



High Country

Seasonal Affective Disorder

Everyone has at some time experienced the effects of cabin fever. The feeling of being stuck on a cold dreary day and not quite sure what exactly has you feeling down. Lately with all of this beautiful sunshine, we sometimes forget that the winter months can be very difficult for those with Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Some people do not have just a couple days that they are feeling down, they often times endure a much more permanent “cabin fever” than others.

There are some great resources to keep in mind that can be offered at many different health facilities, such light treatment therapy. I speak from personal experience with depression. On my worst days there is nothing more comforting than the feeling of the warm wind hugging you and the sun just ever so gently kissing your skin. It brings a sense of natural healing that no anti-depressant can give you. So some of the ways that I have learned to deal with SAD or even depression during the fall and winter months are to pick up possibly some winter sports, spend an evening in a hot tub, or even a sauna.

With these recent summer months in play it's important to journal things that you do that helps you to deal with depression or anxiety or even just when you have a tough day during the upcoming fall and winter months. Keeping a journal of how you feel in the moment on these beautiful days can be a great thing to look back on when you are struggling with your SAD or anything that may be going on in your life. A journal of how you feel in these moments and going back and reading them

when it's difficult is a great way to allow your mind to vacation to the sand between your toes, or a summer breeze teaching you to breathe calmly.

I bring attention to this disorder now to potentially help others to begin to prepare themselves for our lovely winters. Teach your mind to find other ways to appreciate the cold and dreary days. One of my professors told me once that “rain and snow are always a sign of rebirth and a fresh start.” I never forgot that and this quote has changed my perspective on the days that seem just too awful to get out of bed.

Challenge yourself during these times. Dance in the rain (even though it may be a bit chilly), taste the sweetness of a snowflake melt on your tongue. SAD does not have to take charge of your mood in the months to come, because you are in charge of your happiness. Soak up this amazing summer sun, but don't forget to jot down the days you feel you're in paradise. This can allow your mind to dance in the sun on the days that seem just too difficult to handle.

Victoria Casey



Victoria Casey is a senior at Appalachian State University. She has a lot of personal experience between herself and family and friends when it comes to mental health.

Next Meeting

Melanie Childers
Spirituality and Coping
Monday, July 7 at 7pm

Rev. Melanie Childers is a hospital chaplain and a licensed professional counselor. She currently serves as Director of Pastoral Care at Watauga Medical Center in Boone, NC, where she has lived for 15 years. A North Carolina native, she graduated from Mars Hill College in 1990, from Southern Seminary in 1994, and from ASU in 2009. Before entering professional chaplaincy, she worked as a writer and editor in Oklahoma and Kentucky. She became board certified by the Association of Professional Chaplains in 2000. She is passionate about spirituality, wholeness, and peace and justice efforts.

In 2002 she was named Chaplain of the Year by the North Carolina Chaplains' Association. Melanie's most recent article, "Holy Havoc: The Chaplain's Unique Role in Healing Spiritual Abuse," was published in the Autumn/Winter 2012 issue of the peer-reviewed journal *Chaplaincy Today*. In June 2013, Melanie received the Outstanding Local Leadership Award from the Association of Professional Chaplains.

Melanie's focus as a chaplain is to meet individuals where they are on their particular spiritual path and to provide support, crisis intervention, spiritual care, and gentle challenge. She works with people of any faith as well as those who are agnostic or atheist.

Melanie has both personal and professional experience with mental illness.

Melanie and her partner live in Vilas and enjoy outdoor adventures, advocacy, and simple living.



Our meetings are in the Watauga County Public Library conference room. Watauga County Public Library in downtown Boone is located at 140 Queen Street, behind Mast General Store. If you get there before 7pm you will be able to go in the main door. After that we will enter and exit through the side door.

Wellness Recovery Action Plan®
(WRAP®)
Free Trainings

- July 10-11, 2014 – 9:30am-4:30pm (both days)

Ashe County – Ashe County Public Library – 148 Library Drive, West Jefferson
Registration: Call 1-800-893-6246 extension 3335 or email mary.lloyd@smokymountaincenter.com

- July 23-24, 2014 – 9:00am-4:00pm (both days)

Wellness Recovery Action Plan® (WRAP®)
Transylvania County – Transylvania Cooperative Extension – 98 East Morgan Street, Brevard
Registration: Call 1-800-893-6246 extension 5132 or email sam.sutker@smokymountaincenter.com

- August 27-28, 2014

Wellness Recovery Action Plan® (WRAP®)
Alleghany County – Location TBD, Sparta
Registration: Call 1-800-893-6246 extension 3335 or email mary.lloyd@smokymountaincenter.com

- Late August TBD

Wellness Recovery Action Plan® (WRAP®)
Cherokee County – Location TBD
Registration: Call 1-800-893-6246 extension 1157 or email richie.tannerhill@smokymountaincenter.com



The Boone Peer-to-Peer class is off to a great start! Consider signing up for the Ashe County one from August 21-September 25. Mondays and Thursdays (except Monday September 1) at Ashe County Public Library in Ashe Co from 3 – 5 pm with Karen Gross and Glenda Smith.

Visit www.namihighcountry.com for more information.