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For Immediate Release

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Preparing for Holiday Stress

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) is encouraging residents to take proactive steps to protect their mental well-being this holiday season, a time when emotional strain, stress, and crisis situations often become more frequent. While the holidays can bring joy and celebration, they can also magnify feelings of grief, financial pressure, loneliness, and family conflict. This can create moments when people feel overwhelmed, making early awareness and support especially critical.

The holidays often intensify emotions—both positive emotions and difficult feelings—and having healthy coping strategies in place can make the season more manageable. “We encourage everyone to set realistic expectations for gatherings and celebrations,” explains Kay Schmidt, Emergency Response Coordinator at SWNPHD. “Holiday moments do not need to be perfect to be meaningful. Planning for situations that may cause stress, such as crowded events or tense conversations, can help you remain grounded and keep your emotions from escalating.”

Coping with Stress

- Staying connected with supportive friends, family, or community groups is especially important this time of year, as even brief interactions can help reduce feelings of isolation.
- Maintaining healthy daily habits—such as getting enough rest, eating balanced meals, staying hydrated, and moving regularly—can stabilize mood and improve resilience.
- For moments of rising anxiety or tension, simple practices like deep breathing, quiet reflection, journaling, or stepping outside for fresh air can help calm the body and mind.

During periods of high stress, individuals may be more inclined to rely on unhealthy coping behaviors, such as using alcohol or substances to manage overwhelming emotions, overspending to relieve tension, withdrawing from others, or skipping meals due to stress. SWNPHD encourages residents to be mindful of these tendencies and plan ahead to try these healthier alternatives that promote safety, connection, and emotional stability. Reaching out for support early—before a situation becomes a crisis—can also make a significant difference.

For those experiencing a crisis or intense distressing emotions, help is available at any time. The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline offers 24/7 support through call, text, or online chat. Local mental health providers, trusted friends or family members, and community faith leaders can also offer valuable support during challenging moments.

To make sure everyone has access to mental well-being tools and crisis-prevention resources, SWNPHD provides the CredibleMind platform as a free tool for all residents of the health district. This online resource offers evidence-based assessments, educational materials, stress-management techniques, and self-guided programs designed to help individuals understand their mental health and build coping skills. Holiday-specific guidance, resilience tools, and local resource information are available at any time.

through the platform. Residents can sign up by visiting swhealth.crediblemind.com or by calling SWNPHD at 308-345-4223 for more information.

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. You can follow SWNPHD on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.

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