

How to survive Valentine's day without romance

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Expert offers tips to those who don't have a partner or spouse.

(HealthDay)—Valentine's Day can be difficult for some people, but it's important to keep things in perspective, an expert says.

People who don't have a spouse or [romantic partner](#) may feel lonely, sad or left out while those around them plan special events and [gifts](#), said Dr. Jeffrey Borenstein, president and CEO of the Brain & Behavior Research Foundation in New York City.

However, there are practical tips for those who might be going solo this weekend.

Some people try to fight negative feelings by doing things such as binge eating or drinking, but that only makes them feel worse. It's better to do positive things, such as exercise, which triggers the release of natural chemicals that boost your mood, Borenstein said.

Another suggestion is to focus on things that make you happy, instead of thinking about what you may be missing, he added.

For example, be thankful for the good relationships in your life. You might plan to get together with other single friends or family members to do something everyone enjoys, Borenstein suggested.

He noted that Valentine's Day coincides with shortened days in many parts of the United States. This lack of natural light can lead to a condition called seasonal affective disorder, a type of depression that occurs during the winter. Treatments include light therapy, counseling and medications.

"Being sad on Valentine's Day is different from being depressed," Borenstein said.

"Valentine's Day is a challenging holiday for many people, even those who have a partner or spouse with whom to celebrate. But if symptoms of depression are frequent, that is a sign to seek professional help," he added.

"The most important take-home message is that depression is treatable and people should not suffer in silence; they should seek help," Borenstein said.

More information: The American Academy of Family Physicians has more about [depression](#).

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