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HUMAN BEHAVIOR ASSOCIATES, LLC

EAP NEWSLETTER

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SAD or Seasonal Affective Disorder

SAD is a clinical diagnosis accepted in the medical community. Seasonal Affective Disorder is a mood disorder characterized by mental depression related to a certain season of the year—especially winter. Onset usually occurs during adulthood, and it is four times more likely to happen to women than men.

Symptoms of SAD

- ? daytime drowsiness
- ? fatigue or low energy level
- ? decreased sex drive
- ? diminished concentration difficulty thinking clearly
- ? tendency to overeat sweets and carbohydrates causing weight gain.

Decreased sunlight is thought to be part of the cause of SAD, or Season Affective Disorder, and is under clinical investigation. One treatment for SAD, which seems to improve the symptoms, is exposure to bright light, especially in the morning.

Grief During the Holidays

Important Facts to Remember:

- ? Grief is a natural reaction to loss—it's not a sign of weakness.
- ? What you're feeling is okay.
- ? Time alone does not heal grief—we must find personally meaningful ways to understand, heal and transcend our losses. It takes as long as it takes.
- ? No two people will grieve the same way or in the same time frame.
- ? Cherish your memories and talk about your loved one with friends.
- ? Put off making any major decisions in your life—at least one year since your loved one has died.
- ? Try to get rest and eat healthful foods.
- ? Attend grief workshops and meet other people who are suffering like you. When we reach out to others to help us heal, we find hope and new meaning in life.
- ? Healing from loss is a choice—one that takes courage and commitment.
- ? Remember; take one day at a time. Grief is not a problem to be solved, but a process to go through—moment-to-moment, day-by-day, to healing.



"A journey of one thousand miles begins with a single step."

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Holiday Blues

The holidays are supposed to be a joyful time of good cheer and optimistic hopes. Yet, it is not unusual for many of us to feel sad or lonely during the holiday period—a condition that has come to be called **holiday blues** or **holiday depression**.

Holiday depression may occur at any holiday or vacation time, but most commonly happens during the December holidays when, it may seem, just about everyone in the world is celebrating in some way. There are many causes for holiday blues, and symptoms may mimic clinical depression.

There is a long list of recommended Do's and Don'ts for managing your holiday blues. The most important things to remember are: it's a normal response to a stress-filled time of the year, and you don't have to suffer unnecessarily. Find someone to talk with who can help you through this difficult time—a family member, friend, member of the clergy, or a physician or professional counselor.

The Do's of managing holiday blues:

- Do** follow the three basics for good health”
1. Eat right. 2. Get plenty of rest. 3. exercise regularly.
- Do** set realistic goals: Organize your time. Make lists. Prioritize. Make a budget and follow it.
- Do** let go of the past and create new or different ways to celebrate.
- Do** allow yourself to feel sad, lonely or melancholy—these are normal feelings, particularly at holiday times.
- Do** something for someone else.
- Do** enjoy activities that are free.
- Do** spend time with people you care about.

Do spend time with new people or a different set of friends or family.

Do contact someone with whom you have lost touch.

Do give yourself a break—plan to prepare (or buy) one special meal, purchase one special gift, and take in one special event. The rest can be ordinary, but will seem special because of the time of year and the people you're with.

Do treat yourself as a holiday guest.

The Don'ts of managing the holiday blues:

Don't drink too much alcohol.

Don't overindulge in holiday foods, especially those that are high in sugar and fat.

Don't have unrealistic expectations of yourself or others.

Don't dwell on the past.

Don't focus on what you don't have.

Don't spend money you don't have.



Happy Holidays

FROM THE STAFF AT HBA

HBA is the provider of your Employee Assistance Program. Employees and their family members can call 1-800-937-7770 24 hours per day, 7 days per week to request assistance with personal or family problems.

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sleep, by all

means, use it. It is certainly a nutritionally healthy choice.

Nutritional Cures for Insomnia?

From Parents Place.com

Many foods contain chemicals that can alter the balance of neurotransmitters in your brain. Neurotransmitters are the brains chemical messengers. Some foods will increase those transmitters that induce a sense of calm and drowsiness, while others will increase the transmitters that perk you up.

The neurotransmitter in the brain that is known to make you feel relaxed and sleepy is called serotonin. Serotonin is made from and amino acid (a building block of protein) called tryptophan. A meal or snack that includes only carbohydrates will help to increase the level of tryptophan in your brain and thus the level of serotonin. Eating carbohydrates causes the pancreas to release insulin, which pushes all amino acids, except tryptophan, into the muscles, leaving tryptophan in the blood stream for exclusive uptake into the brain.

Sugar or honey, which is pure carbohydrate, will have this effect, as will a piece of bread with jam, waffle with syrup or a few crackers. It is postulated that milk, which contains high levels of tryptophan, will also produce the same effect, but the other amino acids in the mil actually interferes with tryptophan's effect. In fact, any protein will inhibit the brains uptake of tryptophan. Therefore, a meal or snack that is exclusive of any protein and high in carbohydrate is the best choice.

However, it does seem that warm milk helps some people get to sleep. Perhaps it is the casomorphins, a natural opiate contained in milk, although evidence is not yet supportive of this idea. But if you find that milk helps you

Conversely, if you need to think quickly, be alert and energetic, your best choice is a meal high in protein. Foods such as eggs, fish or poultry will stimulate your levels of norepinephrine and dopamine, which cause you to be alert.



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