



Shedding Light on Seasonal Depression

As days grow shorter, and daylight becomes scarce in late fall and winter, many Americans experience a form of depression called winter-onset Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Many mistakenly write off SAD as the winter blues or cabin fever, but as a recognized type of clinical depression, SAD requires professional diagnosis and attention. Those with SAD exhibit many of the common signs of depression—sadness, anxiety, irritability, social withdrawal, loss of interest in normal activities, and inability to concentrate.

Other symptoms of winter-onset SAD, which usually begin in October or November and subside in March or April, include:

- Craving for carbohydrates, overeating and weight gain
- Fatigue and loss of energy
- Oversleeping
- Increased sensitivity to social rejection

Some solutions fending off the effects of winter and depression include:

- Open curtains and blinds to allow in as much daylight as possible.
- As safety permits, spend time outdoors every day. Even on cloudy days the effect of daylight can be beneficial.
- Eat a well-balanced diet that provides recommended amounts of vitamins and minerals to maintain energy. Limit consumption of starchy and sweet foods.
- Get physical activity 30 minutes a day, three times a week.
- Stay involved with hobbies, church and social activities and friends to prevent feelings of isolation that winter can bring.

Activities and Socializing in Assisted Living Facilities

Activities play a vital role in helping residents of all physical abilities live as fully as possible. Activities should be designed not only to honor residents' preferences and needs, but also to engage body, mind and spirit.

The evidence is clear that a mixture of physical activity, intellectual challenge, socialization and spirituality or quiet contemplation contribute to a fulfilled life. Socializing benefits seniors in many ways – helps to keep minds sharp, reduced depression, assist in slowing the process of dementia and having a positive effect on nutrition. We, as a company, provide rich, engaging activities to our residents. We have an activity coordinator who each month plans and prepares the month's activities and schedule. The activity calendar is posted on a bulletin board in the residence.

Activities don't have to be the sole responsibility of assisted living facility staff. Visits from family members and friends of residents are just as important to the social well-being of residents. There are plenty of ways family can get involved, and if activities are open to other residents it can impact morale in a big way.

Here are some ideas:

- Schedule game night once a week.
- Religious services are important to many residents. Take your loved one to church with you, or help organize a religious study group one evening each week.
- Eat together. When family members eat at the dining hall with residents it encourages conversations and new friendships.

2012 Highlights

New Falls Protocols

New initiatives to our Falls Reduction Program were implemented across the company in October 2012 with the objective being to reduce the number of falls and injuries related to falls.

Joined Facebook!

As part of an on-going process to be more accessible through technology, a Facebook profile was created for KindredHearts Senior Living.

KindredHearts Celebrated its 10th Anniversary

KindredHearts was created in October 2002 with 7 buildings. Today, KindredHearts is comprised of 20 buildings in 16 different locations throughout Wisconsin.