

BE GLAD NOT SAD AS THE SEASONS CHANGE



It's a blessing and a curse that New Jerseyans experience all Four Seasons full-fledged! I happen to love Autumn but know that I'm one of a few in that regard. I'm not so crazy about the Winter, though. Both seasons tend to make most of us Jersey folk a little twitchy. The cold weather, falling-back during Daylight Savings Time, and less sunlight during Autumn and Winter put us at risk for Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). SAD is a form of depression that can be debilitating through these months. It is estimated that SAD affects 10 million Americans (Psychology Today Staff , 2019). There are ways to treat SAD, but let's try to prevent it in the first place by being GLAD during the changes of the seasons.

GLAD:

☞- Practice **gratitude**. A gratitude practice can train your brain to think positively, which in turn will make you happy. A daily gratitude practice boosts your overall wellness – mind, body, and spirit (Sood, 2021). We celebrate Thanksgiving in the Fall; however, Thanksgiving could be celebrated every day all year round. Practice gratitude by acknowledging all the things you are grateful for in your day. Write it all down in a designated notebook or journal. When life starts to bring you down, take a peek into your journal to remind yourself to be grateful. If you are not one for journal writing, just make it a point to think of these things before you hit the hay.

L- Feel the **love** for yourself. Continue to work on your self-care activities through the seasons and incorporate seasonal play during Autumn and Winter, such as jumping in a pile of leaves or building a snowman. Get creative by carving a jack-o-lantern out of a pumpkin or building a gingerbread house. Play is beneficial to adults, too. Engaging in fun activities or hobbies will inspire a positive mindset, making you more resilient (Scott, 2019). Also, an excellent way to burn calories while tending to your seasonal chores is to rake the yard or shovel the walkways. A 155lb person raking leaves will burn approximately 288 calories per hour (The Toro Company administrator, 2020), and shoveling snow will burn roughly 223 calories (Wayne, 2021). Depending on your weight, you will burn more or less, but overall, knowing you are getting fit while tending to these types of chores could give you the motivation to do them.

A- Be **amazed** by using your five senses to be delighted with the seasons' smells, tastes, sights, and sounds! Isn't it amazing to see the trees turn beautiful colors, shed their leaves, and grow new ones in the Spring? Snowflakes are amazing, too, as each snowflake is fascinatingly unique! Those pretty snowflakes will envelop us in quiet white. The smell of fallen leaves and chimney smoke, soups, and pies trigger fond memories boosting our emotional wellbeing (Cole, 2020). The tastes of pumpkin bread and apple cider and the feel of a warm cup of hot cocoa or the cold feeling of a snowball bring us peace of mind.

D- Dream. **Daydream** that is. Daydreaming is an excellent way to recharge your energies and decrease anxiety. It can also make us more creative. In his article, Go Ahead, Do Nothing, Jeffrey Davis writes, "Studies show that taking breaks and allowing your thoughts to drift can help your brain retain information, refocus, gain fresh perspective, and make new connections between ideas (Davis, 2021)." Daydreaming can relieve stress and anxiety and make us more productive (Rush, 2020). On those cold dark days, imagine you're walking on the warm beach or smelling the new flowers of Spring. Give it a shot, and let your mind wander.

We wish you well on your Healthy Nurse Journey and hope you stay GLAD!

Sincerely,

Tracey Jaworski-Lucas, BSN, RN, and the Healthy Nurse Healthy New Jersey Team

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