

Don't Be SAD!



This time of year, when it's cold and dark for much of the day, can be depressing. In extreme cases, people may develop Seasonal Affective Disorder—or SAD—a depressive disorder caused by seasonal changes in light.

More people suffer from SAD than you may think. In fact, according to BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information, about 2 to 3% of Canadians will experience SAD at some point in their lifetime, while another 15% will experience a milder form that leaves them slightly depressed, but without major impact on their life.

And given these numbers, it's likely that at least a few of your workers are suffering from SAD.

SAD Tips

WorkSafeNB has some advice on avoiding SAD. Pass along these tips your workers:

Get active!

Boost your energy level by getting active. If you already have an exercise routine, stick to it because it'll help you get through these cold winter months. If you don't have a fitness plan, there's no better time to start. It doesn't have to be complicated. In fact, there are many ways to make activity part of your daily routine:

- Take the stairs instead of elevators
- Dress warm and park further away from your destination so you can walk
- Take a morning or afternoon walking break with co-workers (inside or outside).

Get out!

Don't stay inside just because it's cold; a bit of fresh air can do wonders. Exposure to sunlight reduces your chances of being depressed, especially this time of year when the tendency is to bundle up and stay inside. It'll help you clear your head and give you energy to finish the day without feeling overwhelmed. But it takes planning—make sure you're dressed warmly and that you always have good winter boots handy. A few things to remember:

- Dress in layers
- Always wear a hat and mittens or gloves

- Use walking or trekking poles in slippery conditions
- Wear boots with a good winter tread.

Get playing!

Don't shy away from winter, embrace it! There are so many things to do in the winter. Plan a ski trip with family or friends, go skating, make a snowman, go sledding—the possibilities are endless. If the outdoors isn't your thing, plan a shopping trip or a weekend getaway. Scheduling activities in advance will give you something fun to look forward to.

Get some sleep!

Sleep is good—but not too much. The best thing to do this time of year is keep your sleeping habits consistent and resist the urge to oversleep. You should be getting 7-8 hours of sleep each night. If you feel the need to sleep through the day, try for a short (10-30 minute) nap to re-energize.