Managing Seasonal Depression

It’s no surprise that the winter months see an increase in depression among kids, teens, and even their parents. From freezing weather to darker days, not every part of the holiday season is festive and fun. Read on for some easy ways you can help your kids (or yourself) manage seasonal depression when it starts to take away your holiday cheer.

Go Outside
While it’s tempting to stay inside where it’s cozy and warm, getting out during the daylight for at least an hour can greatly improve mood. Both the fresh air and exposure to natural light can act as mood boosters, plus physical activity produces endorphins in the brain. Try working a short walk down the street into your daily routine with your kids. Just be sure to bundle up!

Fix Sleep Cycles
Sleep can be easily disrupted when the seasons change. Between changing the clocks and a decrease in temperature, your established sleep routine over the summer will be shaken up at least a little. Try to prep your kids in advance for these changes and commit to a new routine. The first few weeks may be hard, but starting now is important in setting healthy patterns for the season ahead.

Don’t Isolate
During the cold months, it can be tempting to curl up and isolate yourself. Make sure your kids are still able to meet up with friends or engage in other social activities. Loneliness is a huge catalyst for depression. It’s vital that you not let your kids isolate themselves during this period.

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Increase Therapy
When seasonal depression gets especially serious, it’s never a bad idea to contact your child’s therapist or find one if they don’t already have one. There are multiple options your therapist can offer you, including additional appointments, different types of therapy or treatment to try, or they may even be able to help you with depression medication. It’s important to keep an open line of communication with a therapist during the winter months!

Featured Resources
- Enjoying the Holidays: How to Manage Vacation Time and Changing Schedules with Kids
- Managing Vacation Time: Preparing for a Jolly Holiday Season with Kids
- Identifying and Treating Depression in Youth
- In this webinar from September 2023, we explore how we can support children and teens by identifying and treating depression effectively.