

Sarah Mallard Wakefield pt. 2

Do the holidays cause more anxiety for people?

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I think the holidays have always been stressful for families. It's a time of kind of forced togetherness and being together with people who you might not see eye to eye with, but you're coming together for the holiday celebration, and there's a lot of expectation, and a lot of you know, did, did the turkey go okay? And you know, all of these layers of anxiety about the meal, and when, what time people are arriving, and sowing lots of meaning into all of those things. And then, in addition to differences and opinions, and what are we going to discuss at the table? So it's an interesting question of, is that harder today than it used to be? It may be, I don't have good data to say if it is or not, but I think it can be a stressful time, especially if we are coming from a place of, if someone disagrees with me, they must be wrong or they must be bad. That is always a really hard thing. One of the things that I try to remember, and try to encourage people around me to remember, is that it's a lot easier to assume positive intent from someone else. That's from Cy Wakeman stuff, not mine, but if you can assume that even if they said something that really doesn't kind of rubs you the wrong way, that they were not trying to offend you. That doesn't change what they said and it, but it changes how you feel, and that is really important to come if you can, if you could say, oh, that was an interesting perspective Uncle Joe, I may but not feel like Uncle Joe is trying to offend me that you immediately feel different.

How can we help family or friends who are dealing with Anxiety?

1:47

We are so busy in our lives that sometimes it gets really hard, even when we notice that someone is not being themselves, to really go ask the question and saying, Hey, how are you? And I would say that's probably the most important thing that we could do, is slow down and notice, or when we notice to slow down and go check on our friends and family.

When should we seek professional help with these issues?

2:21

I mean, I think there are a lot of things that can be solved in community and in fellowship and in support with your friends and family. And I think if, if you are attempting those things, and you're attempting trying to get back to the things you love and interacting in those patterns that you used to when you felt more invigorated and healthy, and you're not able to do that with the support of your friends and family or with the strategies that you've tried that it's time to talk with your clinician and say, Hey, I was feeling down, or I was feeling withdrawn, I was feeling kind of overwhelm or sense of doom, or really frustrated or irritable, I tried to get out and exercise more. I tried to get out in the sunshine, I reached out, I tried to reach out to my family members, I tried to do these things, and none of it really helped. Then I think that's great information to say, okay, maybe we need additional layers of support, and that's totally okay, and we want you to access those and we want to access them sooner than later, because the earlier we access them, the less support we need.

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When is medication helpful for these issues?

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If we are sad, if we are worried, if we are overwhelmed, we want to try to do those things that help support us to not feel sad and worried and overwhelmed if we are not able to get ourselves out of that place, we want to seek additional supports and how we can move out of that. If someone says, Okay, I want you to talk with a clinician and do some therapy for a little while, and they say that's not really working. Say, all right, maybe time for a medicine to help support you in this part of your journey. Doesn't mean we need a medicine for forever. Doesn't mean that all we're doing is a medicine. We want to do these other things as well, because that'll be more likely you can get off the medicine in the future. Nobody wants you on medicine that you don't need, and we want you to be as well as you can on as few medicines as possible. I mean, that's in general how we feel about things. But if you need that medicine, your body says, Hey, for whatever reason, this medicine really helps me, and without it, I struggle. Then, just like any other condition, we want you to take that medicine. We want to reduce the struggle of life, and if that's the way we reduce the struggle, and we've tried all the other things, then that's the appropriate thing to do.

What can people do to reduce their own anxieties?

4:51

I think, trying to really think about connection and connecting with people, instead of reacting to people responding to something someone says with curiosity instead of caution and divisiveness is really important. Those are skills. Those are hard work. Take a long time to work on them, but I think they're really important skills. I think when we're really feeling alone, that's the best time to take a walk outside, even if we're not prepared to talk with anybody, we can see that other people are around us, and community exists, and we're not alone, even when we feel like it. Getting out in the sunshine is really important. Touch grass. I think that that feels a lot of times kind of too simplistic, but it's, it's feeling like you are part of the world, and the world is steady and okay can be a really helpful thing. And there are people who are living in situations where they can't do that. And so sometimes I think, you know, I'm living in a situation that I can do that, I need to honor that, I need to understand and not pretend like I'm not living there. And say, you know, in the mornings, I like to get outside and get my feet in the grass and look up at the stars, they're still out, and think, Wow, this is a big place. And there have been a lot of things before me, and there will be a lot of things after me and how, how am I going to go into this world today? I think trying to slow down the amount of information we are consuming and the pace at which we are being asked to go at very often, from I have three kids school events and talk about entering the holidays and all of the different tasks that we have to do and events that we have to go to. And it can just feel like you're just going to the next thing and trying to be as present and mindful as you possibly can.

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Should people be using AI tools to deal with these issues?

7:00

You know, I will say that I have seen some pretty scary things with AI in the last few weeks even, just with people asking for advice, and that being misconstrued and actually giving really terrible advice and dangerous advice. And I've seen this, I have multiple people in the hospital after talking about talking with their chat bot and things like that. And so I would say ChatGPT is not our community.

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There are many tasks that can be helpful with machine learning and taken off our plates, but it is not our community. It's not a substitute for community. And I think of those kinds of tools as take the things off my plate so that I can go have more community. And I can have more time to actually have human interaction. But yeah, we want to seek advice from the people who love us and care about us and from the experts who have our best interests in mind.