



## ***Waterloo Region Nurse Practitioner Led Clinic***

### **Winter 2024 Newsletter**



#### **Winter Blues and SADs**

With winter comes the cold and shorter days with less sunlight. Many people describe “winter blues” with changes in mood, low energy, increased appetite, and increased need for sleep.

When symptoms are more marked, more severe and affect day to day function this may suggest seasonal affective disorder (SAD), a type of clinical depression.

It is estimated that 15% of the population will have SAD in their lifetime.

#### **What can you do to help with the winter blues and SAD?**

Light therapy is the most effective treatment for SAD. Using a light lamp for 30 min each morning can help reduce symptoms. The dose required is 10 000 lux. Your local libraries have light therapy lamps you can access.

Exposure to sunlight, particularly early in the day can help mood and energy.

Try to keep regular routines for sleep and meals. Connect with others.

Movement can help energy and mood. Go for a walk outside. When the weather is poor consider using an indoor walking track or a mall after hours.

Talk to your nurse practitioner or one of our team social workers. You are not alone!

#### **For more information**

<https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-illness-and-addiction-index/seasonal-affective-disorder>

<https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/blog-posts/34590-seven-ways-to-cope-with-the-winter-blues/>

#### **Upcoming Winter Programs**

Strategies for Better Sleep (Thursdays Feb 15, 22, 29<sup>th</sup> 5-6:30 pm)

CBT Group for Depression and Anxiety (Tuesdays March 19<sup>th</sup> to April 9<sup>th</sup> 6-7:30 pm)

For more information check out our website [www.wrnplc.ca](http://www.wrnplc.ca)

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### **Social Connection and Health**

Research has indicated that having high social connection has significant positive impacts in all areas of health from weight management, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and depression. Just as one can focus on healthy eating and getting exercise, being intentional about building strong social connections in your life can improve your mental and physical health.

Social connection can be hard to find, Statistic Canada found in 2021 that 40% of Canadian adults feel lonely some or all the time. It is important to be intentional about building a strong social connection in your life.

Dr. Emma Seppala, the author of *The Happiness Track*, has these three tips to start your journey in building healthy social connections.

- 1) Do acts of service and kindness for others: Research indicates that compassion and volunteering create a sense of connection and purpose in our community and with people around us.
- 2) Take care of oneself: Stress and burnout is linked to high self-focus and therefore a lower sense of connection. By taking care of your own physical and mental health you will increase your motivation to reach out to others
- 3) Ask for Help: Research indicates people are willing to help if asked. It does not just help you feel more connected to others, it also creates belonging to the people asked.

A couple of local suggestions to help you are your own journey in building social connections. Try a program at one of the Waterloo Region Libraries, play a sport or activity at a city run community centre or volunteer, <https://volunteerwr.ca/> has a lot of opportunities and resources to help you.

### **Navigating Conflict**

Conflict can be a normal aspect of everyday life, either at home or work, we may have disagreements with the people we are surrounded by. There can be healthy conflict, but consistent unresolved conflict can impact the relationship along with causing us stress that can negatively impact our health from inflammation to decreased cognitive functioning.

The Action/Intent/ Effect tool can help to get unstuck from an entrenched conflict by giving a framework to understand all perspectives in a conflict/

**Action:** The physical words or action that took place. The actual words that were said or deed that was done.

**Intent:** Intent is why someone said/did a comment or action. What was going through their mind when a comment or action was done? What were you hoping to achieve?

**Effect:** How the other person perceives the comment or action. How they receive the information that was portrayed.

This tool helps to navigate and resolve conflict by allowing everyone's perspective to be heard and understood when seeking a solution, resolution and/or way forward.

