

Green Island Union Free School District

Don't be SAD!!

What is SAD?

Seasonal affective disorder (also called SAD) is a type of depression that occurs at the same time every year. If you're like most people with seasonal affective disorder, your symptoms start in the fall and may continue into the winter months, depleting your energy and making you feel moody. Less often, seasonal affective disorder causes depression in the spring or early summer.

A few specific factors that may come into play include:

- **Your biological clock (circadian rhythm).** The reduced level of sunlight in fall and winter may disrupt your body's internal clock, which lets you know when you should sleep or be awake. This disruption of your circadian rhythm may lead to feelings of depression.
- **Serotonin levels.** A drop in serotonin, a brain chemical (neurotransmitter) that affects mood, might play a role in seasonal affective disorder. Reduced sunlight can cause a drop in serotonin that may trigger depression.
- **Melatonin levels.** The change in season can disrupt the balance of the natural hormone melatonin, which plays a role in sleep patterns and mood.

Winter-onset seasonal affective disorder symptoms include:

- Depression
- Hopelessness
- Anxiety
- Loss of energy
- Heavy, "leaden" feeling in the arms or legs
- Social withdrawal
- Oversleeping
- Loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed
- Appetite changes, especially a craving for foods high in carbohydrates
- Weight gain
- Difficulty concentrating

Treatments

- Light therapy
- Medications
 - St. John's Wort, SAMe, Melatonin, Omega-3 fatty acids
- Psychotherapy
- Make your environment sunnier and brighter
- Get outside
- Exercise regularly
- Mind-body therapies
 - Acupuncture, Yoga, Meditation, Massage therapy

Contact Us:
273-1422 x. 2008

Kendell Hardy, LCSW
School Social Worker
khardy@greenisland.org

Maria Westbrook
MSW Social Work Intern