Clinical counselor offers tips to beat holiday depression

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The holiday season can invite unwelcome guests into your life, such as loneliness, money problems, family demands and unrealistic expectations. The stress and anxiety that accompany those issues can

lead to sadness and depression. But Debbie Fuehrer, a clinical counselor at Mayo Clinic, has some tips to take back your holiday happiness.

Most people expect the holidays to be a happy, jolly time. But that doesn't match reality for everyone.

"Maybe your relatives aren't showing up for dinner. Or you are estranged from a family member. Or there are financial concerns," says Fuehrer. "And it's not fitting with the way the holidays are supposed to be."

She says people are bombarded by the media during the holidays with expectations of having the next best thing. And that can make you feel depressed because nothing is good enough.

"At that point, it's time to switch to gratefulness and connections with other people," says Fuehrer.

For example, take time every day to share a treasure with someone.

"The treasure could be a funny story, a kind story, something new you've learned or something beautiful in nature," says Fuehrer.

And try lowering your anxiety by being mindful.

"[Pay] attention to your senses," she says. "What do you hear, smell, see, taste and touch?"

And pay it forward with random acts of kindness. It will brighten your day and someone else's too.

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