

The Wellness Shack, Inc.

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Foods That Fight Winter Depression

The winter blues can leave you not only feeling down in the dumps, but they can also send you rummaging for sweets. Don't get caught up in this vicious cycle.

Seasonal affective disorder, or SAD, is a form of depression that affects 25 million Americans, mostly women. Much research has been done on this mysterious disorder.

In somewhat of a simplification, the lack of light in wintertime can result in lower levels of serotonin, the mood-enhancing chemical that regulates hunger and the feeling of well-being.

Serotonin production increases with light, meaning that gray gloom creeping in the window is not kicking the production of feel-good chemicals into action.

Some symptoms include depression, marathon napping, low self-esteem, obsessiveness over little things, irritability, shyness, and panic attacks. People with seasonal affective disorder may also sleep poorly (although for many hours), partly because they don't have enough serotonin to convert to the sleep substance melatonin.

Symptoms can range from mild to severe, and people generally recover completely around April or May - once the days become longer.

Treatment includes light therapy and/or medication. However, there are things you can do yourself that can help boost serotonin levels.

Subject yourself to bright indoor light. This is the touchstone of seasonal affective disorder treatment. Many pricey lights are available. Ross says a 300 watt bulb within three feet for 20 minutes three times a day can help, although the boost in serotonin may be temporary.

Exercise. This is very hard to do when caught up in the seasonal affective disorder cycle. But if you can force yourself to start, 15 to 20 minutes of dancing to the radio or fast walking can reduce a sweet tooth and improve mood.

Eat wisely. This means, pushing away the leftover cake and eating sensible carbs to stimulate serotonin. Sweets and simple carbs, like white rice and white bread, quickly raise blood sugar, flood you with insulin, and then drop you in a hole

WELLNESS SHACK DATES TO REMEMBER!!!

ANXIETY & DEPRESSION	MONDAY 4-5:30PM
BIPOLAR GROUP	TUESDAY 2:00 3:30PM
PROCOVERY	WEDNESDAY 4-5PM
GENERAL SUPPORT GROUP	THURSDAY 1:30-3:00PM
DUAL RECOVERY ANONYMOUS	FRIDAY 4-5PM

HOURS

SUNDAY	CLOSED
MONDAY	1-6PM
TUESDAY	1-6PM
WEDNESDAY	1-6PM
THURSDAY	1-6PM
FRIDAY	1-6PM
SATURDAY	CLOSED

. Eating wisely also means watching the caffeine, which suppresses serotonin. "If you must drink coffee, save it for after the meal," Ross says. Protein, she says, should be eaten three times a day. Another good rule is to eat four cups of brightly colored veggies a day. "This is enough to fill a (pardon the expression) 1 quart ice cream container." Vegetables are carbs, but the kind that feed into your system slowly.
<http://www.webmd.com/depression/features/foods-that-fight-winter-depression?page=2>

What a YEAR!

2015 was a year to remember. The Wellness Shack had many good things happen in 2015. I'd like to take some time to let everyone know what's happening.

The most exciting news regards the financial status of The Wellness Shack. Since our beginnings in 2004, TWS has struggled to provide services on a very meager annual income of \$32,000 or less. Anyone running a business will agree that is a challenging task. In 2015 TWS was awarded 4 substantial grants. The United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley awarded TWS a grant to strengthen the peer support services we provide and finance some of the overhead costs for running TWS. A portion of those funds were also allocated to hiring 3 part-time Certified Peer Specialists.

The fall of 2014 produced some stress for Bonnie and I when TWS received an announcement that the State of Wisconsin grant was being open to competitive bidding. In the past, this grant was the main source of TWS's funding. In 2015, TWS received the grant for Peer Run Organizations, plus we were awarded an additional \$5,000!

In June of 2015, the Eau Claire Community Foundation awarded TWS a grant to promote The Wellness Shack to area professionals. A laptop, digital projector, and camcorder were purchased with some of the funds. The rest will be used for marketing materials, new brochures, and providing snacks for large group presentations. We will need 4 more volunteers who are willing to go through some training and be part of the marketing team.

In December, The Domer Foundation of Eau Claire awarded TWS a grant to help towards the purchase new furniture to replace the worn furniture in our social area. Marie Crothers of the Domer Foundation Board of Trustees, is a Psychologist and UW-EC Professor of Psychology who is a strong supporter of The Wellness Shack. We are grateful for her advocacy and contributions.

Does all this mean we've got money coming out of our ears? The answer is NO. Each grant application made specific requirements for how the money is to be spent. What it does mean is that The Wellness Shack is in need of volunteers to help us successfully fulfill the objectives of the grants. So you're probably asking, "how can I help?" Here is how. Peer Supported recovery works when people who have found stability and recovery in their life help new people to find stability and recovery in theirs. Maybe you think you're not there yet. Or maybe you think you have nothing to offer. Neither of those is true. Recovery is a journey. It's never perfect. But what we do know is that when we help others find stability and recovery, it aids in our own recovery, and makes us stronger. Please consider helping TWS help more of the people who are living in our community and struggling with mental illness.

Thank you
Bob Schrader – Board President

Thank you—Cookie Bake Sale

Thank you to everyone who donated cookies and to the volunteers who worked the Cookie Bake Sale on Wednesday December 16 and Thursday December 17! This was a very successful fundraiser! All proceeds will go to Wellness Shack Programs.



Happy New Year!

