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Seasonal Blues: Feeling depressed, but only in winter?

By Linda Fodrini-Johnson



Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC, is a Licensed Family Therapist and Certified Care Manager. She has been practicing professional care management since 1984. Linda founded Eldercare Services, a full-service care management and home care company in 1989. Eldercare Services is now a division of Home Care Assistance and continues to provide Bay Area families with care management, advocacy, counseling, support groups and education.

medication may be suggested as a remedy for that time period and may even need to be taken before any symptoms are evident.

2. Purchase a therapy light. You can find a therapy light on Amazon for around \$50. Use this to expose yourself to light for several hours each day. The light mimics the sun's effects, produces serotonin, and regulates melatonin which helps combat seasonal depression.

3. Stay active. Take a workout class, go for a run or walk outside, or watch a DVD/ television program that has structured exercise. Movement helps combat depression of all sorts!

4. Stay engaged. Encourage yourself to go out and enjoy a light spirited movie or concert even if you don't feel like going out. Structure it into your week by having standing lunch plans or eating dinner with your family each night.

5. Eat well. Sugar and refined carbohydrates can contribute to feeling blue. Try to avoid processed sugar and move towards fruits, veggies, and proteins. Keep some hummus and cut up veggies ready for snacking. Ask your physician if adding fish oil and Vitamin D to your diet might help.

If you make all the above changes and you are still feeling down, it might be time to call a professional counselor. At Eldercare Services several of our Professional Care Managers who are also licensed therapists. Give us a call and we will get you an appointment.

If you are feeling like life is not worth living, you should address these feelings immediately by calling 911 or an emergency suicide lifeline. Your feelings are real and there is help. Depression is very treatable. When you are in the middle of it, it can be hard to believe that there is a "life-preserver" out there for you or your family member, but there are certainly resources that can help.

Mental health can have a negative effect on physical health, so please stay well and seek professional advice

The holiday season brings with it a myriad of emotions and social gatherings. These are typically tied to positive experiences and uplifting memories, but for some, the holiday season can bring up emotions that are difficult to deal with. During the holidays people may struggle with the pain of loss and grief, or less than perfect interactions with family members. These emotional situations can lead to feelings of sadness and, in some cases, depression.

Even when some people have all positive holiday experiences filled with joyous activities and gatherings, it is possible to still feel sad or depressed when the whirlwind is over and the new year begins.

This phenomenon is called Seasonal Affective Disorder. If this cycle of sad emotions during the holidays sounds all too familiar to you, you might have this diagnosable disorder. You might even know a family member that has it. Thankfully, there are ways in which to address it.

Seasonal Affective Disorder can be caused by a disruption in melatonin and serotonin. Normally, we produce melatonin during the night time when it gets dark to help us sleep. When there is less sunlight and more darkness during the long nights of winter, your body may produce too much melatonin. Serotonin, a chemical and neurotransmitter that regulates feelings of happiness, is also diminished by lack of sunlight. The combination of these two imbalances can cause depression. Here are some ways to combat SAD:

1. Be proactive. Visit your physician proactively, especially if you know this happens to you every year. Tell him/her about your symptoms. An anti-depressant

if you are experiencing SAD. It can be hard for many of us to ask for help but our lives are short and each of us deserves to live each day to the fullest. That means we need to seek answers for mental health challenges as well as medical challenges.

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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