

Navigating the Wintertime Blues

December 14, 2023



Concepts Taught:

- Symptoms of wintertime blues.
- Differences and similarities of Seasonal Affective Disorder and Major Depression.
- Practical tips to ease and manage symptoms.

Symptoms of wintertime blues:

- Sadness, loss of interest, lack of energy, sleep problems and difficulty taking initiative.

Why does this happen?:

- Some experts believe seasonal changes, including change in temperature and daylight savings, disrupt the body's circadian rhythm.
 - The circadian rhythm is the body's 24-hour clock regulating how we function during sleeping and waking hours.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD):

- SAD is a type of recurrent major depressive disorder in which episodes of depression occur during the same season each year.
- This condition is sometimes called the "winter blues," because the most common seasonal pattern is for depressive episodes to appear during the fall or winter and remit in the spring.

Prevalance:

- January and February have the highest rates
- It is estimated that 20-40% of Michiganders experience some degree of SAD

SAD vs. Major Depression

| Seasonal Affective Disorder | VS | Major Depression |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Symptoms are similar | Depressed Mood | Symptoms are similar |
| Fall & Winter Season | Timing | All Year 'Round |
| More likely to gain it | Weight Gain | Gain or Loss |
| More like to sleep more | Sleep Effect | More or less sleep |
| Yes | Light Therapy Response | Unclear |

What can you do?:

- Prepare - have a plan on how to manage symptoms as much as you can. Find what works for you.
- Talk to a professional to help create a plan.
- Keep a regular sleep schedule and monitor your diet. Check out the Mediterranean Diet.
 - <https://oldwayspt.org/traditional-diets/mediterranean-diet>
- Utilize your support system - friends and family.
- Talk to your provider about light therapy.
- Take time for self care.

Practice self care:

- Practice gratitude - name three things everyday.
- Enjoy the sun when it comes out.
- Maintain social relationships. Plan a dinner with a friend or invite your neighbor over for coffee.
- Include physical activity in your routine.
- Journal - about your day, your feelings, or the things you are grateful for.

Resources:

- Bronson HelpNet Behavioral Health Specialists - Battle Creek
 - 269-245-3850
- Bronson HelpNet Behavioral Health Specialists - Kalamazoo
 - 269-245-3850