Collaboration creates childhood fun

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Features Editor

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Winter brings SAD times

Each year more than one million people spend the winter months feeling in remission Seasonal Affective Disorder, a form of depression to which SAD affects suffers, appears in late fall and can last until the springtime. In the northern hemisphere, those with SAD may experience symptoms of seasonal affective disorder beginning in October or November, lasting throughout the winter months and reappearing in those affected when the days begin to lengthen and daylight returns.

SAD symptoms also might appear to affect certain individuals. This depression if left untreated can result in a severely impaired quality of life. The cause of SAD is said to be linked to a combination of genetic, environmental, and biological factors. The body's production of serotonin, a hormone that controls mood, and melatonin, a hormone that controls sleep, is diminished in winter. The body’s mood-affecting circadian rhythm is also affected by the reduced amount of natural sunlight. The body’s internal clock is not synchronized to the light-dark cycle.

Symptoms of seasonal affective disorder are:

• Difficulty concentrating or remembering
• Oversleeping
• Appetite change, specifically increased
• Weight gain
• Loss of interest in once-enjoyed activities
• Activity change, specifically increased physical activity
• The body's mood-affecting circadian rhythm
• The body's production of serotonin
• The body's production of melatonin
• The body's internal clock

This depression is more prevalent in those over the age of 20. Current light therapy is used as an effective treatment for SAD. There are certain criteria that must be met to be diagnosed with SAD. If you feel a little more down than usual and notice that you’re thinking about food more than usual and feel fatigued, have trouble sleeping, or have difficulty concentrating, you might be suffering from SAD. If you notice these symptoms, see your physician or Ms. Health Council Behavior Health if you notice symptoms persist.

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