

## Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

Are you feeling the effects of the cold weather and the short daylight hours?

Most of us feel better within ourselves when the sun shines. With the light and warmth of a midsummer's day, we can feel as though our personal batteries are recharging. Conversely, midwinter can leave us feeling very drained. It can be harder to get up on a dark dreary morning; harder to go out (even to meet friends) on a damp cold evening; and much harder to remain motivated to get

through even the most basic of daily tasks. This seasonal loss of daylight is not something that many people look forward to, but some people do appear to be more affected by this than others. As light enters into the eye, messages are passed to the part of the brain (the



hypothalamus) that rules sleep, appetite, sex drive, temperature, mood and activity. If there's not enough light, these basic functions tend to slow down and may almost stop altogether. Some people seem to need a lot more light than others to keep them functioning to their normal level. Some are affected to such an extent that they may be diagnosed as suffering from a condition known as **Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)**

Some of the symptoms of SAD may include:

- Lethargy: lack of energy and difficulty carrying out daily routines. Sleep problems: oversleeping or disturbed nights.
- Depression: feeling sad, low, weepy; feeling guilty or a failure; hopeless and despairing; or - apathetic and feeling nothing.
- Overeating: craving carbohydrates and putting on weight.
- Loss of appetite: and weight loss.
- Social problems: irritability or abusive behaviour.
- Concentration problems: difficulty in thinking straight or making decisions

- Anxiety: tenseness and difficulty coping with pressure; panic attacks.
- Loss of libido: not being interested in sex or physical contact.
- Alcohol and drug abuse.

For further information and literature on SAD, try the following website:

[www.sada.org.uk](http://www.sada.org.uk)



Counselling can be very useful in helping people manage these symptoms.

It can also help to uncover other factors that may be contributing to the problem, look at ways to enable change, and do something about them.

However there are many other reasons for feeling physically or emotionally low. If you are concerned about any of the above, you should in the first place consult your GP.

Once other physical illnesses have been ruled out, **Riverside Wellbeing** is fortunate to have a number of highly experienced therapists and other practitioners that can help with the symptoms of SAD, both physical and emotional. Don't suffer alone.