

Winter Blues or More Serious Clues?

Shorter days, with less sun, can lead to reduced energy and, for some of us, a case of the “Winter Blues.”

What can you do to support yourself physically and emotionally through the winter months?
Many of the same good things that help all year round!

- Get as much light as possible.
- Eat smaller meals more often, avoiding too many carbohydrates, caffeine and alcohol.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Move around at least a little bit every day. An old counseling professor of mine likes to say "Take your depression for a walk!"
- Avoid the excesses that keep you from getting enough rest.

When you feeling as gray as the sky outside, **try focusing on the simple truths about your life.** What things can you be grateful for? If you aren't of fire, or in a prison camp, chances are good that you have a lot of little things going for you.

Here are some examples from my life. I'm crazy about my dog. I'm grateful that he's healthy and that he makes me laugh every day...even when I'm down. I'm grateful for silly things like the puffy comforter on my bed, and the fact that my neighborhood is a friendly, active place. I'm way too fond of Kozy Shack Rice Pudding. I'm grateful they make it and that I can enjoy it!

Now it's your turn...make a list of the simplest things you are glad to have in your life. And then have a warm, soothing cup of something healthy!

If you find that you just can't shake stress or sadness, that friends make comments like, **“You don't seem yourself,”** you may be dealing with more than a slight case of the blues.

Be on the lookout for:

- A change in eating habits (weight gain or loss)
- Restless sleep, especially waking early and not being able to get back to sleep
- Unexplained irritability
- Lack of concentration
- Disinterest in usual activities
- Distressing thoughts or feelings that you find hard to talk about with family and friends.

These can be signs of a more serious physical or emotional challenge. Feeling sad in the winter is normal, but when sadness interferes with your enjoyment and functioning in life, you may need a little help.

Call me at 1.866.821.9386, or email me at bj@bjcounsels.com for a quick assessment to determine if you've got the blues or one of the more serious winter challenges: Seasonal Affective Disorder or depression. You don't have to face whatever is making you sad alone.