

## Cheerless Holiday

Shopping, decorating and entertaining aren't the only hallmarks of this time of year. For some, signs of depression can set in.

BY TAMARA E. HOLMES

**I**F THE YULETIDE season has you feeling more like Ebenezer Scrooge than Santa Claus, you are not alone. A *Consumer Reports* study has found that 90 percent of us stress over at least one thing during year-end festivities.

“The holidays are really difficult for many people,” notes Karinn Glover, vice president of The Black Psychiatrists of Greater New York and attending psychiatrist at New York’s Montefiore Medical Center. Besides becoming mentally and physically exhausted from shopping, entertaining, traveling, financial woes,

squabbling relatives and loneliness can leave us with a case of the blues. “There’s an expectation that we all have incredibly special places to go during the holidays, where we’re surrounded by people who love us,” Glover states. “That’s not always realistic.”

While it’s tempting to stick your head in the snow until January 2, Glover suggests trying these tips to lift your spirits instead.

## 1 KNOW THE SYMPTOMS

Some African-Americans may not identify with the idea of feeling depressed. “It’s something that is felt in the body more so than the mind,” Glover explains. Instead, they may notice a lack of energy, eating issues, restlessness or irritability.”

## 2 MANAGE YOUR EXPECTATIONS

Don’t get caught up in the fantasy of what the holiday season should be. “We hear the Temptations’ rendition of ‘Silent Night’ playing in the background and we think that we’re supposed to be happy and at peace,” Glover shares. When that doesn’t happen, we feel bad. Instead, accept that the holidays may not be the highlight of your year — and that’s okay.

## 3 AVOID TOXIC PEOPLE

Before going to any family gatherings, identify those individuals who steal your joy, whether it’s the uncle who often drinks too much or the cousin who always puts you down. “Make sure that you’re around that person for no more than 30 minutes,” Glover advises.

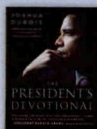
To steer clear of negativity, seek out conversations with people who affirm you, step outside for a walk or, if necessary, cut the visit short.

## 4 NURTURE YOURSELF

This part of the year can be particularly painful for anyone who has experienced a death, divorce or other emotional, life-changing event. “Holidays remind people of loss,” Glover says. To get through, schedule one activity each day that feeds your soul. Try attending a church service, spending time with friends or relaxing for an hour at the spa.

Visit the National Alliance on Mental Illness at [nami.org](http://nami.org) for a state-by-state listing of local resources.

### WRITER'S BLOCK



### SOUL FOOD

In *THE PRESIDENT'S DEVOTIONAL*, spiritual advisor Joshua DuBois reveals inspirational and reflective emails he sent to Pres. Barack Obama. Along with poignant daily meditations—which reference Christianity, history and jazz—DuBois also includes firsthand anecdotes about time spent with the leader. Readers will relish the personal connection to Obama’s spiritual life. **BY MIYA WILLIAMS**

+ Go to [JETmag.com](http://JETmag.com) to read more about DuBois and his work

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