



Newsletter 136th Edition

December 2024

OUR MISSION

To reach out and empower people affected by limb loss to achieve their full potential through education, support, and advocacy, and to raise awareness of limb loss by becoming actively involved in our community.



EDITOR'S NOTE – by Elaine Skaggs



November is almost over, Thanksgiving will soon be here, a busy time of year coming up no doubt for your family as well as mine. Amidst planning the menu and cleaning the house for my family who will be here for Thanksgiving Day, I was presented with a rather unique opportunity. I received a phone call from a local Spectrum News Channel anchor/reporter informing me of an upcoming series about overcoming obstacles. The reporter proceeded to ask if I could recommend someone in our group who had overcome obstacles in their life that would be willing to be interviewed. I explained that all of our members had overcome many obstacles simply because we are amputees, and all had some sort of limb loss/difference. I declined to provide contact information, though, because I didn't feel comfortable passing that information along without first talking to the person. And to be honest, at the time, I really wasn't sure that this wasn't a scam of some sort. So the reporter left his information with me, with a promise from me for a return call. However, after doing some research on Google, (it really works) and a call to Kelly I discovered that David Williams really was a reporter for

Spectrum News. In fact, a different reporter for the company had done an interview with Billy Parker, Kelly's husband, a couple years ago. So I made a return phone call to Mr. Williams and volunteered to do an interview myself. He came to my home the next day for the interview, and was there for a couple hours, taking video footage, asking questions, and listening to my story. We talked a lot about the group, sat on the front porch, even took a short ride in the car with me driving around the block a couple times. It was a great experience, and a lot of fun for an old girl like me! I was not given an exact date for airing my story, but I will post the info on our Facebook page as soon as I find out when it is going to be aired. I'm excited to see how it all comes together. If I can inspire or encourage just one person it will be worth it. If you are interested in telling your story, I encourage you to contact David Williams with Spectrum News as soon as possible at (502)795-4048, or by email at david.williamsvi@charter.com. Telling your story is also a great way for people to discover our group and all we do for our community.

The year is drawing to a close, and we want to ride out 2024 with a bang! We are in the final stages of planning a spectacular Christmas Party for the group. Make plans to join us for pizza, music, and Santa with gifts for the kiddos. In addition we'll be raffling off gift baskets, and cards, and also holding an ornament exchange. There will be a craft table as well, for kids and adults, so you can make your own decorations. Details about the time and place appear below in the UPCOMING EVENTS section.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SATURDAY December 7, 5:00 - 8:00pm - We will be holding our annual Christmas Party at Encompass/Baptist Health Rehab Hospital. Come on out for a night filled with fun activities for everyone, including an ornament exchange, a craft table, even Santa may stop by for the kiddos. Dinner will be provided.

MONDAY December 16, 6:00pm - 7:30pm We'll be having a Christmas celebration for our Indiana folks at this meeting, with food provided by PAM, a craft table, and games. There will also be raffle items donated by PAM. The meeting will take place at PAM Rehabilitation Hospital, 2101 Broadway Street, Clarksville, IN 47129. We will meet in the cafeteria just inside the front entrance to the right.

SATURDAY January 25, 2:00pm - 4:00pm Louisville meeting at Baptist Health Rehabilitation Hospital, 11800 Bluegrass Parkway, Louisville, KY 40299, in the Day Room. We will post our Moving Forward signs for you to follow. Please note that this is our new meeting location for the Louisville meetings.

PLEASE NOTE, THERE WILL NOT BE A LOUISVILLE MEETING IN DECEMBER!!



"Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love." —
Hamilton Wright Mabie

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## Cake Mix Cookies

### Ingredients

- 13.25 ounce Betty Crocker Cake Mix 1 box, any flavor
- 1/3 cup canola or vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon [vanilla extract](#)
- 2 large eggs

### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper and set aside.
2. In a large bowl, stir cake mix together with oil, vanilla and eggs.
3. Scoop dough into 24 even balls and place onto prepared baking sheets. Bake 8-10 minutes. Remove from oven and cool 4 minutes before removing to a cooling rack. Enjoy warm or at room temperature.



## 5 Ways to Cope With Depression During the Holiday Season

Despite the bright lights and festive cheer that accompany the winter holidays, this time of year can bring about feelings of loneliness, isolation, grief, and sadness, both for people with clinical depression and even for some who are not depressed.

Depression around the holidays can happen for many reasons. The holidays bring an increase in thoughts about family, relationships, and social engagement. If there are issues within these dynamics in our lives, depression can surface.

And this time of year may also raise expectations of spending more time with family than usual, which can be stressful for some. Events with family may bring up old conflicts and emotions, which can be challenging to navigate.

The holidays can also be very difficult for people grieving the loss of loved ones. These common holiday scenarios can be taxing for anyone, whether you have depression or not. But if you do have depression, they could worsen your symptoms.

For some people, the wintertime can also trigger a certain kind of depression known as seasonal affective disorder. This type of depression happens in a seasonal pattern, usually worsening in the darker fall and winter months and lifting by spring when the days are longer and brighter.



### How to Manage Depression During the Holidays

No matter the cause of your low mood or negative feelings, an arsenal of healthy coping strategies can help you prepare for and get through the festive months ahead when you're managing depression. While practicing good self-care is always important, it is even more important during the holidays.

That said, symptoms of depression like fatigue or lack of energy can make it difficult for some with the condition to adopt new coping strategies or self-care practices. If that feels overwhelming to you, consider starting with smaller steps. Small, consistent steps can make a big difference in the long run. With that in mind, here are five expert-recommended strategies to consider.

#### 1. *Stay Active and Get Outdoors*



Moving your body is one of the best science-backed ways to cope with depression during any season, and the holidays are no exception. Getting outside and exercising can help you avoid isolation and loneliness during the holiday season. Spending time in nature is another way to reduce your risk of depressive symptoms.



## 2. *Share How You're Feeling With Trusted Loved Ones*

Surrounding yourself with people you can rely on during the holidays — whether it be family or friends — can help you manage holiday depression. If you confide in your loved ones about how you're feeling, they may offer empathy, share their own experiences with you to help you feel less alone, or even suggest additional options for support that you may not know about. Never underestimate the power and love of your own community; people want to help. All you need to do is ask for it.



## 3. *Assess Your Relationships and Set Boundaries*



Monitor your emotions around different people in your life and set boundaries accordingly. This could mean limiting the time you spend during the holidays with people who cause you to feel negative emotions or exacerbate your depressive symptoms, as well as establishing boundaries for your interactions with and availability to those people.

## 4. *Consider Volunteering Throughout the Holiday Season*

Consider volunteering as a possible way to cope with depression during the holidays. One review article showed that volunteering for 2 to 3 hours a week or even just 1 to 10 hours a month offers myriad mental health benefits, such as: Meaning and purpose, Developing empathy toward others, Feeling like you matter, Contributing to society, Social connectedness, and Being part of something larger than yourself. Finding a volunteering opportunity that's right for you will depend on several factors, including what activities you feel comfortable with, how much time you're able to commit, and which causes you're passionate about.



## 5. *Create a Coping Sheet or Depression Toolkit*



A coping sheet is a list of favorite activities you can turn to when you're feeling depressed. You can create one on your own, with your family members, or with your therapist. Bernardi says she made a coping sheet filled with actions she can take to help her manage depressive symptoms. Self-care activities you could add to your coping sheet might include journaling, acupuncture, listening to music, spirituality, calm breathing, and positive self-talk.

## Is It Depression or the Holiday Blues?

Not all negative feelings during the holidays are signs of depression. In fact, temporary or situational anxiety or depression during the winter holidays (known as “the holiday blues”) is quite common. If you have the holiday blues, you might temporarily feel fatigued, tense, angry, lonely, or sad during the winter holidays.

### The Takeaway

The holidays can bring about stress and difficult emotions for anyone, especially for some with depression. If the holidays worsen your depressive symptoms, it’s important to find healthy ways to cope. Good exercise, time in nature, volunteer efforts, and setting boundaries are all strategies that can help. If the thought of trying a new strategy feels overwhelming or you’re not sure where to start, it can help to begin with small steps toward each one. Small, consistent steps will make a big difference over time.

By Michelle Pogle - Everyday Health



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