

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD)

Preparing to Discuss a Seasonal Mood Pattern

Adults | 10 to 15 minutes

Seasonal affective disorder is a form of depression with a recurring seasonal pattern; it can occur in different seasons. A difficult winter alone does not establish the diagnosis. This page helps organize your observations and questions without prescribing light therapy, supplements, or medication.

Choose a recent, manageable example. Write, draw, or discuss your answers. Skip anything that does not fit; this page is not a diagnostic assessment.

Look for a repeated pattern

Describe approximate seasons, mood and energy changes, sleep, appetite, and daily impact across years if you recall them. Note work schedules, holidays, illness, losses, and other explanations rather than assuming daylight is the sole cause.

Discuss appropriate options

Ask a qualified clinician about assessment and treatment choices, including risks and suitability for your history. Mention any past periods of unusually increased energy or reduced sleep need before considering treatments for depressive symptoms.

1. What seasonal timing have you noticed, and has it repeated across more than one year?**2. What changes in mood, energy, sleep, or functioning accompany it?****3. What other seasonal or health circumstances might contribute?****4. What assessment or treatment question will you discuss, including any history of unusual activation?****Clinical use and adaptation**

Assess depression, suicidality, bipolar history, sleep schedules, and medical contributors. Do not infer SAD from climate or prescribe light intensity, timing, supplements, or medication here. Treatment suitability and monitoring require individualized professional guidance.