

Lawyers ASSISTANCE

By Dr. Angela White-Bazile, Esq.

SUMMERTIME BLUES

Each year, many of us wait in anticipation for summer when work slows down, court dockets are lighter, traffic is not as heavy, snowball stands are open, school is out, and the vacations we have been looking forward to all year finally happen.

Summer, however, is not everyone's favorite time of year.

Do outdoor summer activities, long, sunny days, and warm weather make you feel emotionally drained and exhausted? Does being outside in the sun, hosting backyard barbecues, attending outdoor sports activities, or taking a trip to the beach not appeal to you? Or do you feel anxious or even depressed that Labor Day is approaching and summer is officially coming to an end?¹

Is the end of your vacation upsetting because you are returning to a job that no longer excites you?

Are you sad and anxious at the end of summer because you are a parent who has not finalized class schedules, bought school supplies, organized carpools, or completed financial aid for your college student?² Are you distressed because you know your new grandchild is due soon and you have no more vacation time to prepare for the big arrival? Are you frustrated because you had so many summer goals that have not been fulfilled?

During this time of year, if you start to experience a low mood, lack of motivation and general dissatisfaction, you may suffer from post-summer depression — a seasonal depression, also known as seasonal affective disorder (SAD). SAD is commonly referred to as the “winter blues” because it is a subtype of depression or bipolar disorder that occurs and ends around the same time every year, typically beginning in the fall and continuing into the winter months. However, seasonal depression can occur in the summer or spring as well.³

The symptoms of winter SAD include feeling more tired, oversleeping and putting on weight, while summer SAD often

leads to trouble sleeping, losing your appetite and feeling more agitated.⁴

As schools reopen, the court docket picks up and the season changes, you may experience increased anxiety and depression. Regardless of whether you experience SAD in the winter or summer, the depression — which can last for weeks or months — typically lifts, and you experience normal moods for the rest of the year.⁵

Your primary care doctor may diagnose you with SAD if you experience symptoms of major depression; depressive episodes that occur during specific seasons for at least two consecutive years; and depressive episodes happening more frequently during a particular season than during the rest of the year.⁶

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, the risk of developing SAD is greater if you are a woman; have a relative with a mental illness; or have major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder or another mental illness.⁷

As the timing of SAD is predictable, there are positive steps you can take that you are likely already familiar with:

- ▶ exercise regularly;
- ▶ eat a healthy diet;
- ▶ spend time with family and friends who make you feel like you matter;
- ▶ get enough sleep; and
- ▶ volunteer at a hospital, library or shelter to focus on others.⁸

Although it is normal to occasionally feel down, if the feeling persists for days or weeks and you are not interested in the activities you usually enjoy, it may be time to seek professional help. Reaching out to someone is especially important if your sleep patterns and appetite have changed, you turn to alcohol or drugs for comfort or relaxation, or you feel hopeless or think about suicide.⁹

There is nothing to be ashamed of. We are here to encourage and support you in being the best version of yourself.

To seek confidential, non-disciplinary help, contact the quality team of profes-

sionals at JLAP at (985)778-0571, email jlap@louisianajlap.com, or visit the website at: www.louisianajlap.com. The call costs nothing but could make a life-changing difference.

We are a CONFIDENTIAL Safe Haven of Healing committed to fostering healthy and competent lawyers, judges, law students and legal professionals.

FOOTNOTES

1. Mary Lauren O’Crowley, “Feeling the Summer Blues? Here’s What It Is and How to Deal,” *Elevate Counseling* (Aug. 12, 2022), <https://www.elevatecounseling.com/blog-post/feeling-the-summer-blues-heres-what-it-is-and-how-to-deal>; Valmira Rashiti, “What is the Summertime Blues & Can You Be Experiencing It?” *YouthTime* (Aug. 29, 2022), <https://youthtimemag.com/what-is-the-summertime-blues-can-you-be-experiencing-it/>.

2. Stephen Johnson, “How to Cope with End-of-Summer Blues,” *Lifehacker* (Aug. 23, 2022), <https://lifehacker.com/how-to-cope-with-end-of-summer-blues-1849444331>.

3. O’Crowley, *supra* note 1; Caitlin Harper, “How to Beat the End-of-Summer Blues,” *MyWellbeing*, <https://mywellbeing.com/therapy-101/how-to-beat-the-end-of-summer-blues-august-anxiety-sunday-scaries>.

4. Sally Sapega, “The Summertime Blues,” *Penn Medicine News* (Aug. 2, 2018), <https://www.pennmedicine.org/news/news-blog/2018/august/the-summertime-blues>.

5. O’Crowley, *supra* note 1; “Summertime blues are really a thing,” *UCI Health* (July 30, 2019), <https://www.ucihealth.org/blog/2019/07/summer-sad>.

6. Harper, *supra* note 3.

7. “Seasonal Affective Disorder,” *National Institute of Mental Health*, https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/seasonal-affective-disorder#part_6691.

8. Johnson, *supra* note 2; “The Summer Blues is Real – Here’s How to Beat It,” *Plymouth Psych Group*, <https://www.plymouthpsychgroup.com/blog/the-summer-blues-is-real-heres-how-to-beat-it>.

9. Harper, *supra* note 3.

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