Therapist Suggests

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or "Beating" The Holiday Blues By Audrey C. Lodato Post Staff Writer

" If you tend to get depressed when the holiday season approaches, you're not alone. Many people feel blue at this time of year. Although November-December is the nation-ally sanctioned time to "get happy," ngling bells in the shopping mall and laughing faces on the TV en may only serve to make you

eel worse rather than better. time of year? The reasons vary, but Why do people feel down at this Webb Jr., of Webb, Webb & Associates and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' Employee Assistance Program, some of them finclude the high expectations of the penson, childhood recollections, economics, relationships, and alone-

At holiday time, he says, some people "try to compensate for the test of the year." They may look back and try to make up for what was lacking through the previous 10 r 11 months. When this fails, they et depressed.

For others, the loss of a relationhip, whether it be spouse, parent, other loved one, becomes more acutely felt during the holiday

The person who is feeling alone is nore apt to get depressed at holiday ime, Webb notes. Someone who is single may feel a lack of connect-edness especially at this time of year.

Another source of holiday ill pirits is the stress created when amilies get together and recreate patterns of earlier years.

If you're prone to the holiday plues, what can you do to get through the period with a minimum of psychic pain? Although each erson's situation is different, here re some general tips to help see you



John L. Webb Jr.Social worker

through.

1. Acknowledge the fact that you are feeling badly. Don't try to deny or repress your feelings. If your depression is related to a loss, talk to family members or friends about it. You needn't feel guilty about having a good time because your loved one is no longer here to enjoy the holiday with you, for instance.

2. Find some alternate behavior to engage in. If you will be alone during the holidays, do something special for yourself. "Not everyone can give themselves a trip," Webb remarks. "Find what would be satisfying to you."

For example, this year it's likely that Webb's family will be in New York while he remains in Charlotte for Thanksgiving. He's been wanting a new tennis racket and may buy one for himself to compensate for his spending the holiday by himself. Webb hastens to add that what works for one person may not work for another. Whatever you decide on, it should be something you wouldn't ordinarily do.

3. Give of yourself in some way. If your church or community group is sponsoring a project for the needy, for example, get involved. It'll give you something outside of yourself to focus on.

4. Find someone to spend the holiday with, if you expect to be alone and feel the need for the presence of others. Or, if the prospect of spending time with family is what's getting you down, decide to stay home. There's no sense in setting yourself up for a miserable time. On the other hand, if tensions exist between you and, say, your parents, and if you feel strong in yourself, perhaps the "good will" of the holiday season will help you improve the relationship.

5. If trying to make everything "perfect" for Thanksgiving or

Christmas is driving you up a wall, relax. Don't allow your self-esteem to become dependent on how well your fancy dessert turns out or on how many compliments you receive for the splendid table you spread. And if you can't find that special toy your child wants, it's not the end of the world. She or he will survive, and so will you. When stress is bound to build up, build in also some releases.

day season to make you temporarily blue, remember that, "this, too, shall pass."

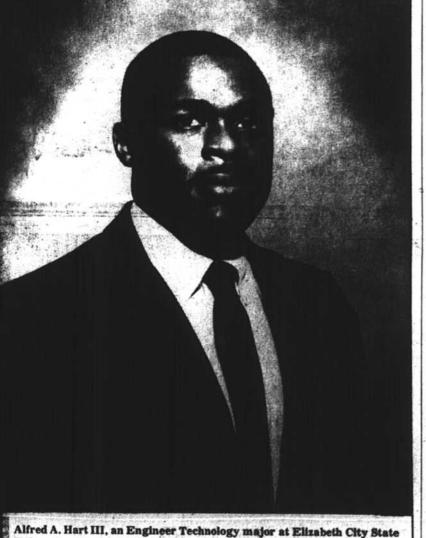
the subject this way: "It's okay to be sad for a period of time; but do build in something to look forward to. Interact with others if that's your preference, or do something for yourself. We can be happy by ourselves.'



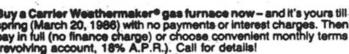
Mama looks distracted, but 17-month-old Deric Hudson has his mind on one thing only and that's his bottle of fruit juice. The sturdy tyke is taking a nourishment

break during a trip into town after his mother, Jackquelyn Hudson, has just returned from a jeweler. (Photo by Audrey Lodato)









University, has recently been named recipient of one of the American Bridge Association annual college academic scholarships. Hart, the son of Mrs. Ozella Hart of Charlotte, was sponsored by the Metrolina Duplicate Bridge Club of Charlotte and is the second college student from Charlotte to receive an ABA scholarship.

ational FamilyWeek

National Family Week will be served November 24-30. Sponred by United Family Services, a Forum for Families" will be held onday, November 25, from 11:30 m. to 1:30 p.m. in the United Way allding.

Forum panelists will address conns and trends found in today's milies. The overall theme for the cussion will be "What Makes for Healthy Family?" A question and swer period will follow the panel scussion.

peration Share

Operation Share and Care, a ique nationwide food program, cks off nationally Monday, Nomber 25, and will continue rough the season. Coordinated ally by Volunteer Action Center, e program is designed to increase blic awareness about how private izens and their organizations can pport local food programs.

Charlotte Play

On Sunday, December 1, the nshine L & P Manufacturers will esent a theatrical production, inshine Bedtime Story" at West arlotte High School's auditorium, 3 p.m.

he program, which will emphasize true meaning of Christmas, will o feature Stanley Alexander and Alexander Singers. Mayor rvey Gantt is expected to give tetings. The Sunshine L & P and w Beauty were recently in s homecoming parade.

