

THE ADAMH STAR

An newsletter of the Fairfield County ADAMH Board



Our Mission: To promote healing, support recovery, and provide prevention and treatment services of mental health and addiction disorders within our community

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SEASONAL DEPRESSION

BY PROGRAM COORDINATOR MIRANDA GRAY, MS



As we close another holiday season, I can't help but start thinking about spring, longing for more outdoor hikes and anticipating spending lots of time at the baseball field with my boys! To some, winter is the most wonderful time of the year. For me, the stretch of winter post-holidays seems to last a lifetime!

Ohio's long winter months may also negatively impact our mental health and well-being. The end of Daylight Saving Time (DST) and the onset of cold weather aren't the only factors that bring about mood changes or that feeling of being in a "funk." For some, those changes in mood may be related to seasonal depression, also known as seasonal affective disorder (SAD), which is more than just the "winter blues."

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, SAD, a type of depression that is characterized by its cyclical nature, impacts 3–5 percent of the population in the United States. Symptoms typically begin in the fall and last through the winter. These depressive episodes may start out mild and become more severe as the season progresses. Although less common, there are some people who experience spring and summer SAD.

The exact cause of SAD is unknown but scientific and other risk factors may influence the condition. Our internal clocks change along with the seasons. When DST ends, we experience more dark hours, which can impact our sleep schedule. Less sunshine may cause chemical imbalances in our brains as well. If a person has a family or personal history of depression, he/she may be at risk of developing SAD.

While they can be exciting, the holidays can also be stressful. It is normal to experience all sorts of feelings, including anxiousness, sadness, reduced energy, and the desire to stay at home in your pajamas from time to time,

but it does not necessarily mean that a person has SAD. How do I know if I have SAD or just a case of the winter blues? Other symptoms of SAD are loss of interest in activities, feelings of worthlessness/hopelessness, oversleeping, weight loss or gain, and thoughts of death/suicide. If these feelings are persistent and interfere with daily functioning, you could have SAD, and steps should be taken to address your mental health by talking with your healthcare provider about treatment options.

Making simple changes to your lifestyle and daily routine can be a great way to alleviate symptoms of SAD. Bundle up and take a walk outside regularly. If you can't bear the frigid air, try some other techniques to soak up the sun, such as keeping your house well-lit or sitting next to a window at home/work. A well-balanced diet, exercise, and meditation are other great ways to boost your mood.

Talk to your doctor about dietary supplements or medications that may be helpful. There are several that are FDA-approved to treat depression. Supplements (e.g., vitamin D, melatonin) may be recommended. "Talk" therapy with a counselor is another great option for treating SAD.

Consider using artificial sunlight to give your body the light that it needs. There are many light therapy lamps or light boxes on the market that mimic the benefits of the sun and are proven to be an effective, low-cost technique for curbing SAD symptoms.

Winter weather brings its fair share of challenges, but for those experiencing SAD, it can be particularly difficult. One thing that we can all do is to be mindful of those around us: friends, families, neighbors, and co-workers. Check on your people, look out for each other, and reach out to those whom you think may be impacted by SAD and remember that it's O.K. to ask for help, too.

STAFF UPDATES

Grant Manager Dylan Sander started 9/25/22. Clinical Care Coordinator Dawn Good started 10/31/22. Finance and Operations Director Shanda Wyrick started 11/7/22. Public Relations Coordinator Latina Duffy resigned in November.



Dylan Sander



Dawn R. Good,
MSW, LSW



Shanda Wyrick

BOARD MEMBER UPDATES



Lori L. Eisel, MS,
CFP®, EA, CDFIA®

Resignation & New Appointee

Lori L. Eisel, MS, CFP®, EA, CDFIA®, was sworn in during July 2022.

Stephanie Mulholland resigned on 9/20/22.

NETWORK OF CARE AGENCIES OF THE MONTH

The ADAMH Board recognizes and congratulates the following as Network of Care Agencies of the Month:

- November — Lutheran Social Services Faith Mission of Fairfield County

- December — Family, Adult and Children First
- January — Big Brothers Big Sisters of Fairfield County

