

## December 2020 Newsletter

### SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER

#### Responding to Winter Blues in the Classroom

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a subtype of clinical depression that typically occurs during the winter months and is associated with a reduction in sunlight exposure. Students and staff who are prone to depressive symptoms may be particularly vulnerable to increased feelings of sadness, loneliness, and hopelessness during the winter when sunlight hours are shortest.

School leaders may see an increase in student and staff depressive symptoms during the winter months. Preventive measures and intentional interventions can alleviate the negative stress responses that contribute to SAD. The New England Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (New England MHTTC) created the [Seasonal Affective Disorder: Responding to Winter Blues in the Classroom](#) toolkit to provide educators with practical advice for preventing, recognizing the symptoms of, and addressing SAD in the school building and community. Download the toolkit today!

### HELP FOR THE HOLIDAY BLUES

#### DSS Provides Help for the Holiday Blues

This year, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, there may be fewer large gatherings and more people than normal may miss far away loved ones they typically gather with for the holidays. Through technology, one option is to gather virtually to see the smiles, hear the voices, and share the cheer of the season. When it comes to the financial stress of buying gifts, it is helpful to remember it's the thought that counts. Making gifts by hand or creating a reasonable gift budget and sticking to it are a couple of ways to help reduce the strain.

DSS contracts with 11 Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) across the state offering services to both children and adults. Financial assistance for services at those centers is available for eligible families. [Click here](#) to find your local CMHC.

### TRAINING

#### Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Awareness Training

Suicide prevention and mental health awareness training continues to be available to South Dakota communities and schools. Training is available at no-cost and can be flexible to your needs, available in-person or virtually. Learn more about available training [here](#).

### EVENTS

For more information on events, visit the South Dakota Suicide Prevention [Calendar](#).

#### December

- 1 – MHFA Virtual Training
- 3 – Survivor Support Group
- 4 – MHFA Virtual Training
- 5 – YMHA Virtual Training
- 7 – YMHA Virtual Training
- 10 – YMHA Virtual Training
- 15 – Aliive Roberts County Coalition Meeting
- 16 – Glacial Lake SAFE Coalition Meeting
- 26-Black Hills Area Survivors of Suicide Support Group

#### January

- 7 - Survivor Support Group
- 19 – Aliive Roberts County Coalition Meeting
- 20 – Glacial Lake SAFE Coalition Meeting
- 23-Black Hills Area Survivors of Suicide Support Group

#### February

- 4 - Survivor Support Group
- 16 – Aliive Roberts County Coalition Meeting
- 17 – Glacial Lake SAFE Coalition Meeting
- 27-Black Hills Area Survivors of Suicide Support Group

To request a training for your community, [click here](#).

### SDSP WEBSITE

## Population Specific Pages Added to the SDSP Website

Population specific web pages were recently added to the [South Dakota Suicide Prevention](#) website. These web pages focus on high trauma professionals including Child Services, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Services and Law Enforcement. If you identify yourself as a professional in one of these areas, please check out the resources we have gathered for you [here](#).

