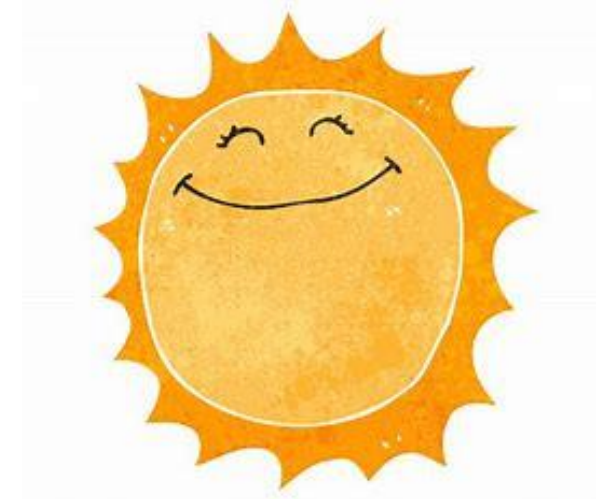


SAD

Seasonal Affective Disorder



the brain injury association
Central Lancashire



What is SAD



- Sad is a type of depression that comes and goes in a seasonal pattern.
- Its sometimes known as Winter depression.
- Symptoms are usually more apparent and more severe during the winter.

Symptoms of SAD

- A persistent low mood
- Irritability
- Feelings of guilt and worthlessness
- Feeling lethargic
- A loss of pleasure or interest in normal everyday activities
- Sleeping for longer than normal and find it hard to get up in a morning
- Craving carbohydrates
- Difficulty concentrating



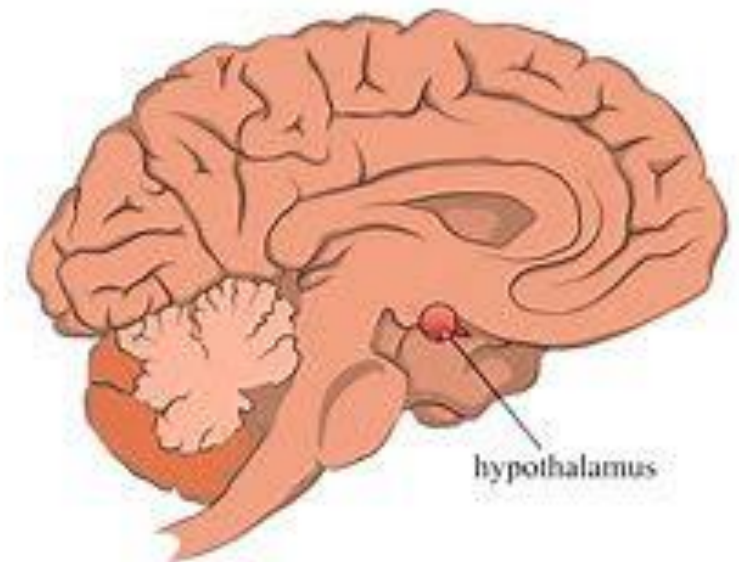
What causes SAD

- The exact cause of SAD is not fully understood, but it is often linked to reduced exposure to sunlight during shorter and autumn and winter days.
- The main theory is that a lack of sunlight might stop a part of the brain called the hypothalamus working properly.



What does the hypothalamus do?

- **Production of melatonin** – a hormone that makes you feel sleepy. In people with SAD the body might produce it in higher than normal levels.
- **Production of serotonin** – a hormone that effects mood, appetite and sleep; a lack of sunlight may lead to lower serotonin levels, which is linked to feelings of depression.
- **Body's internal clock (circadian rhythm)** – your body uses sunlight to time various important function, such as when you wake up, so lower light levels during the winter may disrupt your body clock and lead to symptoms of SAD.
- **Some people are more vulnerable to SAD** as a result of their genes (runs in families).



Treatments for SAD

- **Lifestyle measures** – get as much natural sunlight as possible, exercise regularly and manage your stress levels.
- **Light therapy** – where a special lamp called a light box is used to stimulate exposure to sunlight.
- **Talking therapies** – such as CBT or counselling.
- **Antidepressant medicine** - such as SSRIs (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors are the preferred type as they increase the level of hormone serotonin which can lift your mood



Things you can do yourself

- Try to get as much natural sunlight as possible even a brief walk can be beneficial.
- Make your home environment as light and airy as possible.
- Site near a window when indoors
- Take plenty of regular exercise, particularly outdoors and in daylight.
- Avoid stressful situations if possible.
- Speak to your GP.

Useful resources

- [Overview - Seasonal affective disorder \(SAD\) - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/health-a-z/s/seasonal-affective-disorder-sad/)
- [Dropping Anchor Russ Harris Infographic \(leedsth.nhs.uk\)](https://www.leedsth.nhs.uk/health-a-z/s/seasonal-affective-disorder-sad/)
- [Dropping Anchor; an ACT skill — Flourish Mindfully](https://www.flourishmindfully.com/act-skills/dropping-anchor/)
- [Grounding Techniques: Exercises for Anxiety, PTSD, and More \(healthline.com\)](https://www.healthline.com/health/grounding-techniques/)

Contact us to attend our sessions

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