

MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE



How to Cope with the Winter Blues



With winter now in full force, the cold temperatures and short days lead many people to experience a common phenomenon known as the "winter blues." This refers to feelings of low-level sadness or sluggishness that often persist during this time of year. While you may not be able to change the weather or amount of daylight during the winter months, you can practice good self-care to combat behavioral changes. Try the following tips to cope with the winter blues

- **Change your mindset.** Refocus your thoughts on wintertime pleasures by making a list of things that you enjoy about winter. Some ideas include getting cozy with a book, making traditional recipes and listening to the sound of wood crackling in a fireplace.
- **Get outside.** Make a point to go outside daily for fresh air or a quick 15-minute walk, especially before the sun sets. Ensure you have the proper clothing, boots and cold-weather accessories to stay warm.
- **Increase the amount of light in your home.** If you cannot go outside, open the blinds to allow more sunlight into your space. You can also try light therapy. This involves sitting in front of a bright light box that mimics natural sunlight, which can help regulate the body's circadian rhythm and alleviate associated symptoms.
- **Exercise regularly.** Physical activity is a powerful mood booster. Regular exercise, whether a brisk walk, yoga or a gym workout, can help release endorphins. These natural mood lifters can help combat the lethargy of winter blues.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** Nutrition plays a crucial role in mental health, so consuming a well-balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins is important. Omega-3 fatty acids in fish, flaxseeds, walnuts and edamame may also contribute to mood stability.

If you're feeling blue this winter, and the feelings last for several weeks, talk to a health care provider. Additionally, if you're concerned about your mental health, talk to your doctor or a licensed mental health professional, or contact the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Helpline by calling 800-662-HELP (4357).

Manifestation Techniques to Try

Manifestation is the practice of turning your thoughts and intentions into reality by aligning your mindset, emotions and actions with your goals. At its core, manifestation is about focusing on what you want rather than what you fear and creating a positive environment for those desires to flourish. Consider trying the following manifestation techniques:

- **Clarify your intentions.** Before you can manifest anything, you need to be clear about precisely what you want. Take time to write down your goals in clear, specific terms. Instead of saying, "I want to be successful," try, "I want to earn a promotion within the next year." Specificity helps your mind focus on actionable outcomes.
- **Practice visualization.** Visualization is one of the most powerful tools for manifestation. Spend a few minutes each day imagining yourself living the life you desire. The more vivid the image, the stronger the emotional connection.
- **Use affirmations.** Affirmations are positive statements that reinforce your goals and beliefs. They help reprogram your subconscious mind to support your desires.
- **Practice gratitude.** Gratitude can shift your mindset from one of scarcity to one of abundance. By appreciating what you already have, you create space for more positive experiences. Start a gratitude journal and write down three things you're thankful for each day. This simple habit can boost your mood and attract more of what you value.

- **Take action.** Manifestation isn't just about thinking, it's about doing. When opportunities arise that align with your goals, act on them.

Manifestation is a journey, not an overnight miracle. Consistency, belief and openness are key. Start small, stay positive and trust the process; you might be surprised at how quickly your mindset can shape your reality.

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