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November 30, 2006

Release No. 06-73

**The Gift of Healthy Minds, Healthy Lives**

**Arlington, Va.** – The holiday season is a time of excitement, celebration and happiness. Families, friends and loved ones have the opportunity to come together in observance of religious holidays, family traditions and social gatherings. For most people, the holiday season is a rewarding and cherished time of year. However, for some people, the holidays can bring stress, anxiety and feelings of depression.

Mood disorders, such as major depression and seasonal affective disorder (SAD) can be especially difficult to cope with during the holidays. For December, the American Psychiatric Association's (APA) free public information Web site, "[HealthyMinds.org](http://HealthyMinds.org)," features information to help families and individuals cope and make the most of this festive season.

"Mood disorders are among the most common mental disorders and affect millions of people each year. The *Textbook of Mood Disorders* states that mood disorders are among the most pressing public health problems worldwide," said Carl C. Bell, M.D., president and CEO, Community Mental Health Council and professor of Psychiatry and Public Health at the University of Illinois at Chicago. "The two major types of mood disorders are depression and bipolar disorder. Dangerous health threats, like suicidal behaviors, can result from an untreated mood disorder so it is important to seek help if you think you are suffering from a form of these treatable diseases."

**Special December's HealthyMinds.org content includes:**

- [Tips for Appropriate Holiday Alcohol Consumption](#)
- [Helping Children Cope with Holiday Stress](#)
- [APA Expert Opinion: Mood Disorders with Carl C. Bell, M.D.](#)

The American Psychiatric Association encourages everyone to learn more about the warnings signs of mental illnesses. A healthy mind is key to having a healthy life. For more information about mood disorders, visit APA's "Healthy Minds. Healthy Lives." public information Web site [www.HealthyMinds.org](http://www.HealthyMinds.org).

**About the American Psychiatric Association:**

The American Psychiatric Association is the nation's leading medical specialty society whose more than 37,000 physician members specialize in diagnosis, treatment, prevention and research of mental illnesses including substance use disorders. Visit the APA at [www.psych.org](http://www.psych.org) and [www.HealthyMinds.org](http://www.HealthyMinds.org).

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