

Beating the Seasonal Blues



As the seasons change all around the world, people can experience feelings of temporary sadness, decrease in mood or lack of interest in things they once enjoyed. This seasonal rise and fall in mood and energy is called Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). The symptoms of SAD often resolve on their own once the season changes again.

During seasons when the days grow shorter, such as winter, it is common to feel temporary sadness or lack of motivation. When it is dark, our bodies naturally make more melatonin, a hormone linked to decreasing mood and increasing sleepiness.

To help combat this, increase your exposure to natural light. Sit by a window when it is daylight or buy a therapeutic light that acts like the sun.

Not only do we feel the physical effects of tiredness or lack of motivation, but it is also easier to become withdrawn from others. To help create connections with others, try some of the following tips:

- **Stay connected:** Spend time with friends and family. If you cannot be in the same place, try scheduling weekly virtual calls.
- **Volunteer:** Helping others is a great way to show gratitude while meeting like-minded people.
- **Reach out to support where needed:** Feelings of grief can be heightened while experiencing Seasonal Affective Disorder or during the holidays. Connect with a counsellor through Magna's Employee and Family Assistance Program ([EFAP](#) – use code: Magna)

While connecting with others is important to help beat the blues, it is equally as important to make time and space for yourself. Try the following tips to help put your mental health first:

- **Maintain routine:** Keep a regular wake up and sleep time. Schedule time for hobbies you enjoy.
- **Gratitude journal:** Reflect on the positives of the day and set future goals for yourself.
- **Protect your peace:** Do not feel obligated to attend gatherings that will cause you grief.
- **Embrace the weather:** Try a new activity that is suitable for your climate or find joy in the changing season.
- **Keep moving:** Exercise to help regulate your mood and improve your sleep.

While we cannot control what season it is, we can find small activities or habits to improve our wellbeing throughout the year. You do not need to face these challenges alone! Seeking help creates resilience. If you are experiencing seasonal blues or if it feels like something more, remember support is always available to you.

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