

CORNERSTONE  
DAY SCHOOL

# Parents Matter

APRIL 2022



## Springtime Blues

It is very common for children to start experiencing an exacerbation of symptoms as the spring months begin. Since spring is often associated as a time of renewal, rebirth and hope, one would think that there would be a decrease in mental health symptoms. However, although some people do experience an increase in motivation and happiness during the spring months, it is very common for individuals to experience an increase in depression and anxiety symptoms.

There is a subtype of major depressive disorder called seasonal affective disorder (SAD) in which an individual experiences the symptoms of major depression that correlate with the changing of the seasons. This disorder is generally associated with the winter months; however, SAD can also affect individuals during the spring months. At CDS, we often see an increase in symptoms during the spring months. For example, individuals with bipolar disorder may experience mood changes around the change in the season which may include mania or hypomania.

### Seasonal Affective Disorder

- The onset of the depressive symptoms can occur during a particular season or time of the year
- Full remission of symptoms occurs when this time of the year is over

The individual will experience 5 of the following symptoms during the same 2 week period and are a change from previous levels of functioning:

- Feeling depressed most of the day, nearly every day
- Feeling hopeless or worthless
- Difficulty with sleeping
- Having low energy or lethargy
- Irritability

- Losing interest in activities that you once enjoyed
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Difficulty with concentration

### What You Can Do

- **Sleep.** Try to get an adequate amount of sleep, as proper sleep hygiene is crucial to optimal mental health functioning.
- **Practice mindfulness.** It can be very therapeutic to go for a walk or have lunch outside without other distractions.
- **Remove clutter.** This is the perfect time to do some spring cleaning and to get organized.
- **Initiate a new exercise regimen.** Spring is a great time to begin walking or hiking. Exercise helps to relieve anxiety and stress that can exacerbate mental health symptoms.
- **Nurture your friendships.** Spring is a great time to reconnect with old friends and to build your support system.
- **Go to a doctor if you suffer from allergies.** Allergies can cause you to feel unwell and can therefore negatively impact your functioning. Treatment for the allergies can alleviate your symptoms.

Seek help from a professional therapist or psychiatrist if the symptoms are severe and no strategies seem to alleviate their intensity.



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