



UNION COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

BEHIND THE STAR

SHERIFF MALCUM J. "JAMIE" PATTON



THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR?

*Mental Health During the Holidays*

The holidays should be the most wonderful time of the year, and for most, it is. But for those who suffer from a mental illness, it can be the most difficult time of year. Mental illness can leave you feeling sad and alone. When movies and ads are promoting family togetherness with so many messages about things being “merry and bright”, how do you handle these feelings?

In 2014, the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI), found that 64% of people with mental illness say the holidays make their conditions worse. A 2021 survey showed that 3 in 5 Americans feel their mental health is negatively impacted this time of year.

Here are a few steps you can take to prioritize your mental health during the most wonderful time of the year:

1. **Accept Your Feelings.** You may feel a range of emotions during the holidays. Try your best to acknowledge and accept your emotions rather than place judgment on them. It is okay to feel happy, it is okay to feel sad and it’s even okay to feel both emotions. Give yourself compassion and allow yourself to be okay with whatever you are feeling.
2. **Maintain Healthy Habits.** The holidays can bring disruption to your daily routine. Make sure you are getting enough sleep and exercise. Maintaining healthy habits is critical to keeping your mental health on track.
3. **Set Boundaries.** People like to be generous during the holidays, but that generosity doesn’t need to come at the expense of having health boundaries. If you find that doing something is too stressful, it’s okay to say no.
4. **Make Time to Connect.** Connection and meaning are crucial to our mental health. Make time for relationships that are important to you. You can even connect with loved ones who are no longer with you through family traditions. If you have a family member or friend struggling with a mental illness, stay connected with them during the holidays.

5. Self-care. It's important that we take care of ourselves during the holidays. Make time for you, to do what you enjoy and to recharge. You will feel better about holiday stressors if you are taking care of yourself. It is okay to put you first!

Managing your mental health is always challenging, but it can be particularly difficult during the holiday season. While the struggle can make one feel isolated, remember you are not alone.

Sheriff Patton recently read this quote, *“Your struggles do not define you. Taking care of your mental health is an act of self-love. You are worthy of happiness and peace of mind and there is no shame in seeking help for your mental health.”* -Author Unknown

#### Union County Resources:

- Walk-In Crisis Screening
  - o Maryhaven at the Mills Center/ 715 S. Plum St., Marysville, OH/ 937-644-9192
    - 8am-12am Mon-Fri; 5pm-12am Sat-Sun
- Crisis Intervention Team (CIT)
  - o Call 9-1-1
    - Urgent response by trained CIT Officers
    - De-escalation
    - Transportation to Emergency Services
- Crisis Help
  - o Call: 24/7 Hotline- 800.731.5577
  - o Text: 4help to 85511

Take care of yourself and each other!

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