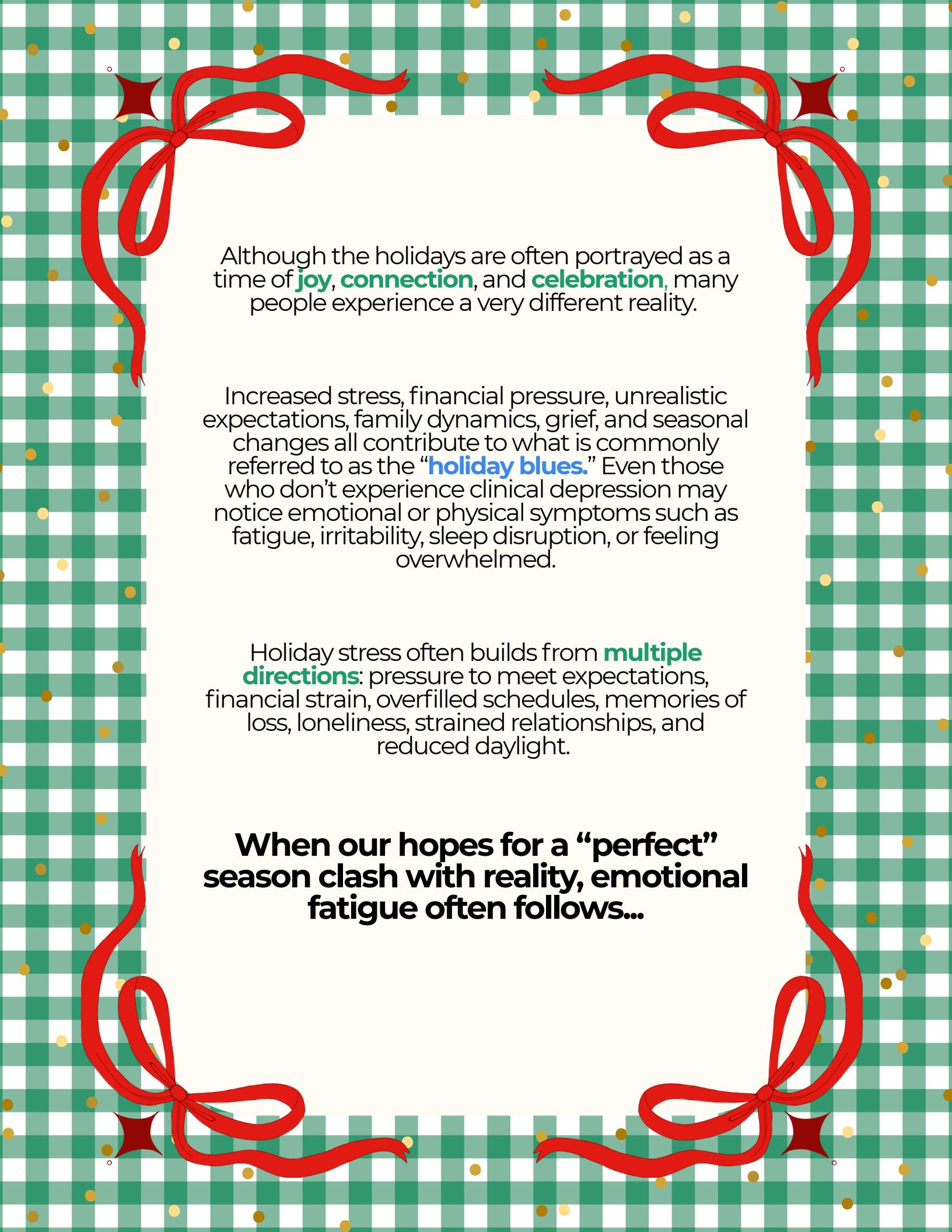


# Managing Holiday Stress

**Worried about how to cope with the upcoming holidays? Make sure you check out the list below to regulate your way through the season:**

- Keep expectations realistic and manageable
- Make space for all emotions, including sadness and grief
- Let go of the pressure to recreate holidays from the past
- Take care of your physical health through sleep, food, and movement
- Drink alcohol in moderation
- Stay socially connected with supportive people
- Try something new to reduce pressure
- Budget mindfully to reduce financial stress
- Avoid comparing today with previous holidays
- Make intentional time for rest and self-care.

**Keep reading for more practical ways to cope and understand this stressful season!**



Although the holidays are often portrayed as a time of **joy**, **connection**, and **celebration**, many people experience a very different reality.

Increased stress, financial pressure, unrealistic expectations, family dynamics, grief, and seasonal changes all contribute to what is commonly referred to as the “**holiday blues**.” Even those who don’t experience clinical depression may notice emotional or physical symptoms such as fatigue, irritability, sleep disruption, or feeling overwhelmed.

Holiday stress often builds from **multiple directions**: pressure to meet expectations, financial strain, overfilled schedules, memories of loss, loneliness, strained relationships, and reduced daylight.

**When our hopes for a “perfect” season clash with reality, emotional fatigue often follows...**



**It may help to know that seasonal depression and light exposure can play a big part in our holiday emotions & experiences.**

Some individuals experience Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), which is linked to reduced daylight during the winter months. Research shows that light therapy and increased exposure to natural sunlight may help reduce symptoms of seasonal depression.

If you feel persistently overwhelmed, disconnected, hopeless, or unable to function day to day, professional support may be helpful. You do not have to manage this alone.

**The holidays do not need to be perfect to be meaningful. This season may hold both joy and heaviness—and both are valid. Taking care of yourself is what allows deeper healing, connection, and resilience.**

With compassion and care,

*The Mental Fitness CREW:  
Center for Resilience, Empowerment & Wellness*