

Diversity Thoughts: Holiday diversity--text in email

November 20, 2018

The words “Holiday” and “family” have so many different meanings and have important and unique meaning to each of us. As we are now in the midst of Fall Holidays and gearing up for Winter Holidays, let’s begin to engage in conversation about holidays; all holidays, holiday awareness, respect, diversity, equity, inclusion, and celebrations. To start the conversations, this year we are providing some tips regarding holiday awareness.

Some quick tips:

DO	DON'T	KEEP IN MIND
Use “Universal precautions” - Assume that colleagues and those accessing our services have different holiday definitions and traditions	Expect or Assume that others define holiday they way you do	Not all people celebrate holidays or celebrate holidays in the same way we do
Stay true to you	Assume that others celebrate the way you do	People celebrate holidays that we might not even be aware of – This doesn’t mean that our beliefs or their beliefs are any more or less valid
Celebrate	Assume that others view holidays the way you do	Holidays happen throughout the year for all cultures and religions
Sensitively ask others how they celebrate – use their language	Continue to use your definition/language when someone has shared their definition/language with you	Not everyone has family to celebrate with throughout the year
Engage with a genuine and sensitive curiosity – enjoy the learning!	Decorate using specific religious holiday items, images, etc. (cross, Star of David, menorah, a nativity scene, etc.)	Not all people have the finances to participate in holiday celebrations
Be mindful of decorations used (consider garland, trees, snow people, snowflakes, and the like)	Believe we cannot talk about holidays in a sensitive and respectful way	You have a choice whether or not you participate in holiday celebrations and, if so, how you participate
Be mindful of your language and assumptions (i.e. saying “Happy Thanksgiving” to a person who identifies as Native American may be experienced as insensitive and uninformed – consider, “I hope you enjoy the holiday”)	Assume that others have or plan to celebrate holidays with what you consider to be a family	Learning about other views does not make our views any less important and can be very fun!
Invite others to celebrate with you, but allow them to say no or yes without pressure	Don’t expect perfection. We are all learning.	Holidays can be a source of pain for some people and they might need extra support around this time

Please know; we envision a HealthPoint culture where we are able to sensitively celebrate all holidays in a meaningful way. It is so exciting to honor and celebrate each of you, your unique identities, cultures, traditions, and those of the people we serve and our communities.

This tip sheet was authored by Dr. Shelley Farnan, Diversity Director at Burrell clinic in Missouri, with input from Dr. Aimee Dershowitz, Diversity Director at Four County clinics, Indiana, and HealthPoint’s Anya Zimberoff, 3 of the Diversity committee members of NPTC (National Psychologist Training Consortium, our Behavioral Health Internship organization).