

Suicide prevention at Lake Tahoe: Tips to cope with holiday loneliness

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Suicide Prevention



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RESOURCE LIST

Volunteer opportunities:

530-550-7985 |
<http://givebacktahoe.org/#volunteer>

Workshop/class schedules:

530-550-8981 | <http://www.goodnesssake.org>

530-386-2700 | <http://www.ateliertruckee.com>

Senior resources:

530-550-7600 | <http://www.sierraseniors.org>

Tahoe Truckee Suicide Prevention Coalition:

530-550-6733 | <http://www.tahoelifeline.org>

While almost everyone experiences loneliness sometimes, loneliness is more common around the holidays and during times of stress.

This is especially true for the elderly, empty nesters and those that are grieving a relationship transition or the loss of a loved one. People may feel tremendous pressure to be happy and socially connected and often don't talk about feeling lonely.

These feelings can manifest in many ways such as physical pain, depression, and overall physical health.

Here are some suggestions for healthy coping with loneliness.

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1. VOLUNTEER

There are many organizations looking for extra assistance around the holidays such as the warming shelter, soup kitchen or Toys for Tots.

You can locate volunteer opportunities in our region through the Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation's Give Back Tahoe program at <https://givebacktahoe.org/#volunteer>.

2. SEEK COMPANY

Avoid the instinct to isolate yourself when you are feeling lonely. Attend a holiday celebration or join a class. Get involved in a book club, bridge or faith group.

For Goodness Sake in Truckee has classes almost every day promoting spiritual health and also a great way for connecting with the community.

Atelier in downtown Truckee hosts a variety of tactile art workshops for the community. For class schedules, visit <http://www.forgoodnesssake.org> and <http://www.ateliertruckee.com>.

3. ASK FOR WHAT YOU NEED

Be honest with the people you trust and tell them how you are feeling. Most people will appreciate your vulnerability and want to help. It is important to clearly communicate what you need whether it's meeting a friend for coffee or a needing a hug.

If you are feeling socially isolated but have people around, the holidays are a good time to work on deepening the emotional connections you already have. Make an effort to show up with a smile and participate in group activities.

4. PRACTICE SELF CARE

Maintain a healthy diet without indulging in too much alcohol and sugar. Make sure you are getting enough sleep, engage in physical activity that you enjoy, and allow yourself quiet time for meditation or time to process — even for 5 minutes a day when you wake up or before you fall asleep.

5. HONOR YOUR FEELINGS

Above all things, give yourself permission to feel your feelings and then separate yourself from them. Focusing on what we do have and consciously feeling grateful is one way to overcome feeling down.

HOLIDAYS FOR SENIORS

The holidays can be especially hard for elders. Isolation and loneliness is widespread with our elders. Aging brings wisdom and maturity, but there are many inevitable losses that come to even the healthiest individuals.

Many losses are emotional and social in nature compounded by physical decline and decreased hearing or vision. Here are some tips for enhancing the holidays for seniors:

Maintain frequent visits: Spending time with a senior is the most important things you can do. If you can't make the drive, make a phone call. You don't need a special reason to make the call. Just hearing your voice can delight your elder. If distance is a challenge, consider using Skype or other video to allow visual contact.

Take your elder parent to an event they enjoy: The community theater or tree lighting event are examples. Start with something they've enjoyed in the past.

Consider teaching your senior to use technology to maintain connection: Using email and the Internet for news sites is one way to follow current events. Using social-media like Facebook or Instagram is another way to help your senior feel connected.

Embrace local options: Sierra Senior Services offers Community Room meals at Truckee Donner Senior Apartments as well as Meals of Wheels for homebound seniors in Truckee and North Lake Tahoe. They also offer health and wellness seminars, Yoga and Tai Chi, intergenerational activities, and fun activities with socialization. For more information visit <http://www.sierraseniors.org>.

For more information about the Tahoe Truckee Suicide Prevention Coalition, visit <http://www.tahoelifeline.org>.

Lisa Stekert is the coordinator for the Tahoe Truckee Suicide Prevention Coalition and Outreach Coordinator for the Tahoe Truckee Prevention Task Force. Contact her at lsteckert@tfhd.com or by calling 530-550-6733.

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Now more than ever, your support is critical to help us keep our community informed about the evolving coronavirus pandemic and the impact it is having locally. Every contribution, however large or small, will make a difference.

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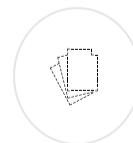


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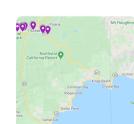
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