

Tools for Navigating The Holiday Season





TOPICS WE WILL COVER TODAY

- Different forms of anxiety and depression
- Why the holidays are catalysts
- Tools for preventing or minimizing them, including some local resources
- A few strategies that may help you to support someone else who is experiencing “holiday blues.”

clarifying Terms

There is a continuum from anxiety to what might be diagnosed as clinical depression. Words that are sometimes a part of this continuum include sadness, grief, loneliness, and isolation.

These may occur singly or as a mix of emotions.

What is Anxiety?

COMMON FEELINGS RANGE FROM FAMILIAR FEAR AND WORRY TO BUTTERFLIES IN YOUR STOMACH OR A POUNDING HEART.

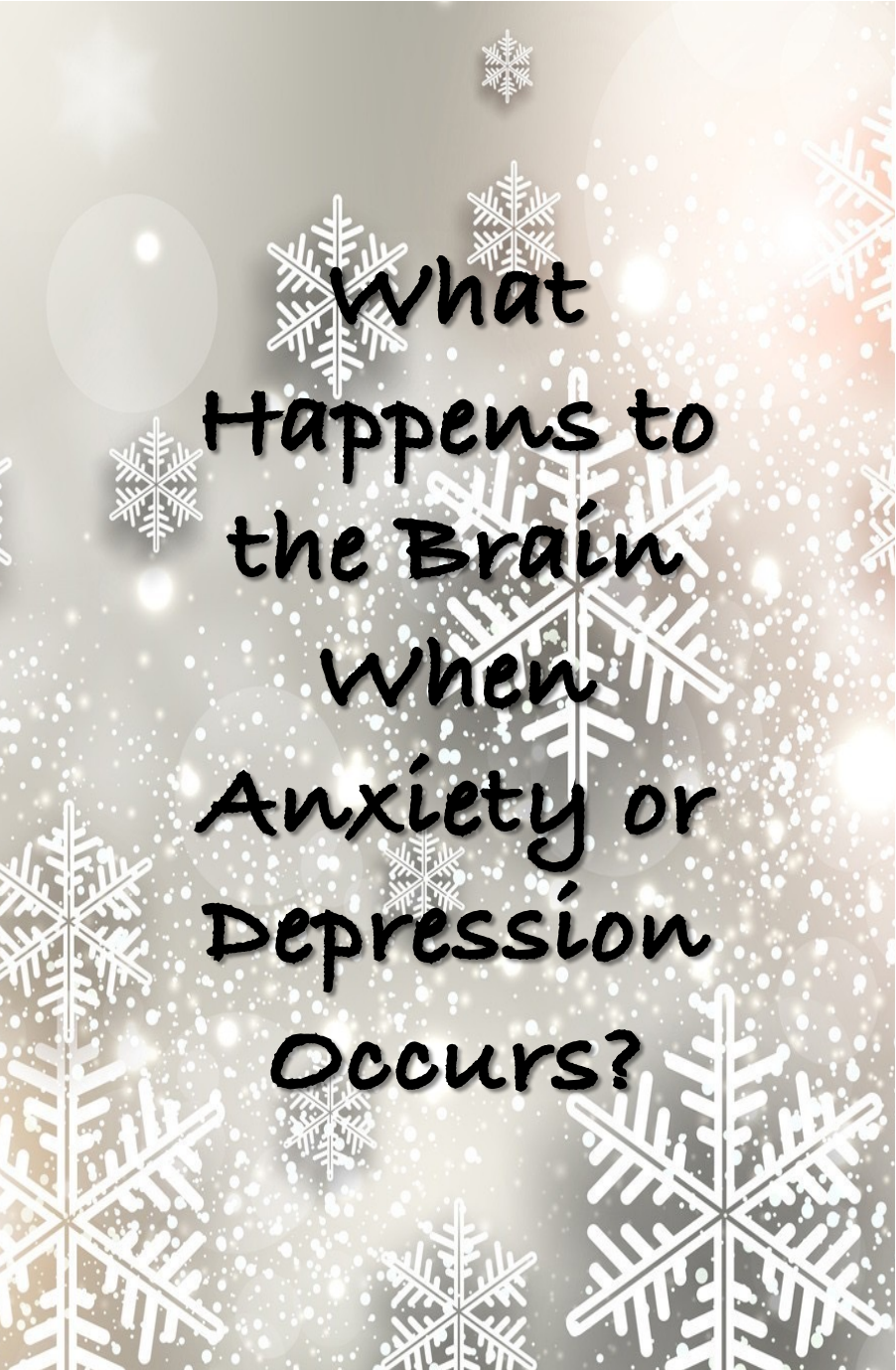
YOU COULD FEEL OUT OF CONTROL, AS THOUGH YOUR MIND AND BODY ARE DISCONNECTED

Anxiety
can feel
like this!



When does
anxiety
transition
to clinical
depression?

Clinical depression lasts longer (2 weeks or more without relief) and significantly affects the individual's ability to carry out basic daily tasks



What
Happens to
the Brain
When
Anxiety or
Depression
Occurs?

Growing evidence points to three factors: Genetics, Stress, and Inflammation

PARTS OF THE BRAIN AFFECTED:

Hippocampus
Prefrontal Cortex
Thalamus
Caudate nucleus
Insula

Uncontrolled anxiety or depression can erode or damage brain cells over time



Holiday **STRESS**


Stop it before it starts

StrongWomenStrongLove.com

SOME BASIC TOOLS

Many of the most helpful tools will fall into the following categories:

- Set boundaries
- Stay connected
- Limit social media
- Sleep
- Maintain a healthy diet, including alcohol and caffeine intake



When
Prevention
Isn't
Enough



**Be with those that
bring out the best in you,
not the stress in you.**

PreventDisease.com



SOME LOCAL RESOURCES

Get help if symptoms are prolonged
or more intense

For Fairfax County & Falls Church

- Emergency mental health services: Call 703-573-5679 [fairfaxcounty.gov/community-services](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/community-services)
- Northern Virginia Family Services: 571-748-2500 [nvfs.org](https://www.nvfs.org)
- Haven of Northern Virginia: grief counseling; 703-941-7000, [havenofnova.org](https://www.havenofnova.org)
- Center for Family Services (Virginia Tech): 703-538-8470; mft.nvc.vt.edu/cfs.html
- Faith-based organizations
- 988 - suicide and crisis lifeline



Support for Someone Else

- Remember to honor your personal boundaries
- Listening, even for a short period, can make a difference
- Be honest and kind
- Identify help needed
- Follow up later to confirm how the person is doing - more help needed?
- If the person is in crisis get help - don't try to manage on your own

Choose to
be an
Advocate
for your
OWN
Health
and well-
Being

WHAT MATTERS MOST
IS HOW YOU SEE YOURSELF.





PEACE
ON EARTH