

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



HERE COME THE HOLIDAYS

While the holiday season is meant to bring feelings of love and cheer, it also brings stress for many of us. According to studies, more than 80% of us find the holiday season to be 'somewhat' or 'very' stressful. Albeit, we may find the holiday season extremely demanding and hectic, there are children who may find the holidays traumatic and even unbearable-these are the children of incarcerated parents. These children are an invisible, powerless, marginalized and ever growing population in our communities. In 2007, more than 2.7 million American children and youths had at least one parent in federal or state prison (with more having parents and other family members in local jails). Additional statistics assert:

- More than +5 million US children have had a parent in prison.
- 1 in 14 US children experience parental incarceration.
- The initial episodes of parental incarceration occurred before the child was 9- after which rates remain relatively stable.
- Children who have no resident parent with more than a high school education are 41% percent more likely to have experience parental incarceration than that of children with at least one parent wo has had some education beyond high school (8.2 and 5.8% respectively).
- Children living outside metropolitan areas are more likely to have experienced parental incarceration than those living in metropolitan areas (10.7% vs. 6.3% respectively).
- More than half of the children who ever had an incarcerated parent have lived with someone who had a substance abuse problem.
- Nearly 3 in 5 children who ever had an incarcerated parent have experienced parental divorce or separation.
- More than 1/3 of children who ever had an incarcerated parent have witnessed violence between their parents or guardians, and 1/3 have witnessed or experienced violence in their neighborhood.
- More than 1 in 4 children who ever had an incarcerated parent have lived with someone who was mentally ill or suicidal, and nearly 1 in 10 have experienced the death of a parent.

The following article was written by **Susan Lemere**, Empowering Solo Moms Everywhere (ESME's) Addiction Resource Guide. She is a Solo Mom of two, as well as a therapist, a writer, and an artist coach.



"IT IS HARD TO LOVE
SOMEBODY THAT
EVERYONE SAYS IS BAD."





When a parent is in jail for the holidays, whether this is the first holiday season since the parent's incarceration or one of many, kids may be struggling with feelings that are often difficult for them to talk about. Solo Moms, in the meantime, are often dealing with their own extra stressors at this time of year, including financial strain and difficult feelings of their own. How, then, can a Solo Mom try to help the kids (and herself!) cope?

HOLIDAYS MAGNIFY A WIDE RANGE OF BEHAVIORS AND EMOTIONS

Children of incarcerated parents may show a wide variety of reactions and behaviors at school and/or at home. These can include sadness, anxiety, anger, loneliness, and restlessness. Some children might act out more or take out their difficult feelings on the caregiving parent or other family members. Some might withdraw or pull away while others seek more contact and reassurance from the caregiving parent—sometimes to the point of clinging or having separation anxiety.

Children have different reactions to the holiday season in general and more specifically about visiting their incarcerated parent. Some want more contact while others want less. Others might feel guilty about the idea of celebrating while their parent is in jail and ask to be excluded from usual festivities or ask that the festivities be cancelled. They might feel angry at the incarcerated parent for “ruining” the holidays, or they might be dedicated to connecting with the incarcerated parent in any way possible. Much will depend on their age, their relationship with the incarcerated parent, the impact on the household of the parent's incarceration, and their temperament and coping strategies.

HOW SOLO MOMS CAN HELP

- 1. Take care of yourself.** Your kids need your strength right now, and you won't have it to give if you are neglecting your own well-being.
- 2. Investigate local and national resources for families with an incarcerated parent.** Many communities have programs to help families at the holidays. For example, in 2014, the San Francisco Sheriff's Department and the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice collaborated to provide some incarcerated fathers and their children a special holiday visit with donated gifts for fathers to give their children. Staff took pictures to commemorate the occasion.

In terms of national resources, [Angel Tree](#), founded in 1982 by a formerly incarcerated parent, is a Christianity-based organization providing outreach to families of incarcerated individuals. It has a strongly religious tone that may be inviting to some and off-putting to others, but it does a tremendous amount to help children of incarcerated parents, including helping with holiday gifts.

- 3. Let your children know you're available to talk, but be willing to give them some space if they want it.** Some kids will have an easier time talking about their feelings regarding the situation than others. Also, kids might be reluctant to talk to you specifically about this, especially if your relationship to their other parent was troubled and they are aware of this. Let them know you are there for them in general, for talking or just spending time together, and if it seems that they want to talk about it but not to you, offer to connect them with a counselor or other skilled and trusted adult.

1.7 Million
CHILDREN HAVE A
MOTHER OR FATHER
SERVING TIME



"Family isn't always blood. It's the people in your life who want you in theirs; the ones who accept you for who you are. The ones who would do anything to see you smile and who love you no matter what" ~ Unknown ~♥~

4. Let your children know what to expect ahead of time—especially if this is a first holiday season that their parent is incarcerated. Of course, there are limits to what you know and can communicate in advance, but any information you have can help your children prepare for what will happen. For instance, if there will be holiday visit; find out what you can ahead of time about time limits and privacy. If the incarcerated parent will be calling collect from jail, your children should know that this is expensive and that the call will need to be brief. And if the children want to send gifts, find out what the rules are at the particular facility where the parent is; many kinds of gifts are not allowed, and it can be very disappointing to children to choose a special gift, only to have it refused.

5. Ask for your children's input on anything about the holiday season that is within the family's control. Is there a tradition they would like to emphasize, modify, or skip under the circumstances? Is there a way to make the absent parent seem more present, if that's what the child desires? For instance, if you celebrate Christmas, maybe the child would like to make a new ornament symbolizing the absent parent in some way.

6. Remember that your presence matters, and try to find ways to celebrate the family that you are. One of their parents is away, but you are not. In the midst of what might feel like a tumultuous time, it can be important to recognize and celebrate the connection that *you* have with your kids and to give yourself credit for doing the best you can in this important role.

Your children may or may not know other kids whose parent is incarcerated, and they may feel unlucky and alone. It can help to remind them that many children celebrate the holidays with one or both parents absent, for reasons including parents living elsewhere after separation or divorce, a parent being in the military, or a parent being in the hospital. While it's important to validate tough feelings, it is equally important to instill, reinforce, and model a sense of focusing on the positive. Celebrate one another, even if all is not as you would hope for your family this season. NDOC Education Services thanks author, Susan Lemere, for sharing her personal and professional strategies to alleviate some of stress endured this time of year by children of incarcerated parents.



HALLOWEEN TRIVIA and FUN FACTS

Because of the unknown, Halloween is the one of the most captivating holidays, often celebrated by both adults and children. The element of surprise makes it fun and unpredictable. Enlighten yourself with Halloween trivia and fun facts to enjoy the holiday even more. Take the trivia and make a quiz for your next party!





- Orange and black are Halloween colors because orange is associated with the Fall harvest and black is associated with darkness and death.
- Jack o' Lanterns originated in Ireland where people placed candles in hollowed-out turnips to keep away spirits and ghosts on the Samhain holiday.
- Pumpkins also come in white, blue and green. Great for unique monster carvings!
- Halloween was brought to North America by immigrants from Europe who would celebrate the harvest around a bonfire, share ghost stories, sing, dance and tell fortunes.
- Tootsie Rolls were the first wrapped penny candy in America.
- The ancient Celts thought that spirits and ghosts roamed the countryside on Halloween night. They began wearing masks and costumes to avoid being recognized as human.
- Halloween candy sales average about 2 billion dollars annually in the United States.
- Chocolate candy bars top the list as the most popular candy for trick-or-treaters with Snickers #1.
- Halloween is the 2nd most commercially successful holiday, with Christmas being the first.
- Bobbing for apples is thought to have originated from the roman harvest festival that honors Pomona, the goddess of fruit trees.
- Black cats were once believed to be witch's familiars who protected their powers.
- The fear of Halloween is known as Samhainophobia.



When it comes to Thanksgiving, every year is reenacted: turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie. Someone will make insane political assertions and the younger crowd will sulk. The cook will promise to do a better job with the gravy — and then it will taste familiarly paste-like!

Considering the times we've celebrated Thanksgiving, year after year, you would think that we would know everything there is to know about this food-centric holiday. But do you know what the pilgrims ate at their first Thanksgiving day meal, and who they ate it with? Below are bits of Turkey Day trivia so you can enjoy the feast a little bit more — feeling a tad smarter and equipped with appropriate holiday conversation starter tidbits.

**STAND UP, ON THIS
THANKSGIVING DAY,
STAND UPON YOUR FEET.
BELIEVE IN MAN.
SOBERLY AND WITH
CLEAR EYES, BELIEVE IN
YOUR OWN TIME AND
PLACE. THERE IS NOT,
AND THERE NEVER HAS
BEEN A BETTER TIME, OR
A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE
IN.-PHILLIPS BROOKS**

THANKSGIVING TIDBITS: EAT THEM UP!



Was There Turkey At The First Thanksgiving?

There is no evidence that turkey was eaten at the first Thanksgiving, a three-day meal shared between the pilgrims and Wamponoag tribe in 1621. It is more likely that they ate venison and a lot of seafood. Today, though, we sure eat a lot of turkey.

Of The Three Utensils We Use To Eat (Fork, Spoon & Knife) Which Was Not Present At The First Thanksgiving Feast?

The fork. What did they use to eat their meal with? A knife, a spoon and their fingers. The fork was not brought by the pilgrims. Governor Winthrop of Massachusetts introduced it 10 years later, but it did not really catch on until the 18th century.



What Is The Relationship Between Frozen T.V. Dinners And Thanksgiving?

Apparently, part of the reason that Swanson started creating T.V. dinners in 1953 was because it needed to find something to do with the massive amount of leftover frozen Thanksgiving turkeys.



Does Turkey Really Make Us Sleepy?

Not really. Tryptophan does make us tired and it is in turkey. But more of it can be found in soybeans, parmesan and pork. So what is to blame for the post-meal coma? Well, it could be the quantity of food over-consumed. The huge serving of dessert could have an effect. Or it could be the amount of alcohol drunk midday.

Do People Consume A Lot Of Alcohol During This Holiday?

YES! It has been claimed again and again that the night before Thanksgiving is the biggest drinking night of the year -- beating out New Year's Eve and St. Patrick's Day. Why? It is the number one evening where people return home and reunite with their high school buddies. Or possibly the anxiety of being surrounded by family drives some to drink.

How Did The Pilgrims Make Their Green Bean Casserole?

They didn't. Green bean casserole came into being just 50 some years ago and was created by Campbell's soup. It came about when the company was making new recipes for its annual cookbook. Now, Campbell's sells about \$20 million worth of cream of mushroom soup, most likely for people to make the casserole.



TO SPEAK GRATITUDE IS COURTEOUS AND PLEASANT, TO ENACT GRATITUDE IS GENEROUS AND NOBLE, BUT TO LIVE GRATITUDE IS TO TOUCH HEAVEN.- JOHANNES A. GAERTNER

WE TEND TO FORGET THAT HAPPINESS DOESN'T COME AS A RESULT OF GETTING SOMETHING WE DON'T HAVE, BUT RATHER OF RECOGNIZING AND APPRECIATING WHAT WE DO HAVE.- FREDERICK KEONIG

WHAT WE DO FOR OURSELVES DIES WITH US. WHAT WE DO FOR OTHERS AND THE WORLD REMAINS AND IS IMMORTAL.- ALBERT PINE

How Many Turkeys Are Consumed On Thanksgiving?

An estimated 46 million turkeys are eaten on Thanksgiving (the birds weigh, on average, 16 pounds). That is more than double the amount eaten on Christmas (22 million) and Easter (19 million). In 2010, more than 244 million turkeys were raised and about 226 million of those were consumed in the United States.



Have Turkey, Stuffing And Football Always Gone Hand In Hand?

Not quite. It all started in 1934, when the Detroit Lions was bought by G.A. Richards. Trying to build up the fan base for the team, he scheduled a game for Thanksgiving Day to play the Chicago Bears, who at the time were world champions. The game sold out and was broadcasted live on radio.

Did Fresh Cranberry Sauce Accompany The Meal At The First Thanksgiving?

The first Thanksgiving most likely did not involve cranberry sauce. While there was a plethora of cranberries for the Pilgrims to feast on (being one of the few fruits native to North America), sugar was a luxury and was reportedly scarce at the time. Unrelated tidbit: The cranberry used to be called the Crane Berry, since its flowering fruit bears resemblance to the bird. 750 million pounds is the forecast for U.S. cranberry production for 2011. About 30 percent of that is for Thanksgiving alone.



How Did The Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade Begin?

The Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade began in 1924 with 400 employees marching off from Convent Avenue and 145th Street in New York City. During this time the parade was accompanied not with the oversized balloons of our favorite cartoon characters, but with live animals borrowed from the Central Park Zoo -- from camels to elephants.



Often in life we come across many people who have helped us, made our lives better and taught us good lessons. They may or may not be family but are truly cherished. On Thanksgiving Day express your gratitude towards them.

Let people know how much they mean to you.

AN OPTIMIST IS A PERSON WHO STARTS A NEW DIET ON THANKSGIVING DAY.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE: NCEC 2016 OUTCOMES

NEW VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR INMATES

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

NDOC EDUCATION SERVICES DIVISION WISHES ALL A SAFE, THRIVING AND FLOURISHING HOLIDAY SEASON.