more about this program, call us at 781-324-7705.

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About Mystic Valley Elder Services

Located in Malden, Mass., Mystic Valley Elder Services is a non-profit agency that provides essential home- and community-based care and resources to older adults, adults living with disabilities, and caregivers who reside in Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Medford, Melrose, North Reading, Reading, Revere, Stoneham, Wakefield and Winthrop. Agency services include coordination of home care, transportation, Meals on Wheels, and information, advice and referrals. For more information, please call (781) 324-7705 or visit www.mves.org.