

SUMMERTIME BLUES: A SEASONAL DEPRESSION

*'Well' I went to my congressman...He said 'quote'
'I'd like to help you son...But you're too young to vote'
Sometimes I wonder what am I gonna do
'Cause there ain't no cure for the summertime blues...Eddie Cochran*

WHAT TO KNOW!

- ❖ Summertime Blues (SB) occur when spring changes to summer and people tend to feel depressed and irritable
- ❖ Summertime Blues has been thought of as reverse SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder); a condition where people get depressed due to a change in the season, usually winter
- ❖ Genetically, more than 2/3 of people with Summertime Blues have a relative with a major mood disorder
- ❖ Symptoms of SB include: depression, anxiety, decreased appetite, insomnia, irritability, loss of interest in usual activities, social withdrawal, anhedonia, feelings of hopelessness, difficulty concentrating, and an inability to cope with heat
- ❖ SB symptoms tend to let up in the Fall but will return with the onset of Spring
- ❖ Common descriptions of people with SB report that they feel like the sun is piercing their skin or that they are attacked by the sun
- ❖ Too much or too strong sunlight or high temperatures and humidity are thought to play a major role in summertime depression
- ❖ Many people with SB in fact stay inside in air conditioned rooms rather than go outside
- ❖ SB affects less than one percent of the population, about 2/3 of which are women, and is more prevalent geographically where temperatures are higher
- ❖ Factors thought to cause SB include:
 - changes in a person's melatonin and serotonin levels and in circadian rhythms, the body's biological clock, due to increased sunlight
 - disrupted schedules, especially eating and sleeping, which increases stress
 - wearing less clothes which can increase body image issues and embarrassment
 - activities during the summer such as vacations and camp which can greatly increase feelings of being financially strapped
 - difficulty tolerating the summer heat which may lead to isolation in air conditioned homes, less exercise, and eating poorly
- ❖ Traditional treatment includes antidepressant medication often started in the winter
- ❖ Another common treatment is taking Melatonin which is a hormone that affects seasonal rhythms in people and helps regulate day and night cycles

WHAT TO DO!

- ❖ Understand you have SB, don't beat yourself up, and remember that it is temporary
- ❖ Try to expose yourself to early morning sunlight for a few minutes
- ❖ Put yourself on a regular schedule so that you have activities for the day and plan fun events to look forward to
- ❖ Keep a consistent exercise routine and regular eating and sleeping patterns
- ❖ Don't isolate, push yourself to be around people, and socialize
- ❖ Write your feelings in a journal which can be a great antidote for depression
- ❖ Pursue new interests or hobbies and volunteer for charitable work
- ❖ Practice yoga, meditation, and other relaxation activities
- ❖ Seek professional help to decrease and eliminate the symptoms of depression

WE CAN HELP!

Call us at **954 755-2885** or email us at **DrKimmel@KimmelPsychology.com**

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