

Independence Center Gives Tips to Prioritize Mental Health Around the Holidays

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ST. LOUIS - Although the holidays can be a time of joy, they can also be a time of stress for people struggling with mental health disorders. Getting out of normal routines, extra family gatherings and less healthy foods can all lead to an increase in symptoms.

Independence Center, a local nonprofit dedicated to helping adults living with mental illness, wants to remind people of some simple tips to help those struggling with mental health have a good holiday season.

Independence Center Executive Director Trish Holmes said stress and anxiety typically play a significant role in triggering mental health symptoms. She said paying attention to what is causing those feelings can help people avoid those triggers.

“Stressors around the holidays can range from past memories of substance abuse, financial restrictions or dealing with difficult family members and friends that you only see around the holidays,” said Holmes. “We encourage our members to put themselves and their mental health first and to make a plan to limit their time at places that they know might trigger symptoms. We also encourage family members to help create a calm and caring atmosphere for their loved ones with mental illness during this time of year.”

Holmes also recommends that people try to stick to their typical exercise, sleep and eating routines as closely as possible during this time of year. Holmes added that Independence Center’s Clubhouse, which provides a place for people struggling with mental illness to manage their symptoms and gain a sense of community, is a good resource for the clients they serve particularly around the holidays. She said in many cases, people experiencing mental health symptoms around the holidays may struggle silently.

“You never know what someone could be struggling with behind closed doors,” said Holmes. “If you know someone living with a mental illness, it is important to be a resource for them. We have programs and help available for anyone trying to battle their mental health on their own and we’re here to support them.”

Independence Center’s Welcome Center can be reached at 314-533-4163 or go to www.independencecenter.org for more information.

Independence Center’s mission is to provide all the services and resources a person with a serious and persistent mental illness needs to manage their symptoms, find belonging and purpose and gain the independence to live a healthy, quality life. For more information about Independence Center, or to learn more about their services, go to www.independencecenter.org or call 314.880.5476.

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