Nearly 7 in 10 Americans Feel Pressure to Appear Happier Than They Are This Holiday Season

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LifeStance Survey Reveals How the Holidays Affect Mental Health, with Stress and Social Pressure Hitting Millennials and Gen Z Hardest

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz., Nov. 5, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- Findings from a LifeStance Health survey released today reveal that for many Americans, the holiday season involves a complex mix of emotions, including reported feelings of stress and pressure. These trends are particularly pronounced among younger generations.

The survey explored topics commonly addressed in therapy around the holidays, including seasonal stress, navigating social gatherings, performative happiness, loneliness and managing family discussions about politics and current events.

Matt Solit, Executive Clinical Director, LifeStance Health, said: "Feeling stress during the holiday season is a common experience, and people facing these challenges are not alone. The holidays can still be a time of connection and genuine joy when we take intentional steps to support our mental health. Evidence-based strategies, like prioritizing self-care, setting boundaries, maintaining meaningful social connections and seeking support from a trained therapist, can support well-being and make the holidays more manageable and fulfilling."

Key insights:

- 57% of respondents find the holiday season stressful. However, 23% report that it is at least slightly relaxing.
- 64% of respondents would prefer to skip at least a few of their holiday gatherings, while 28% would like to attend all of them.
- Millennials (34%) and Gen Z (33%) were the most likely to want to skip most or all of their holiday gatherings, while 20% of millennial and 26% of Gen Z respondents said they want to attend all of them.
- 75% of respondents said at least a few of their planned holiday gatherings feel more like an obligation than something they truly want to attend, with Gen Z leading at 89%. Meanwhile, 20% said they truly want to attend.
- 51% of respondents report feeling lonely around the holidays, even when they're with loved ones, while 24% never feel lonely around the holidays.
- 69% of respondents feel at least a little pressure to appear happier than they actually are during the holidays, with millennial (34%) and Gen Z (35%) respondents experiencing a high degree of pressure. Conversely, 31% do not feel any pressure to appear happier.
- 48% of respondents are not worried about political conflicts at holiday gatherings, while 46% are at least slightly.
- 59% of respondents typically feel positive, refreshed or satisfied once the holiday season is over, while 17% feel sad or disappointed.

LifeStance is committed to making outpatient mental health care accessible and convenient. Many LifeStance providers offer flexible scheduling and remote visits, so individuals can support their mental health this holiday season without rearranging their schedules. To learn more and schedule an appointment, visit www.LifeStance.com.

Methodology
On behalf of LifeStance Health, Researchscape International conducted an online survey of 1,023 U.S. adults aged 18 and older. The survey was fielded from Oct. 16 to 21, 2025. The credibility interval is plus or minus four percentage points for questions answered by all respondents. The data was weighted to the U.S. population by nine demographic questions.

ABOUT LIFESTANCE HEALTH
Founded in 2017, LifeStance (NASDAQ: LFST) is reimagining mental health. We are one of the nation's largest providers of virtual and in-person outpatient mental healthcare for children, adolescents and adults experiencing a variety of mental health conditions. Our mission is to help people lead healthier, more fulfilling lives by improving access to trusted, affordable and personalized mental healthcare. LifeStance and its supported practices employ approximately 7,700 psychiatrists, advanced practice nurses, psychologists and therapists and operate across 33 states and more than 550 centers. To learn more, please visit www.LifeStance.com.

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