

Holiday depression is normal

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The "holiday blues" are real, they are normal, they sometimes intensify in January. And they can be overcome with thoughtful doses of loving care.

Those are the observations of four Michigan psychiatrists whose practices include treatment of local depression and of temporary emotional distresses.

THE 'BLUES' at holiday time are very real, but they are not real mental illness, said Adrian Varol, family psychiatrist in Grand Blanc. This is a short-term problem that stems from special combination of circumstances produced by the year-end holidays.

It may relate partly to too many expectations," Varol said. "A wife expects her husband to be nicer and to show his love with a thoughtful gift. A husband may expect his wife to understand family financial picture and to restrain her holiday buying. Both are often disappointed," he said.

PEOPLE REMEMBER things, and they anticipate things in their lives that become most important to them at holiday time," according to Beverly Luman, a doctor who specializes in emergency psychiatry and is director of Psychiatric Education at the University of Michigan Medical Center in Detroit.

"Important losses are most keenly felt: a divorce, the loss of a loved one, the enforced absence of someone close," Fauman said. "It's normal to feel sad when you're thinking about a void in your life while the joy of the season is all around."

"At the same time, some people are looking ahead with dread at the prospect of a new year, which they fear will bring new problems and woes," she said.

"CONFLICTS" in emotions are paramount at Christmas time, with memories of good and bad times in the past struggling with present realities and the anticipation of things to come," said J.F. Girard Rooks, an adult psychiatrist in the Grand Rapids suburb of Grandville.

"It's much like Ebenezer Scrooge's three dreams in Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol.' Some people give gifts out of guilt. Others use them as a vehicle for dealing with interpersonal struggles, which means some withhold gifts completely."

"And still others simply cannot give material gifts because of financial problems. People in these situations feel a certain emptiness," Dr. Rooks said.

MARIA PALUZZI, a child psychiatrist at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, said children are particularly sensitive to the divorce of their parents at holiday time.

It is the type of personal disruption a child may understand even less well than a death in the family, she said.

"In addition, children often build up Christmas hopes that are out of proportion to reality," she said. "At the same time, they sense any family financial pinch that might be whispered about."

"By the day after Christmas they feel both disappointed at what they did not receive and guilty for what they did receive."

THE FOUR psychiatrists offered these suggestions for losing or minimizing the holiday "blues":

- Take advantage of what the holiday season has to offer, since its primary purpose is to bring happiness.

- Recognize that if you feel down, you are not alone — many other people feel blue too.

- Get together with people who make you feel good or who feel good about being with you.

- Talk over your feelings with a friend, relative, clergyman, family doctor or psychiatrist.

- Set realistic and optimistic limits on your expectations.

- Resist the temptation to "drown your sorrows" in alcohol; they may just become more acute.

Airbag cost: at least 60,000 jobs

Making "airbag" passenger crash restraints mandatory on all passenger vehicles sold in the United States would lead to a drop in vehicle sales from 3.1 percent annually, according to a University of Michigan study.

The job loss would be 60,000 to 200,000 annually, U-M researcher Barbara C. Richardson testified before the U.S. Department of Transportation, which is considering a variety of options on passenger restraints, such as automatic seat belts and the mandatory airbags.

Secretary of Transportation Elizabeth Dole has said a ruling on whether or not to impose passive restraints would be made before July 1984.

RICHARDSON found mandating airbags would lead to a short-term reduction in U.S. auto sales

ranging from 167,000 to 600,000 vehicles per year, depending on the cost the airbags would add to the price of the vehicle.

The 167,000 figure refers to airbags that would add \$100 in additional cost; and the 600,000 figure refers to airbags that would cost an extra \$600, according to Richardson.

In terms of percentages of the total volume of auto sales, Richardson said mandating airbags would result in a drop in auto sales of 2.7 to 9.7 percent of current sales. She noted her figures were based on a number of other economic variables.

Richardson also predicted a long-term drop in vehicle sales, ranging from 18,000 to 185,000 vehicles per year, if the airbags were mandatory.

Richardson is director of transportation planning and policy for the U-M Urban, Technological and

Environmental Planning Program. It is a division of the Rackham School of Graduate Studies.

HER RESEARCH also showed that a mandatory airbag rule could lead to increased unemployment due to the slump in auto sales, and could also have other "macroeconomic" effects, including a drop in the gross national product (GNP).

"Results indicate that in the most favorable short-term case, the regulation would result in about 60,000 more people unemployed per year. The least favorable case would result in about 200,000 more people unemployed annually throughout the entire U.S. economy," she said.

She also estimated a drop in the GNP ranging from 0.12 percent in the most favorable case to 0.38 percent in the least favorable case.

OU classes meet at Groves

The extension program at Oakland University will offer more than 30 winter term courses at Groves High School, 13 Mile and Evergreen, Birmingham.

Classes begin Wednesday, Jan. 4. Students may register and purchase their textbooks in the classroom the first night of class.

Anyone can take one class without being admitted to the university. Call Oakland's extension program at 377-4010 for a complete schedule of classes.

Included in the Groves classes is an introduction to anthropological archaeology taught by associate professor Richard Stamps.




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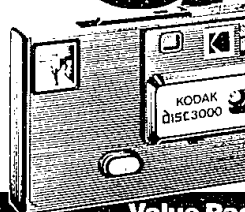
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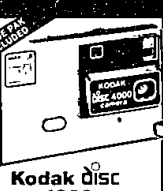
Michael Landon says:
"Celebrate Your Holidays Now!"

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