



REACH FOR RESILIENCE

Helpline for ND Healthcare Workers

701-365-4920



SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER

What is SAD and what can you do about it?

The National Institute of Mental Health (2021) describes Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) as a type of depression characterized by a recurrent seasonal pattern, with symptoms lasting about 4 to 5 months per year. SAD is not a separate disorder from major depression, and there can be some specific symptoms that differ for winter-pattern and summer-pattern SAD. Not every person with SAD will experience all of the symptoms listed.

Symptoms of major depression include:

- Feeling depressed most of the day, nearly every day
- Losing interest in activities you once enjoyed
- Experiencing changes in appetite or weight
- Having problems with sleep
- Feeling sluggish or agitated
- Having low energy
- Feeling hopeless or worthless
- Having difficulty concentrating
- Having frequent thoughts of death or suicide

Winter-pattern SAD, additional specific symptoms may include:

- Oversleeping (hypersomnia)
- Overeating, particularly with a craving for carbohydrates
- Weight gain
- Social withdrawal (feeling like “hibernating”)

Ways to cope with SAD symptoms

- Make sure to get a lot of natural sunlight
- Exercise regularly
- Reach out to family and friends - a good support system is important
- Eat healthy, well-balanced meals
- Do an activity you love (e.g., go to the movies, read, bake, watch a sporting event)
- Be patient with yourself and focus on the positives
- Seek professional help

DISCOVER MORE WAYS TO COPE WITH SAD SYMPTOMS DURING ANOTHER PANDEMIC WINTER...

