

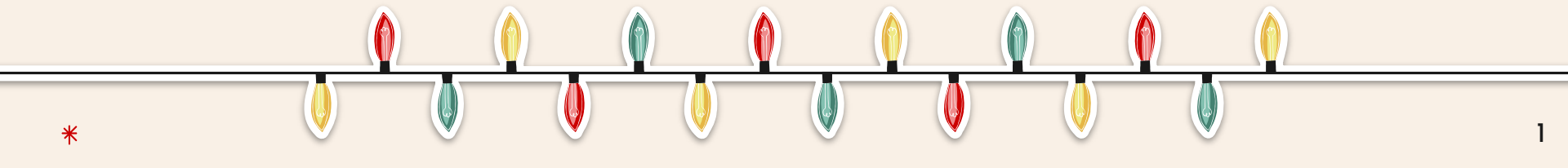


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Caring for Our Mental Health Over the Holidays

Livermore Learns

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Outline of Presentation

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Overview

Holiday Season & Stress



Behavioral Health During the Holidays

Taking Care of Mental
Health

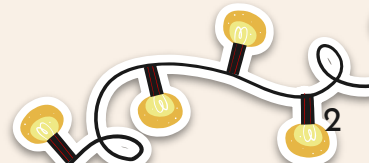


Strategies and Resources

Preparing for the
upcoming holidays



Questions





Overview

Holiday Season & Stress

Background: let's talk about facts

- 62% - Stress levels "very or somewhat" elevated
- 10% - Stress levels "unchanged"
 - Financial demands, interpersonal family dynamics, maintaining personal health habits
- APA - 38% report increased stress
- 8% people report feeling happier



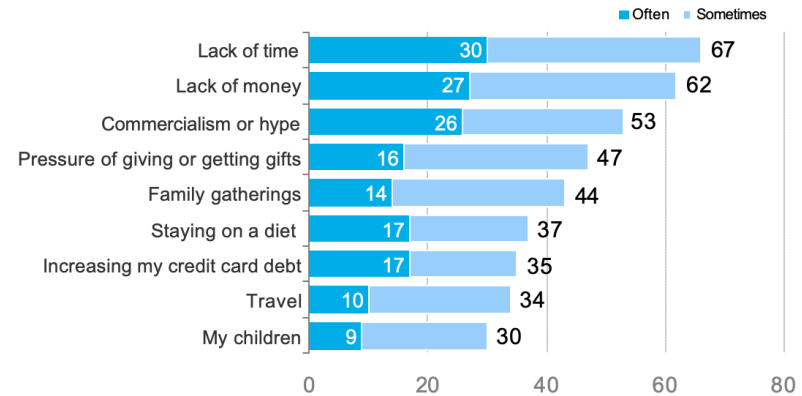
Background cntd

- APA - 44% of females report increased stress vs. 31% males
- 54% of families of lower-middle income (\$30,000 - \$50,000 household income) - increased stress
- 31% of lower income (< \$30,000) and 40% of people with higher income (>50,000)

■ **Figure 4:** Holiday Stressors (percent responding “often” and “often/sometimes”)

Leading holiday stressors

I am going to read you a list of things that some people find stressful about the holidays. How often do each of the following cause you stress during the holidays?



Background cntd

- Stress levels are highest when teens return to school
- 58% or $\frac{2}{3}$ know somebody who has considered self-harm
- 58% “somewhat or very” concerned about their own mental health
- $\frac{1}{5}$ parents admit their stress levels negatively impacts children during holidays
- Mothers 2x more likely to feel stress



Background cntd

- Prep for stress - updating or shifting cognitive strategies
- Attention from one task to another
- ↑ responsibilities - prefrontal cortex overdrive
- ↓ memory & concentration
- Less new brain cell production
- Acute reaction to immediate stress - more likely to go away after season is over
- Face-to-face ↑ wellbeing & focus
- Social-connectedness & growth related activities ↑ wellbeing





Positives and

- Family reunited
- Sense of community
- Sense of appreciation
- Time off school
- Motivation to achieve goals
- Opportunity to recharge



Negatives

- Navigating family dynamics
- Isolation
- Loneliness
- Stress returning to school
- Expectations don't match reality
- Financial pressure
- Grief
- ↑ responsibilities



* Biopsychosocial Model



Bio

- Changes in diet
- Changes in Exercise
- Less sunlight & shorter days
- Bloating
- Headaches

- Comparing self to peers (e.g. gift, family unit)
- Stress of preparation/chaos
- Extra responsibilities

Social

Psycho

- Anxiety about meeting expectations (e.g. multiple households)
- Worry re family dynamics
- Seasonal sadness

Possible Additional Environmental Stressors

- Covid-19 travel restrictions
- Isolation
- Fear for loved ones health
- Separated or divorced families
- Grief (e.g. this year grandpa is not here)
- Social triggers
- Unhealthy family dynamics
- Perfectionistic expectations
- Heightened emotionality

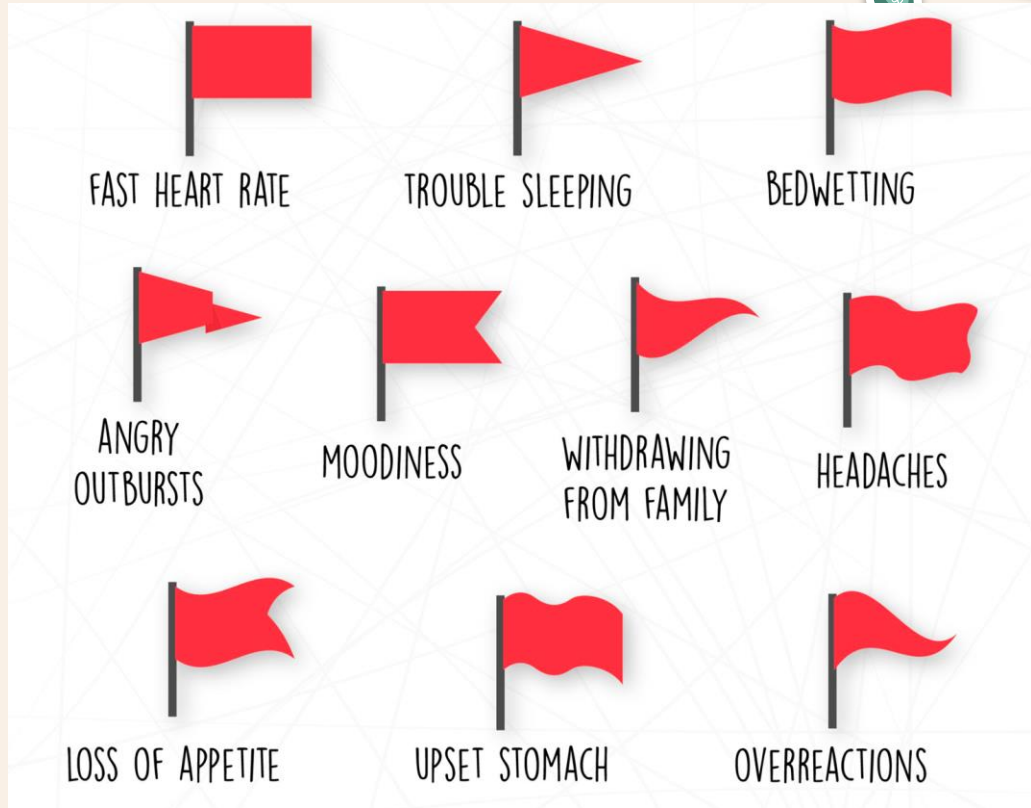


* Anniversary Effect

- Increased distress around anniversary of traumatic event - feeling mildly upset for a while → significant psychiatric or medical symptoms

- Prepare ahead of time
- Commemorate event
- Talk to someone
- Share experience w/ others involved
- Take note of progress
- Practice self-kindness
- Identify triggers
- Safety plan

Warning signs of stress in children





Behavioral Health During the Holidays

Depression

- More than just “moodiness” or “holiday blues”
- Warning signs:
 - Feelings of worthlessness/hopelessness
 - Weight changes
 - Guilt
 - Abandoning hobbies
 - Withdrawal from friends and family
 - Energy loss
 - Appetite changes
 - Sleep problems
 - Thoughts of death or suicide






* What to do

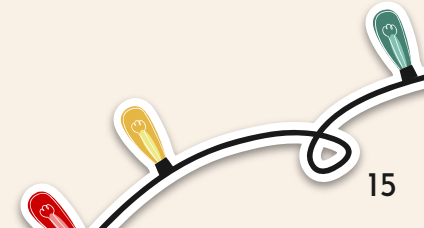


Check-in with your child/teen:

- Start by asking them if anything is bothering them and explain that you have noticed a change in their mood lately. *
- Validate that the holidays can be a stressful time for everyone
- Ask if there is something you can do to make their holiday better
- Keep an open dialogue, listening can be more helpful than talking

Check-in Activity:

- 
- GLAD technique: write down something you are grateful for (G), something you learned (L), something that you accomplished (A) and something that delighted you (D)

Contact your health provider





Anxiety




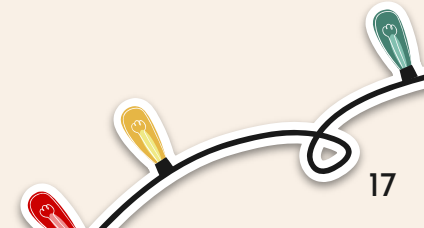
- Nervousness before a large event/travel is normal and common
- Social anxiety- different from shyness and introversion
- What to look for:
 - Fear of being judged/embarrassed
 - Avoid attracting attention
 - Worries and intense anxiety about upcoming social activities



- Hard time talking to people
- Physical symptoms (e.g., blushing, sweating)



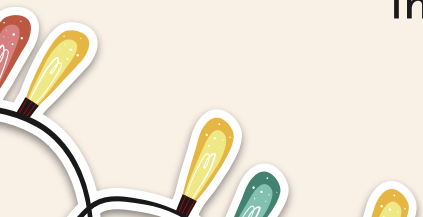

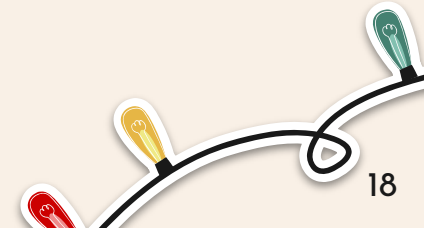


* What to do

- Communicate plans early
 - Example: If you're going to stay with relatives during the holidays, print out pictures of who you'll be visiting. Tell your child stories about them to ease anxiety about new people.
 - Open a discussion about what they are anxious about the holidays
 - Keep routines: They are critical for a child with anxiety to feel some sense of control and peace.
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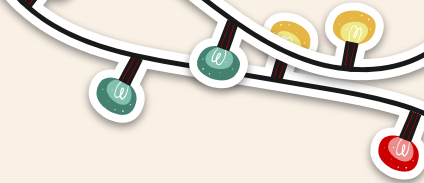
What to do

- Role play: The more prepared a child feels for a situation, the less anxiety they will feel.
 - Help your child build relationships, strong social skills and maintain friendships.
 - Model social skills
 - With younger children, arrange playdates or get them involved in activities
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* Coping skills toolbox

- Create with your child to help them calm down when they are upset, anxious or worried.
- Things you can include:
 - Feel good items that engage all five senses
 - Written affirmations
 - “I’m doing my best.”
 - Strategy cards: breathing, stretching, jumping jacks





ADHD considerations

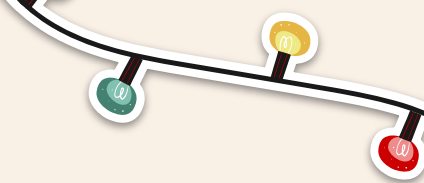


- Teens/children diagnosed with ADHD may experience heightened anxiety and stress symptoms during the holiday months
 - Lack of schedule or overscheduling
 - Lack of consistency in eating, sleeping, and expectations across settings



- Make sure that children know that usual behavior rules apply, even on vacation.
- Give praise and rewards when rules are followed





ADHD considerations



- Sugar & hyperactivity
 - Children and teens should have less than 25g of free sugars a day (6 sugar cubes)
- Structure/Schedule
 - Try to keep mealtimes, bedtimes and medication times about the same as they are at home.
 - Lack of sleep can be associated with increased hyperactivity



Substance Use

- Risk factors: heightened life stressors, lack of adult supervision, increased free time, overstimulation, and reduced social support
- Reasons for trying substance use:
 - boredom*
 - peer pressure
 - social anxiety*
 - trying new things*
 - boost grades
 - control weight



Gray, K. M., & Squeglia, L. M. (2018). Research Review: What have we learned about adolescent substance use?. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 59(6), 618-627.

Substance Use

Warning Signs



DEMAND FOR PRIVACY



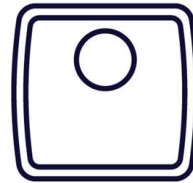
ISOLATION & SILENCE



DISAPPEARING MONEY



CHANGES IN SLEEP HABITS



SUDDEN OR DRAMATIC WEIGHT LOSS/GAIN



DECLINING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE



How to talk about substance use



***Be prepared that if you're going to ask your kids questions about substance use, you may get answers that are difficult to hear.



1. Communication is key! Have frequent conversations **with** your teen, and make sure you listen to them.
2. Promote healthy activities to help fight off boredom and improve mental stimulation.
3. Establish clear family rules about drug and alcohol use and consistently follow them.
4. Keep track of the alcohol and/or prescription drugs that you keep in the house.



Contact your healthcare provider.





Strategies & Resources

Holiday Self-Care Tips



Make space for messy feelings like grief.



Learn to say no without feeling guilty.

Create your own holiday traditions.



Keep your stress levels in check. It's okay to step back or delegate.



Set realistic expectations for yourself and the holiday.



Make a plan and try to stick to it. Organization is key.

Keep your self-care routine or begin a new one.



Give yourself permission to let it be a normal day.



Recognizing Your Child's Emotions (and Ours!)



Joy-
Helps us
know
what's
important

Anger-
defense



Sadness-
Missing
something and
seeking comfort



Fear-
Radar for
protection

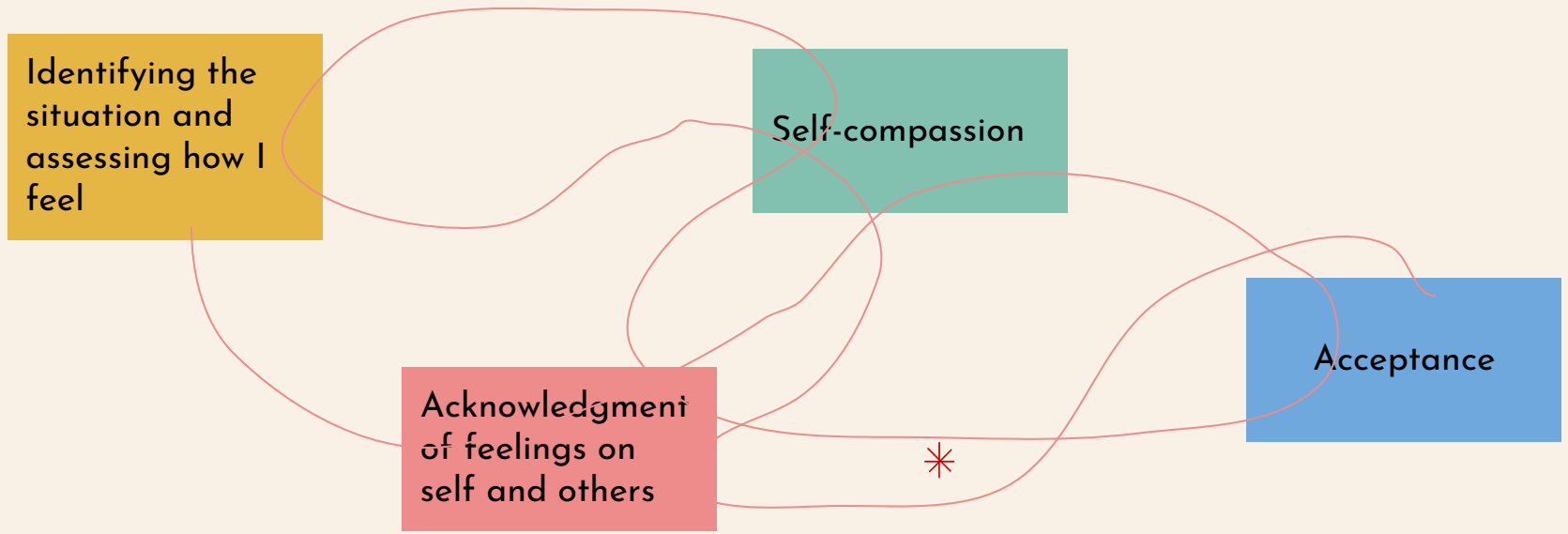


Disgust-
Helps us to get
away from
something
unpleasant



Meaning Making and Acceptance

Meaning making refers to how individuals understand and make sense of life events



Planning for the Holidays

2022 December						
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
28	29	30	01	02	03	04
05	06	07 Attend Livermore Learns	08 Make holiday-themed cards for friends	09 Make a family video holiday greeting	10 Watch a holiday themed movie	11 Make a gingerbread house
12 Print holiday themed coloring pages	13 Buy toys for the homeless shelter	14 Make gifts for teachers	15 Make a pinecone bird-feeder	16 Have a marshmallow fight!	17 Bake cookies for your neighbors	18 Donate old clothes to a family center
19 Create a holiday themed song or rap	20 Take photos in the park	21 Holiday song dance party!	22 Learn how to say "Happy Holidays" in other languages	23 Read your favorite holiday themed story	24 Make your favorite holiday themed dish	25 Spend time with others
26 Create a dance	27 Bake cupcakes	28 Make a paper garland	29 Have a game night	30 Tour the city lights	31 Write a New Year's resolution	

25 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS family activities

1 MAKE CHRISTMAS CARDS	2 FAMILY VIDEO CHRISTMAS GREETING	3 PRINT CHRISTMAS COLORING PAGES	4 MAKE A TEACHER GIFT	5 CRAZY HOT CHOCOLATE RECIPES
6 WATCH A FAVORITE HOLIDAY MOVIE	7 MAKE YOUR OWN ORNAMENTS	8 HAVE A MARSHMALLOW FIGHT!	9 BUY SOCKS FOR A HOMELESS SHELTER	10 MAKE A PINECONE BIRD FEEDER
11 BAKE COOKIES FOR ONE OF YOUR NEIGHBORS	12 TAKE PHOTOS IN THE SNOW	13 CHRISTMAS SONG DANCE PARTY!	14 LEARN HOW OTHER COUNTRIES CELEBRATE	15 DONATE OLD TOYS TO A FAMILY CENTER
16 MAKE A PAPER GARLAND	17 TAKE CUPCAKES TO YOUR LOCAL FIRE DEPT.	18 HAVE GAME NIGHT IN YOUR PJAMAS!	19 READ YOUR FAVORITE CHRISTMAS BOOK	20 TAKE A CAR TOUR OF YOUR CITY'S LIGHTS
21 COOKIE	22 SWEET	23 NEIGHBOR	24 READ THE	25 Merry Christmas

2023 January						
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
26	27	28	29	30	31	01 Write a short reflection of 2022
02 Write a short reflection on what you would like to happen in 2023	03 Take photos of squirrels at the park	04 Watch a mindfulness video	05 Practice deep breathing	06 Wash the family car	07 Bake a dessert you've never baked before	08 Write a short reflection of what you are looking forward to for the spring term
09	10	11	12	13	14	15



Planning for the Holidays

- How to create a Holiday Plan:
 - Have a family meeting
 - Formulate questions
 - Create a holiday plan checklist
 - Food
 - Decorations
 - Events, parties, and family gatherings
 - Traditions
 - Post-holidays
 - Reflection



(National Grief Center for Children and Families)

Coping with Anniversaries and Difficult Dates

- Marking the anniversary and finding ways to honor loved one by
 - Writing a story
 - Planting a tree
 - Making an ornament in loved one's honor
 - Making a movie/dance/creative
 - Light a memorial candle and invite others to share memories
 - Write a card to loved one
 - Buy a gift that loved one liked and donate it to a cause important to them
 - Cook loved one's favorite meals→opportunity to share memories at the table

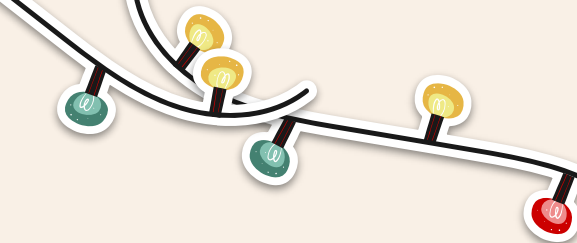


Coping with Family Separation

- Modeling: children do best when parent(s) express a positive attitude about the separation and have internal coping skills to deal with stressors
 - Caring for the caregiver
 - It's okay to feel anger/frustration/sadness/tiredness
- Taking a break from social media
- Allow child's discussion of memories of past holidays when everyone was together
- If appropriate, consider having your child's parent join in on holiday traditions
- Finding a community and reaching out for support



Mental Health Resources



KAISER PERMANENTE®

[Mental Health Services in Northern California | Kaiser Permanente](#)



National Alliance on Mental Illness

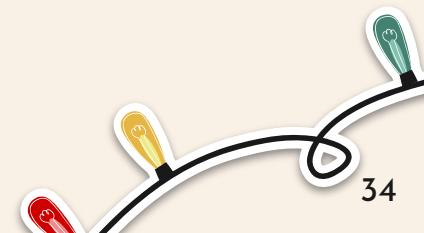
[Home | NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness](#)



[Find community services in the Bay Area | La Familia \(livelafamilia.org\)](#)



[Axis Community Health](#)



Mental Health Resources

CareSolace

- [Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District : Care Match \(caresolace.com\)](https://caresolace.com)



Our Care Team is here to serve.

The Care Team has expert experience in navigating barriers to accessing mental health care, and is available to serve students, staff, and their families 24 hours a day, 7 days per week in any language.



Mental Health Resources



care solace
Calming the Chaos of Mental Health Care.

Care Companion™

The Care Companion™ is a 24x7 service for parents and staff. They are experts at hand-holding families through the mental health care process. They navigate insurance, look at availability and wait time of resources, and help families schedule appointments with local and trusted mental health resources.

If you would like for one of our team members to assist you, you can call us 24/7 at [888-515-0595](tel:888-515-0595), video chat with us by clicking "Talk to us", or email us at weserve@caresolace.org with the following information:

1. Your name and contact information
2. Your preferred language
3. A good time for our team member to contact you

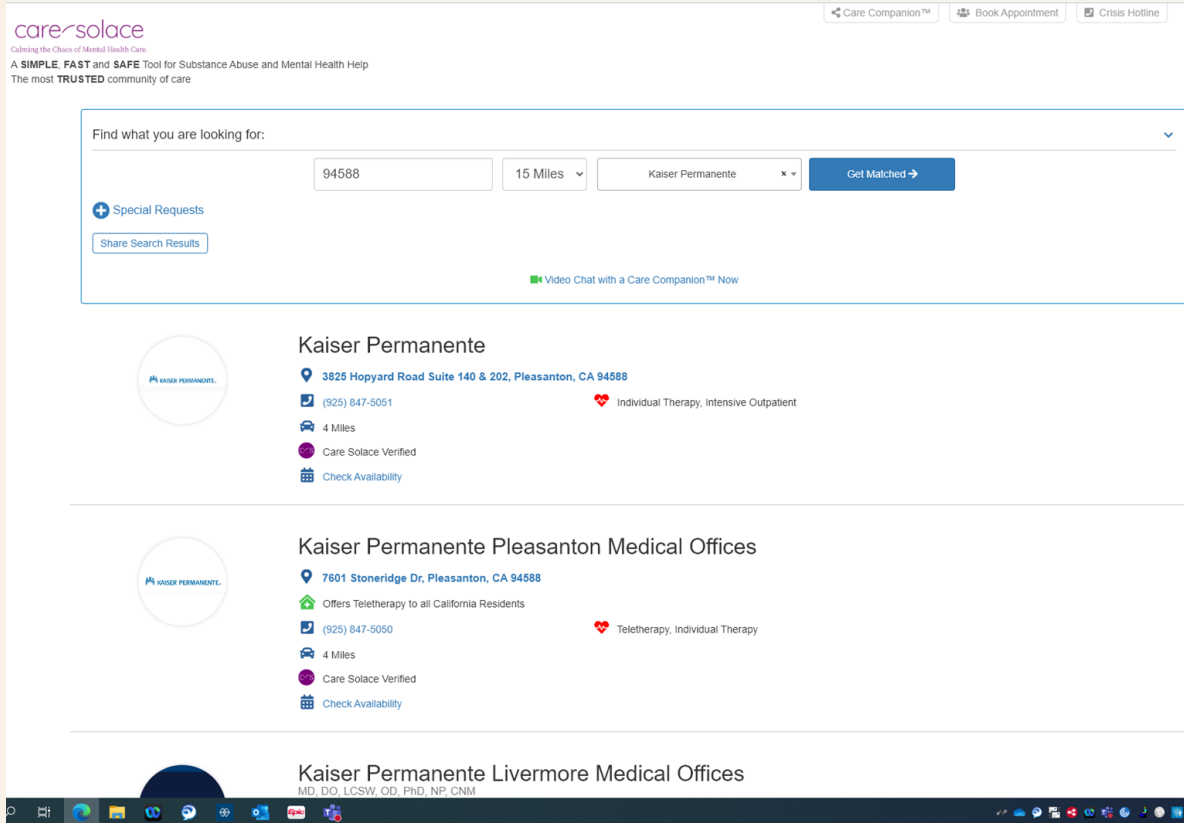
Care Companion™ Follow Through: Average response time to emails is 15 minutes. If we cannot reach you, we will continue to attempt contact for 14 days. This means we will try whatever pathways of contact are available and appropriate, e.g. text, email, and phone. After a confirmed appointment, we follow up two weeks into care to hear your family's experience and check with you if additional services are required.

FOR STAFF REFERRING A FAMILY VIA WARM HAND-OFF: If you are a staff member in one of our districts, please email customersuccess@caresolace.org.

CONTACT US

Reach out to us at weserve@caresolace.org

Mental Health Resources



The screenshot shows the Care Solace website interface. At the top, there are navigation links for "Care Companion™", "Book Appointment", and "Crisis Hotline". The main header includes the "care-solace" logo and the tagline "Celebrating the Choice of Mental Health Care". Below this, it states "A SIMPLE, FAST and SAFE Tool for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Help" and "The most TRUSTED community of care".

The search bar contains the text "Find what you are looking for:" and has a dropdown arrow. Below the search bar, there are three input fields: "94588", "15 Miles", and "Kaiser Permanente". A blue "Get Matched →" button is to the right of these fields. Below the search bar, there are two buttons: "+ Special Requests" and "Share Search Results". A green status indicator says "Video Chat with a Care Companion™ Now".

The search results are listed below. The first result is "Kaiser Permanente" with a location pin icon, address "3825 Hopyard Road Suite 140 & 202, Pleasanton, CA 94588", phone number "(925) 847-5051", and services "Individual Therapy, Intensive Outpatient". It also shows "4 Miles", "Care Solace Verified", and a "Check Availability" button.

The second result is "Kaiser Permanente Pleasanton Medical Offices" with a location pin icon, address "7601 Stoneridge Dr, Pleasanton, CA 94588", phone number "(925) 847-5050", and services "Teletherapy, Individual Therapy". It also shows "4 Miles", "Care Solace Verified", and a "Check Availability" button.

The third result is "Kaiser Permanente Livermore Medical Offices" with a location pin icon, address "MD, DO, LCSW, OD, PhD, NP, CNM".

Transitioning to Spring and Finishing Strong

- Here are some considerations regarding transitioning from winter break to the spring term:
 - Regulating sleep cycle
 - Changed study schedule
 - Flexibility when it comes to COVID trends
 - Having a back up plan
 - For high school students: transitioning to life after high school



Questions?

Thank you for attending tonight's presentation! Take care!