



SEASONAL DEPRESSION & ANXIETY

What is it? What can you do to get through the winter months?

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Q: What is seasonal depression and anxiety?

A: Seasonal depression is also known as Seasonal Affective Disorder and is a type of depression/anxiety that's triggered by the seasons, often when fall or winter starts. It is normal to feel a little down during colder months because we are stuck inside, and it gets dark early. Full Seasonal Affective Disorder is diagnosed by a licensed medical provider and affects more of your daily life and how you think and feel.

Symptoms include: sadness most of the day, every day, anxiety, extreme fatigue and lack of energy. As well as trouble concentrating, feeling irritated or agitated, loss of interest, hopelessness, withdrawing from social activities and sleeping problems (usually oversleeping). And even thoughts of self-harm.



Nurse Terri Kruse

Q: What can you do to help stop or prevent seasonal depression and anxiety?

A: Get enough good quality sleep — lack of sleep is the #1 cause of increase in mental health issues. Eating a well-balanced diet, a diet with poor nutrition and junk food contributes greatly to increase mental health issues. Exercising on a regular basis can help de-stress. Take breaks or brief rest periods during the day to relax. Engage in pleasurable or fun activities every day. Practice relaxation exercises such as yoga, prayer, meditation, or progressive muscle relaxation.

Q: Are there any medications you can take for this? If so, how would you obtain these?

A: You may need a combination of treatments under your medical providers direction:

- Light therapy using a special lamp.
- Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), which is a type of talk therapy. (Research has shown it effectively treats Seasonal Affective Disorder, producing the longest-lasting effects of any treatment approach.)
- Antidepressant medication.
- Spending time outdoors and getting more sunlight.
- Increasing exercise and activity — getting involved in activities
- Vitamin D

Q: What can you do if you have a mental breakdown or an anxiety attack?

A: Talk to a trusted adult and ask for their help. Notify your medical provider. If you wish to call the medical office after hours, there is usually someone on-call that can return your call and answer questions. Use coping techniques such as listening to music, journaling, counting, breathing exercises, and meditation.

Q: What services does North provide for students or staff suffering from seasonal depression and anxiety?

A: Your counselor or nurse can help to assess your mental health needs and help with any needed immediate care or possible referrals.

Q: What should a student do if they need help with mental illness while at North?

A: Speak to a counselor or nurse, or seek help from a trusted adult staff member.

CRISIS HOTLINES

National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Anyone who needs suicide or mental health-related crisis support, substance abuse issues or any other kind of emotional distress or who has a loved one in crisis, can connect with a trained counselor by calling, or texting 988.

Iowa Crisis Lifeline: Your Life Iowa provides information and referrals, counseling, crisis service coordination and links to crisis screening and mental health services 24 hours a day.

CALL 1-855-581-8111
TEXT 1-855-895-8398

Warm Line is a telephone line staffed by individuals with lived experience who provide nonjudgmental, nondirective support to an individual experiencing a crisis. The statewide warm lines is:
1-844-775-WARM (9276)

