Managing the Blues
Overview

• Depression 101
• Holiday Blues
• Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)
• Strategies to move forward
SECTION 1

Depression
Depression 101

1. Depression is a disturbance in someone’s mood

2. Usually involves a feeling of sadness, lack of physical and emotional energy, and a loss of interest in things that used to bring pleasure

3. Depression is one of the most common emotional problems

4. Depression is very treatable

5. Dysthymia or a low level depression also exists
What is Depression?

- A depressed or irritable mood most of the time
- A loss or decrease of pleasure or interest in most activities, including ones that had been interesting or pleasurable previously
- Significant changes in weight or appetite
- Disturbances in falling asleep and sleeping too much.
What is Depression?

- Feeling slowed down or restless most days
- Feeling tired, sluggish, and low energy most days
- Having feelings of worthless or excessive guilt most days
- Experiencing problems with thinking, focus, concentration and creativity and the ability to make decisions most days
- Having thoughts of dying or suicide
Those who are depressed often feel alone
Sadness Verses Depression

- Normal sadness passes in a reasonable amount of time.
- Depression lasts longer and feels deeper than normal sadness.
- May cause one to feel very bad about themselves & hopeless about the future.
- May affect your thoughts, your behavior, your appetite, or your ability to sleep.
- Depression may cause you to see reality in a distorted way, as if everything is negative and difficult, and problems may appear to be bigger than you can bear.
Does this look familiar?
Help Is Always Available

• Major depression can lead to suicidal thought and actions – help is always available

• National Suicide hotline: 1-800-273-TALK
SECTION 2

The Holiday Blues
The Holiday Blues

- Holidays can trigger many feelings and concerns related to current stressors
  - Financial stress
  - First holiday without a loved one
  - Future holidays without a loved one
  - Change in traditions
  - Other life changes - relocation, divorce
  - Separation from family or friends
  - Working the holiday
Holidays Can Amplify Depression

Holiday pressure may create:

- More fatigue than usual
- Lost interest in things that usually bring joy
- Difficulty concentrating
- Lost productivity
- Unrealistic expectations of self and others
- Over commitment

Photo by Elena Shashkina
Symptoms of Depression and Blues

- Headaches, back aches, stomach issues
- Difficulty sleeping or oversleeping
- Change in eating habits – more food choices
- Crying spells
- Mood swings and irritability
- Lethargy
- Withdrawal
Post Holiday Blues

- After the hustle and bustle may feel a let down
- Seasonal affective disorder may be an issue
- Departure of family or friends
- Routines resume
- The weather may be bleak and cold
Bleek, cold days influence how we feel

Nature... discards her floral trimmings in obedience to a reign of tyrannical ice!

—James Lendall Basford
Ways to Cope

- Limit or avoid alcohol and sleep aids, other chemicals
- Get routine sleep
- Say no and stay firm
- Be open to new traditions
- Get grief support if needed
- Spend time with family and friends
Ways to Cope

- Exercise regularly
- Do something new
- Avoid overeating
- Practice mindfulness
- Talk it out with others
- Laugh and have some fun
What to do?

• If symptoms persist see an MD and/or a Therapist

• Some depression might be due to medical conditions:
  - Underactive Thyroid
  - Low Blood Sugar
  - Chronic Viral Illness
  - Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
  - other illnesses
Seasons Change and so do we...

Whoever wishes to pursue the science of medicine in a direct manner must first investigate the seasons of the year and what occurs to them.

--Hippocrates

Four seasons fill the measure of the year; There are four seasons in the mind of man.

--John Keats
SECTION 3

Seasonal Affective Disorder
Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

- Approximately 10 million Americans have SAD
- More prominent in areas with less light
- Generally noticed during 4 months of fall and winter
- Looks similar to Depression
- Looks similar to Holiday Blues
Signs and Symptoms of SAD

- Reduces energy
- Increased eating—especially carb cravings
- Disturbed sleep
- Lowered sex drive
- Thinking problems—difficulty concentrating and processing information
- Mood problems—especially depression
- Body aches and pains
What works for SAD?

- Light Therapy or Photo Therapy
- Behavioral Therapy
- Medication
- Mindfulness and Meditation
- Exercise
- Travel
Light Therapy or Photo Therapy

• Bright light therapy is a common treatment for SAD and circadian rhythm disorders
• Use bright white “full spectrum” light at 10,000 lux, sitting at a distance of 30-60 cm with eyes open but not staring at the light for 20 or more minutes
• Or exposure to sunlight
• Regular daily usage at the same time is best
A variety of lamps are available
Light Therapy

- Get a proper light (full spectrum light)
- Try for 20 to 90 minutes per day
- Have light shining on eye area, but not directly
- Try to get light therapy in the mornings
Vitamin D can help

- Low amounts of Vitamin D were found in folks diagnosed with SAD
- Vitamin D is associated with the production of serotonin and dopamine
- We usually get Vitamin D through exposure to sunlight and through diet
- **NOTE**: Vitamin D is fat-soluble and can reach toxic levels if too much is taken—consult your doctor for dosing
  - Not an effective treatment on its own
Treatment

• EAP or Behavioral Health Counseling
• Group therapy
• Social support groups
• Anti-depressants

• SAD is now found in the DSM V under depression as a specifier “with seasonal pattern.”
Group Verses Individual Therapy
Relaxation and Focus
Exercise

• A proven antidepressant
• Promotes weight control
• Find a buddy – accountability and social benefit
• Make it fun – create an activity worksheet
• Walk, jog, swim, bike, dance, yoga, Tai Chi
Koselig (pronounced Koosh-lee)

- *Koselig* is a Norwegian word with no direct translation

- “More than anything else, *koselig* is a feeling: that of coziness, intimacy, warmth, happiness, being content.”
Travel

- Bright and sunny destination
- The impact of a changed temporary location
- Similar to phototherapy
- Added benefits: Increasing physical activity, resetting your biological clock, removing you from stressful situations
Nature is Restorative: Connect
Re-engagement once you get help

- Tips for re-engagement at work:
  - Make a decision to re-engage
  - Find something of interest to focus on
  - Determine what you can and cannot control
  - Learn something new
Re-engagement once you get help

- Get out of your comfort zone
  - Focus on how you can contribute to your team & organization
  - Focus on doing even better than good
  - Develop a positive attitude
  - Offer suggestions to your team
  - Volunteer to lead something
Resources

• IU Employee Assistance Program (IUEAP) 1-888-234-8327
• Healthy IU
  • Mental Health & Substance Use Support website
    • http://go.iu.edu/2bGH
  • Mental Well-being
    • http://go.iu.edu/2cBX
• Family Medical Doctor
• Behavioral Care
  - Counseling
  - Groups
  - Psychiatry if needed
Thank You

Employee Assistance Program
Appointment Line:
1-888-234-8327
Many offices and hours to serve your needs!