



Counseling & Testing Center

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The Counseling & Testing Center Staff would like to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season. See you in 2016.

The Big Holiday Depression Myth

Hello WKU family,

Have you ever thought that the stress of the holidays is something we have created ourselves? Have you ever thought that maybe believing that holidays will be stressful is why holidays end up being stressful? Read this article from Benjamin Radford and then ask yourself how much holiday stress is our own creation? Are we stressed because we are helpless victims being forced to spend money, or are we stressed because we are choosing to “keep up with the Jones family”. Pogo the Possum once said “we have met the enemy, and he is us.” Think about it; set yourself free.

Happy Holidays, for real!

By Benjamin Radford

At some point during this holiday season—maybe as you’re rushing to the corner store for more turkey stuffing, or while at a Christmas Eve sale wrestling the last Xbox 360 away from a middle-aged mom—you will be tired, stressed and depressed.

Most people have heard the bit of folk wisdom about how depression and suicide increase during the last two months of the year. The holidays can be stressful, no doubt about it: the crowds, the hassles, the cold weather, those annoying relatives you thankfully see only once a year.

And, of course, there’s seasonal affective disorder, perhaps better known by its apt acronym SAD. SAD is a mood disorder that strikes some people during the winter months, causing them to become depressed or lethargic. The disorder is not fully understood but thought to be caused by the decrease in sunlight during winter months.

While stress levels may increase, do suicide rates? After all, there are plenty of stressors throughout the rest of the year as well.

Actually there’s no evidence that suicide rates spike in December; in fact they drop slightly.

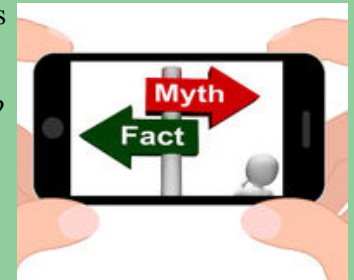
A 1987 study by researchers David P. Phillips and John S. Wills found that about 100 fewer suicides occur on holidays than other days of the year. Part of the reason may be that while holidays are stressful, they are also a time when friends and family come together, offering emotional and social support to troubled individuals.

It’s not all good news, though.

On average, people are slightly more likely to die during the holiday season. While this may seem ominous and mysterious, there is a logical explanation. This effect occurs because during Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s, people engage more in two activities that increase their chances of death: drinking liquor and traveling. Alcohol consumption is linked to both higher homicide rates and more vehicle accidents.

So cheer up! With moderation and common sense, odds are you’ll make it through another holiday season.

Benjamin Radford is LiveScience’s Bad Science columnist. His books and films can be found on his website, www.benjaminbradford.com.



SPOTLIGHT

Ari Deutsch

I am glad to continue my training here at Western Kentucky University and would like to help students in any way I can. I have had a variety of experiences in different fields in addition to student counseling such as forensic psychology, neuropsychology, and psychological assessment. I received my B.A. in psychology from Lehigh University in Pennsylvania, my M.A. in Forensic Psychology from Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey, and my M.S. in Clinical Psychology from Nova Southeastern University in Florida. Outside of the office, I enjoy reading and experiencing different cultures through music and cuisine.

I like to remain flexible during counseling and to include unique and creative ideas. Clients all have unique concerns, and I utilize my knowledge to be helpful in any way that I can. I do not believe that counseling always needs to be a formal process, and encourage students to speak with me for any reason. I understand that changes throughout the school year can be stressful, and I would like to be supportive while you manage them.



Finals are coming!

It's your time to shine

***L**ast semester the Counseling & Testing center gave some great advice to help relieve some of the stress of finals week. Here is an abbreviated version of that story.*

Give up now!! Give up the idea that finals are horrible exams that must be tolerated. Some students actually find finals week to be exciting.

Drink heavily!! Drink a lot of water and juice to stay hydrated and to get your vitamins, anti-oxidants, etc. Watch out for too much caffeine.

Goof off!! As much as you are studying you also need to be playing. Recreation and exercise improve your capacity to concentrate, help manage tension and anxiety, and are good outlets for social support.

Knock yourself out!! Good sleep is vital to finals week. Start getting good sleep before finals week and keep it up during finals week.

Cheat!! Don't wait until finals week to study. Start now. Spend 15 minutes a day going back over your notes and reminding yourself what is was about.

Throw away your highlighters!! Highlighting your textbooks does nothing but make the pages look shiny. To learn something you have to use it. Don't repeat it back to yourself. Tell yourself a story about what you marked.

Get a big head!! Now is not the time to doubt yourself. You made the cut when you were admitted. College can be challenging but thousands of people graduate every semester. Calm down, think about how far you have come so far... and imagine being one of the thousands that graduate. All you have to do is study, know the stuff, and show off on the test. Imagine you are the instructor when you are taking the test, let your answers be like your lecture. Imagine you are explaining your answers to a class of students. Tell your story about the material.

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Star's Report

Hello everyone! I have been very busy this month. I am now thirteen weeks old and weigh about 10 pounds. I am so excited because my training is going really well and I have been getting to come into the office more often. It is a lot of fun getting to be around so many people. . .

especially because I get lots of petting and attention.

Although I'm still in training, I am available to assist any CTC staff member when I might be helpful for a student in session. Also watch for me at campus and community events. During finals week, I will be participating in Puppies for Stress Relief. I will be available to visit with students in Cherry Hall, Tuesday, 10–11 a.m., and again on Thursday, 12:30–1:30 p.m. Watch for more stress relief events to come!

Counseling Services

College should be challenging, not overwhelming

That's why we're here to help, offering our services Monday thru Friday from 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. There is a ONE-TIME \$20.00 fee for paperwork and documentation. After the one-time fee, students have access to unlimited visits for their entire college career here at WKU. Our services are confidential and NO information is released without the student's written permission, unless in an emergency situation. So if your mom, grandma, or next door neighbor calls to learn about your counseling appointment, "mums" the word.

We offer individual and group counseling services to help with coping strategies, conflict resolution, and crisis situations related to:

<i>College Adjustment</i>	<i>Eating Disorder</i>
<i>Bipolar Disorder</i>	<i>Anxiety</i>
<i>Problem Behaviors</i>	<i>Suicide Prevention</i>
<i>Stress Management</i>	<i>Grief/Loss</i>
<i>Depression</i>	<i>Decision Making</i>
<i>Sexual Assault/Abuse</i>	
<i>Relationship Issues</i>	<i>....and more!</i>

Don't Forget! We also offer counseling for couples of all kinds: friends, relationships and roommates.

Testing Services Available

The Counseling and Testing Center offers most national tests such as CLEP, MAT, LSAT, DSST, ACT, HESI and COMPASS. STAMP, Residual ACT and Chemistry Placement tests are also available. For more information on testing dates, see www.registerblast.com/wku. PRAXIS testing dates are at www.ets.org/praxis. Questions may be e-mailed to: testing-center@wku.edu.

LGBTQIA Group meets Tuesdays

The Counseling and Testing Center hosts an LGBTQIA Group every Tuesday in Potter Hall, Room 409. The remaining meetings for this semester are Dec. 1 and 8 from 4-5 p.m. For more information, contact Brian Lee at: brian.lee@wku.edu.

