

fseap SOLUTIONS

Seasonal Affective Disorder

Feeling gloomy in winter is a common complaint, but some people are affected far more than others. Although not a distinct illness, seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a type of depression with feelings of sadness, hopelessness, anxiety, and sluggishness that you can't shake. When any type of depression interferes with social and occupational functioning, take a few minutes to get an assessment. Start with your employee assistance program to get the right source of help.

Learn more: www.nimh.nih.gov [search "seasonal affective disorder"]



Poor Sleep and Type 2 Diabetes

Sleep quality affects insulin resistance and has an impact on glucose tolerance. Did you know this? It can therefore be a risk factor for diabetes. Poor sleep quality happens if you awaken too frequently, causing loss of deeper sleep periods. The other clue to poor sleep is a lack of that "refreshed feeling" after sleeping all night, even though you may have "slept" for eight or nine hours. Are you sabotaging sleep? Culprits: 1) Late-night snacking; 2) Anxiety; 3) Too hot or cold room temperature; 4) Bedtime smartphone use; 5) Alcohol nightcaps; 6) Caffeine; 7) Irregular sleep schedule; 8) Exercising before bedtime; 9) Artificial light/non-darkened room; 10) Sleep apnea.

Source: www.niddk.nih.gov/ [search "poor sleep"]

Relationships at Work: Don't "Psychologize" Friends and Coworkers



Do you "psychologize" your friends? Psychologizing is analyzing others in psychological terms—theorizing or speculating about their decisions or behaviors. To help cement a more trusting and helpful relationship with a coworker, discard this habit. Instead, practice empathy. For example, "Mary, that was a tough decision. How do you feel about it?" This approach will elicit stronger insight versus hearing what psychological dynamics you believe are affecting them. Plus, you'll avoid the retort, "Stop analyzing me!" Acknowledging someone's difficult experience, pain, or discomfort naturally precludes a judgmental response. It takes practice if you don't communicate naturally this way. However, the affirming reaction will reinforce this communication skill, and you'll appear less judgmental.



New Year's Resolution Tip: Better Planning

Are you a serial defaulter on your New Year's resolutions? An estimated 80% of people give up by February. Don't be a statistic. Try better planning. One well-touted approach is to set S.M.A.R.T. goals. S.M.A.R.T. stands for making your goal specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound. If your resolution is to reduce your pre-diabetic fasting glucose A1C score of 6.1, make it specific. For example, shoot for 5.7. Talk with your doctor. Is it achievable? Check. Is it realistic? Check. Measurable? Check. Now, choose the time period for achievement. Three months? Check. Now build your strategy and tactics. They might include exercise, diet, and better sleep. Measure your progress. A third of North Americans are diabetic, so this might be a good goal for you if you don't already have one. Get checked!



Manage Stress, Right Now: Start Sooner, Procrastinate Less

Procrastination is about putting off the pain of starting a project. A visual image of the work often adds to this avoidance. To intervene, focus away from the vision of the work, and onto the vision of completion or success. Then, visualize smaller steps to make it easier to start. For even more motivation, divide small steps into even smaller steps. The Nike slogan "Just Do It!" is well hyped, but it may not stir you to act. Modifying this slogan to "Just Start Small" or "Just Do a Few Minutes" may easily kick-start you to act sooner, and if you do, continuing on to finish the job is more likely. Try it, and discover if it is a game changer for you.

Smoking: Is it Time to Quit?

Overcoming nicotine dependency can be challenging. None of us started to smoke thinking we'd lose our right to choose, but that's exactly what nicotine addiction does to us. Deciding to quit smoking can feel overwhelming, but consider what you can gain by quitting: improved circulation and skin tone, financial savings, improved sense of taste and smell, and whiter teeth, to note a few!

According to the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco, one of the most effective methods for quitting smoking is to connect with behaviour support. Our behavioural health specialists recognize the psychological significance of the decision to quit smoking and the challenge of overcoming nicotine dependency. Our Smoking Cessation Support service provides information to support the decision to quit, information about treatment options for nicotine dependency, and clinical counselling support to help "quitters" stay on track. Contact FSEAP today to request support to conquer nicotine dependency.

