

## Feeling Stressed About the Festive Season? You Might Have Caught the Holiday Blues

By Sow Jeng Teng

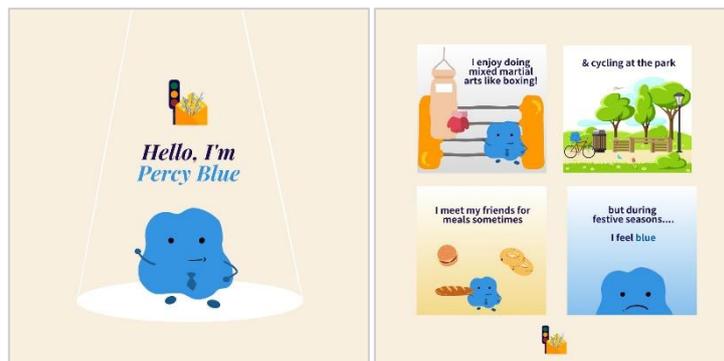
The holiday season is upon us once again. Everywhere you go, you see Christmas decorations, you hear Michael Bublé carolling about it being the most wonderful time of the year, and you're starting to panic as you scratch your head over what last-minute gifts to get for that Christmas gathering.

While this is the season to be jolly for many, let's not forget that some people may be feeling extra blue.

According to the [Institute of Mental Health](#), the "holiday blues" is a common phenomenon when people feel stressed or overwhelmed as the festive season nears. Societal expectations surrounding this holiday – that we should be giving thanks and feeling joy – can be daunting for those of us who are struggling. To make matters worse, the long-drawn battle with COVID-19 that still sees no end could add to our anxiety and ambivalence about the new year.

While holiday blues are different from mental illness, the two are certainly correlated. A 2014 study done by The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) found that 64% of people with mental illness report holidays make their conditions worse.

What then can we do about it?



(Source: Instagram [@AmberLetterSG](#))

Here are 3 ways to fight holiday blues:

### 1) Set your own expectations and boundaries around the holiday

- If parties (of five) are not your thing, don't be afraid to say 'no'. Spend time with those whom you genuinely want to be with, even if it's just that one friend. Most importantly, engage in activities that you enjoy – you don't always need to party or socialise to have an enjoyable time.

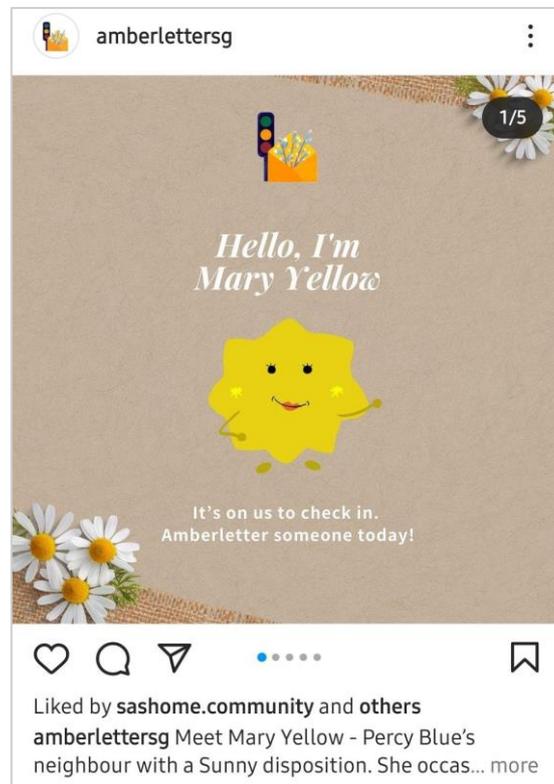
### 2) Redefine your goals

- Let's face it, New Year's resolutions rarely ever come to fruition. When we make absolute statements about what we want to accomplish for the year without making

concrete plans, we might be setting ourselves up for failure and end up feeling disappointed in ourselves. Try ditching New Year's resolutions and go for more realistic, short-term goals. For example, instead of planning to "lose weight in ~~2021~~ 2022", reframe it into a more reasonable, action-oriented goal: "For the next 2 months, I want to start exercising twice a week and reduce my bubble tea intake from 2 cups to 1 cup each week".

### 3) Check in on a friend

- Holiday blues are much more common than you think. Chances are some of your friends or loved ones may be feeling the pressure too. Let's also not forget about the foreign workers, students and many others who are residing in Singapore, a home away from home. Spending the holidays without family can be extremely rough and lonely. Checking in on them can open doors to honest conversations and meaningful connections, just like what Mary Yellow did with Percy Blue from our Amberletter campaign.



(View post [here](#))

In our upcoming posts, we'll be introducing more characters into the Amberletter campaign. Stay tuned to see how they each bring colour to Percy Blue's life. Follow @Amberlettersg on Instagram now, and have yourself a whatever-you-want Christmas!

Read more: [3 levels of conversations to get you started](#)

Source:

<https://www.imh.com.sg/wellness/page.aspx?id=2586>

<https://www.nami.org/Press-Media/Press-Releases/2014/Mental-health-and-the-holiday-blues>

<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/why-your-new-year-s-resolutions-do-more-harm-than-good-a6788381.html>