

# S.A.D. Seasonal Affective Disorder

by Dana Anderson, MFT |

**Q:** I cannot stay awake. As soon as it gets dark I'm ready for bed yet I have so much to accomplish. And when the alarm goes off in the morning, how can I get energized?

**A:** This is that time of year when it seems like overnight we went from long days to short days. We get that hint of autumn and the realization of summer is gone and winter is on its way. We have a little hibernator in all of us and that can be a struggle because we cannot just retreat into our caves and close our eyes. We need to honor each season and ourselves by responding to the changes as needed. For instance, in the spring everything is blooming and rejuvenating and so are we—we get sudden bursts of energy, feel jazzed, and our creative juices are overflowing. Then summer invites play and hopefully we get to play. The fall is a time of harvest and a lead-in to winter. It's a time for us to ease into the dormancy of winter by slowing ourselves down. Pay attention to what your body is wanting because we are physically connected to what the Earth and our environment is demonstrating.

Realize that we still have the reality of our everyday lives, that our work schedules do not change necessarily with the seasons and that our home lives continue to be demanding especially if you have children in school. Just as we add barbecues and parties to our summers we can take away some activities in our autumn.

Also, many of us have more than a little hibernator within and are truly negatively affected by the lack of sunlight. This is called Seasonal Affective Disorder (S.A.D.) and it is a very real form of depression. If you feel you may be struggling with S.A.D. there are many products available to bring sunlight into your home and they actually work.

Hampton Bay has a full spectrum floor lamp that simulates daylight in the house and Home Depot carries it. What it does is create a natural full spectrum lighting

that helps to increase the release of serotonin—a hormone linked to an improved feeling of wellbeing. It also increases vitamin D production in the skin; ease the strain that our eyes go through with less light; reduce our levels of melatonin which is a hormone that promotes fatigue; and these lamps are known to improve neuron function in the brain. It appears to be like any other lamp; do not worry that you are going to have a spot light in the room! This product is useful for increasing energy and fighting the feelings that make us want to crawl under our covers at dusk. Please let me know how it works for you should you try it.

*Many Blessings, Dana Anderson, MFT*

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