

Seasonal Affective Disorder

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What is a Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)?

- ▶ Affects an individual the same time each year, usually starts in September-October and ends in April or May
- ▶ Individuals feel depressed during the shorter days of winter and more cheerful and energetic during the spring and summer
- ▶ Holidays can trigger feelings of grief and loss around past issues and trauma



Things to know about SAD

- ▶ SAD affects 500,000 people in the US each year
- ▶ 60-90% of people with SAD are women (ages 15-55); making women 8 times more likely deal with SAD
- ▶ SAD is believed to relate more to lack of daylight, not the cold temperature
- ▶ SAD seems to run in families

Source: PsychCenter 2017

Difference between Winter Blues and SAD

- ▶ Most of us experience the winter blues more or less to a degree, referred to commonly as “cabin fever” – low mood, not too much energy to get anything done, and looking forward to spring and summer.
- ▶ Clinical SAD means a severe inability to function, which is often coupled with feelings of helplessness and hopelessness
- ▶ Continued criteria for SAD: Regularly recurring depressive symptoms in the fall and winter, remissions in the spring and summer
- ▶ In order to find out the difference, it is important to seek help early and follow treatment recommendations



Sources: Loyola University Medical Center - Chicago, Angelos Halaris, M.D., Ph.D.

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Diagnosing and Treatment

- ▶ Encourage the individual you are concerned about to schedule an intake appointment from a mental health provider
- ▶ Avoid excessive alcohol intake- no more than 2 drinks for men, and 1 drink for women
- ▶ Contact your health insurance plan for a list of providers in your network
- ▶ Treatment may include:
 - UV Light therapy
 - Psychotherapy
 - Medications

Local Resources

- ▶ 24-Hour Crisis Support and Referrals for Substance Use and Mental Health Services
 - ▶ Recovery Help Line- 866-789-1511
 - ▶ Crisis Clinic of Thurston and Mason Counties- 360-586-2800
- ▶ Thurston-Mason Behavioral Health Organization
 - ▶ Customer Service- 360-763-5828 or 800-658-4105