

Holiday Blues? You're Not Alone.

Sheldon Riklon, M.D., UAMS Family Medicine Physician

For many people, the holidays are a time of joy and connection. However, the holiday season can be hard for others, especially those struggling with their mental health. In fact, about two-thirds of people with mental illness say the holidays make their conditions worse. Increased stress, disruption to routines, feelings of isolation and even the weather are all things that can lead to the "Holiday Blues."

If you find it hard to enjoy the holidays, you are not alone. It's important to find ways to celebrate that are right for you. Here are some things to consider doing this holiday season:

- **Set realistic expectations** — Let go of the ideas you have about what the holidays should be. Instead, make a mental note of the things you are grateful for this year.
- **Practice saying "no"** — The pressure to do it all during the holiday season can be overwhelming. Remind yourself that it's okay to say no.
- **Plan time for self-care** — The holidays can be busy. It's also a time when we do a lot for others. Make sure you plan some time to do things for yourself too.
- **Ask for help** — If you're struggling, reach out to supportive people in your life. Mental health professionals are also there if you need them.

Here are some mental health resources in Northwest Arkansas.

UAMS Health AR ConnectNow

UAMS Health AR Connect Now is a free, online behavioral health program. It is available to anyone on Arkansas. Talk to someone by calling 800-482-9921 or by visiting psychiatry.uams.edu/arconnectnow.

UAMS Northwest Psychiatry Clinic

The UAMS Health Psychiatry Clinic in Fayetteville offers behavioral health care to patients 18 and up in Northwest Arkansas. For general information and appointments, call 479-713-8350, or visit <https://uamshealth.com/location/psychiatry-clinic/> for more information about the clinic.

Washington County Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU)

The UAMS-run CSU is a 16-bed behavioral health unit for both males and females, ages 18 and up, who are seeking short-term crisis stabilization services to address behavioral health needs. The CSU in Fayetteville emphasizes personalized, recovery-oriented care from a team of qualified nurse practitioners, nurses, licensed mental health professionals and behavioral health techs. Help is available 24/7, including weekends and holidays. To inquire about admission or to make a referral, contact 479-332-0800. Visit <https://uamshealth.com/location/nwa-crisis-stabilization-unit/> for more information about the CSU.

The national Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is also available 24/7. Call or text 988 for free and confidential support.