

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

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Seasonal Affective Disorder

Holiday events can be a joyful and a memorable experience for most youth. But, for many children and adolescents, changes in light, temperature, and shortened days can increase anxiety and cause depression. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a "mood disorder associated with depression episodes and related to seasonal variations in light." As seasons change in sunlight patterns so do melatonin levels, a sleep-related hormone, which is produced at increased levels of darkness. This disorder is generally experienced in young adults and females during January and February. Try these five tips to try to reduce or eliminate the symptoms of SAD:

- Do not rely on unrealistic expectations from past holiday seasons, as circumstances change.
- Pace yourself, accept help, and allow for quiet time, and prioritize your most important activities.
- It is ok to acknowledge these feelings, even if you choose not to express them.
- Have a support system in place. This may be your family and/or friends.
- Seek treatment. If you experience feelings of depression at a higher frequency during the winter months, contact a mental health professional who can offer counseling and other forms of treatment, such as light therapy.

Retrieved from
<http://mentalhealth.about.com/library/sci/1202/blsad1202.htm> on December 20, 2010.

Try these other websites for more information related to particular mental health diagnoses you may be interested in:

Mental Health America: www.nmha.org

NIMH: www.nimh.nih.gov

WV System of Care: www.wvsystemofcare.org

Inside This Issue

Seasonal Affective Disorder & Recipe	1
Children Can Help with Laundry Chores	2
Wood County Family Resource Network & Other Local FRN's	2
Events & What is MSP-CAN doing?	3



Chocolate Covered Strawberries

Ingredients

- 16 ounces milk chocolate chips
- 2 tablespoons shortening
- 1 pound fresh strawberries with leaves

Directions

- Insert toothpicks into the tops of the strawberries.
- In a double boiler, melt the chocolate and shortening, stirring occasionally until smooth. Holding by toothpick, dip the strawberries into chocolate mixture.
- Turn strawberries upside down and insert toothpick into Styrofoam for chocolate to cool.

<http://allrecipes.com/Recipe/Chocolate-Covered-Strawberries/Detail.aspx>

Children Can Help with Laundry Chores

Laundry can be an overwhelming chore for parents, especially when more children equal more sorting, loading, and folding. Why not bond with your child while teaching them the importance of household chores? Here are a few ideas on how your child may be able to participate and interact with you while doing laundry.

- A child can help sort laundry. Teaching them the importance of separating colors, linens, darks, etc. helps with their cognitive skills and creates time together.



- Children can load the washer. Depending on their age, they may or may not be able to measure detergent. This depends on their level of maturity.
- Children can also be taught how to fold and put away laundry. They can also learn how to place their clothes in proper containers when they are dirty.

Wood County Family Resource Network

On December 18, 2010, the Wood County Family Resource Network in collaboration with Mountain State Parents–CAN, Westbrook Health Services, and the Parkersburg Boys & Girls Club held its first annual “Teen Holiday Party.” Teens from the Gustkey Shelter and Parkersburg Boys & Girls Club came together for an evening of fun and holiday spirit. Adolescents participated in making hand-painted crafts, a dinner, games, and gifts. A special thanks goes to K–Mart, Bob Evans, Mountaineer Family Restaurant, and Ryan’s for donations which made this wonderful event possible. The Youth Advisory Council of the Wood County Family Resource Network felt that providing such services to adolescents with a mental health disorder over the age of 12 was an essential need for Wood County teens. Potential plans for next year will include a “Teen Angel Tree” where children with a serious emotional disorder can be adopted and have the joy of experiencing the holiday season.

Local Family Resource Networks

Are you interested in learning about other Family Resource Networks in Region I? Here are some active websites to link to:

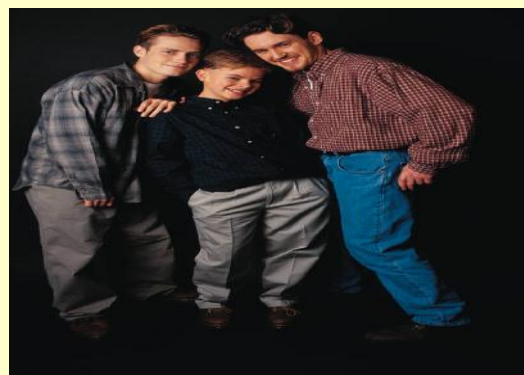
Calhoun County FRN:
www.calhounfrn.net

Gilmer County FRN:
www.gilmercountyguide.info

Marshall County FRN:
www.marshallcountyfrn.com

Marion County FRN:
www.fivepromises.wv.gov/ameriacorps-vista-project/Pages/marion-county-frn.aspx

Monongalia County FRN:
www.mcfrrn.weebly.com/resources.html



MSP ~ CAN

Mountain State Parent-Child Adolescent Network

What has MSP-CAN been doing?

Our organization started a Parent Advisory Council during December in Marshall County. The participants were able to connect with one another and discussed issues they are facing as their child or children are experiencing mental health disorders. The Parent Advisory Council also discussed what types of training they would like to have provided in the Northern Panhandle, which are all free of charge. MSP-CAN will be hosting a Suicide Prevention, Depression, Bullying, and Date Rape Training in the spring at the Wells Christian Center in Weirton, WV., in collaboration with Valley Health Systems.

What is MSP-CAN looking forward to?

Our organization is looking forward to developing Parent Advisory Councils in Wood, Calhoun, Ritchie, Harrison, and Monongalia Counties by spring 2011. If you would like to have a Parent Advisory Council in your town or county, please contact Project Director, Crystal Dugan at 304-916-3649.

MSP-CAN continues to accept referrals, provide 1:1 assistance to family members, offer trainings, promote advocacy, share information, and collaborate with other organizations.

Upcoming Events/Groups

- "Hats off to Mentoring" on the 2nd floor council chambers of the Parkersburg Municipal Building on January 27, 2011 from 6:30pm-8:00pm. The mayor will issue a proclamation to recognize National Mentoring Month.
- Calhoun County FRN "Family Fun Days" on February 12, 2011 held at Calhoun Middle/High School. Begins at 9am. Free.
- Parents Helping Parents Parent Advisory Group serving Wood and Wirt Counties to be held at SW Resources, Inc. 1007 Mary St. Parkersburg on February 8th from 6-7:30pm. Questions or directions call Jackie at 304-966-5839 or Crystal at 304-916-3649.
- Marshall/Ohio Counties Parent Advisory Council. Held at 1201 Garfield St McMechen, WV on February 24th from 6-7:30pm. Refreshments provided.
- Harrison County ADHD Support Group meets on the 3rd Monday monthly at 6pm at the PERC office in the former Gore Middle School, 2nd floor.
- Harrison County Autism Group meets on the 3rd Monday monthly at 6pm at the PERC office in the former Gore Middle School, 2nd floor.
- Autism Support Group – Morgantown at Playworks Child Care, 483 Dents Run Rd., Westover, 2nd Saturday monthly from 10am-12pm. Contact Cheri at 304-328-5042.
- Harrison County Down Syndrome Connection meets the 1st Thursday of every month at the ARC of Harrison County, 6pm. More information contact Julie at 304-745-3449.