



Understanding Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

A message brought to you by your AFA EAP (800-424-2406)

It's normal to feel "off" or a little down from time to time. But if your mood changes with the seasons, feeling low when days get shorter in the fall and winter, then better when spring arrives, you might be experiencing **Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)**.

SAD is a form of depression that follows a seasonal pattern. Most people with SAD start to feel symptoms in **late fall or early winter**, which lift during the **spring and summer**. This is often called *winter-pattern SAD* or *winter depression*. Less commonly, some people experience *summer-pattern SAD*, feeling depressed in the warmer months instead.

Who Gets SAD?

Millions of Americans may have SAD, and many don't realize it. It's more common in:

- **Women** than men
- People who live **farther north**, where daylight is shorter in winter (for example, Alaska or New England)
- Those who have a **family history** of depression or bipolar disorder
- **Young adults**, where symptoms often first appear

What Are Treatment Options?

The good news is that SAD can be treated — and there are several approaches that help many people feel better.

Treatments may include:

- **Light therapy** (using a special lamp that mimics natural sunlight)
- **Talk therapy** (psychotherapy or counseling)
- **Antidepressant medication**
- **Vitamin D supplements**

Talk with your healthcare provider about which option or combination might work best for you.

If you'd like confidential, non-judgmental support or help finding treatment, contact your **AFA Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**. The AFA EAP helpline is 800-424-2406. You can also find your local EAP committee representative at www.afacwa.org/your_local_eap_rep

EAP Chair – Lynnette Clark – 503-729-4439

LEC 16 EAP LEC & Reps

Anne Strand (LEC) – 206-940-4634

Kim Van Wormer – 509-308-9553

Miria Davis – 208-398-8612

LEC 17 EAP LEC & Reps

Carrie Dennis (LEC) – 360-600-5988

Peter Oxentenken – 503-888-7271

Chris Metz – 217-369-8735