

'Tis the Season to be Jolly...Really?

"It's the most wonderful time of the year!"

"You better not pout, you better not cry."

"Tis the season to be jolly!"

The holidays are often advertised as a non-stop joy ride through the end of the year. For many of us, the holiday season is a merry time. We get together with friends and family, share delicious meals, watch holiday movies, give presents, and make memories.



But the reality of the season is complicated. One person's best year could be another's worst. The holiday season can bring up unpleasant feelings and cause conflict and tension. Maybe you're going through a rough patch in your professional life or struggling with relationship issues. Maybe you're grieving the loss of a loved one. Or maybe things feel "off" for no reason at all.

If you aren't feeling very merry this season, that's ok. Whatever the circumstances, your feelings are valid, and you don't have to suffer in silence. Here are six tips for coping with your not-so-jolly feelings.

- 1. Release your emotions.** Cry, yell, take a run or a hike, get a message, write in a journal – do whatever you need to do to release your emotions. Sometimes, just letting out your feelings can help your heart feel lighter.
- 2. Grab a hold of the parts of the holidays that you love and skip the rest.** It will help you to feel better and experience the joy of the season when you make the choice to honor the traditions that you hold dear and say no to the things that bring you less joy.
- 3. Make your social circle as small or as big as you need.** Whether you need space or you need people, do what is best for you. Don't allow social pressures or obligations to dictate your holiday plans.
- 4. Find time for self-care.** Make time to take care of yourself and do things that uplift you. Even if you don't completely find your holiday cheer, you will at least be in a better position to cope during this season.
- 5. Stay off social media.** If you are struggling to find your positive holiday spirit, seeing other people's highlight reels doesn't help. Instead of turning to social media, pick up the phone and reach out to a friend or loved one.
- 6. Ask for help.** Don't be afraid to ask for help. There are people in your life who are willing to help and support you when you are feeling overwhelmed. Use this opportunity as a chance to connect with them.

If you aren't feeling very "merry and bright" this holiday season and need more help to manage your emotions than these tips can provide, contact Mutual of Omaha to access your confidential free Employee Assistance Program benefit.