

# THE *Counseling* CONNECTION

St. Hilary School  
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## Winter Blues: What they are and how to beat them

Winter can be a LONG season. The cold temperatures and shorter days mean spending more time indoors. While people react to the winter months in many ways, approximately 6 percent of the population suffers from Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). While SAD is more common among adults, preliminary research suggests that children and adolescents can suffer too.

Like depression, SAD ranges from mild to moderate or severe episodes. While exact symptoms in children are largely un-researched at this time, professionals suspect that symptoms of child and adolescent SAD are consistent with symptoms of depression. Any of these may impact a child's self-esteem, interfere with extracurricular activities, and impair social and academic functioning.

**Symptoms of SAD include: changes in mood, increased crying, difficulty sleeping and waking, changes in appetite, difficulty concentrating, withdrawal from typically enjoyable activities.**

### Ways to Beat the Blues:

- **Exercise:** it increases the amount of serotonin in the brain and helps to improve mood. Though you may not be able to get outside on the coldest days, pick a fun exercise video or throw a dance party in the living room!
- **Get out of the house whenever possible:** bundle up and take a brisk walk to get some fresh air and a little sunlight
- **Engage in fun activities:** board games, arts-and-crafts projects, baking
- **Plan to spend time with other people:** plan a fun get-together with friends or neighbors
- **Be productive:** tackle a project you have been wanting to accomplish
- **Rest and relax:** listen to calming music, read a good book, or practice meditative breathing or visualization

## February's Focus:

### Beating the Winter Blues

Child and Adolescent Psychology: Seasonal Affective Disorder:  
Help Kids Beat the Winter Blues

