

Depression in Winter: A Vital Time for Self-Care

by Destiny Tanas, LPC, LMHC-A

A shift in seasons affects nearly all aspects of life.

As trees change, so do our daily habits, what we eat, how our homes look (inside and out), our motivation to exercise, even how we want to spend our free time. It's not uncommon for a friend or favorite activity to disappear for a season and reappear in the next.

US readers won't be surprised to hear that Winter months see increased rates of depression. Shorter days, colder temperatures, and less sunlight can contribute to a sense of isolation and sometimes even despair. The American Psychiatric Association finds that around 5% of the U.S. population is affected by Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), with women more likely to experience it. Symptoms of SAD include: *fatigue, difficulty concentrating, changes in appetite or sleep patterns, loss of interest in activities, and a general sense of hopelessness.*

Lack of sunlight during these months is thought to disrupt the body's circadian rhythm and serotonin levels; both are linked to mood regulation. The cold can also lead to a more sedentary lifestyle that 'encourages' isolation. Therapists understand these natural impacts on emotions and encourage more self-care during this time.

Self-care helps manage depression and maintain mental well-being. Simple options include getting better sleep, being physically active, and staying socially connected. When self-care is not prioritized or being achieved, it may be time to consider seeking therapy or counseling to address getting back to a better state. Exploring coping skills with a therapist can add to overall wellbeing and help to manage depressive symptoms.

A study¹ published in The Journal of Affective Disorders looks at individuals who experience depression during Winter months and continue to struggle even as Spring arrives. Relying on the season change for relief,



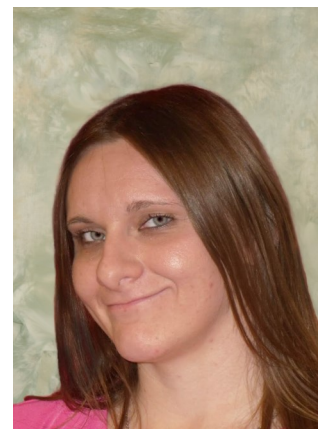
as opposed to seeking help, is thought to contribute to why Spring sees a spike in deaths by suicide.

It's important to reach out to family or friends who may be struggling. You can offer support or encourage them to find a therapist who can help them with managing depression, loneliness, or feelings of isolation. A therapist can also help them make changes so next Winter & Spring are better. These challenges can be turned around if they simply gain the tools for self-care and learn how to establish a strong support system. Therapy can be a great avenue to gain discipline to accomplish goals. The Bible states *"Without counsel, plans go awry, but in the multitude of counselors they are established."* **-Proverbs 15:22 (NKJV)**

A good therapist can walk with their client to make those changes and to help navigate and manage Seasonal Depression and plenty else that comes along.

¹The Journal of Affective Disorders (2019). "Seasonal Changes in Depression: A Review of the Literature."

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Getting to Know the Executive

by Pastor Dr. Leroy Childress "PC"

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Hello, it is a privilege to come alongside New Leaf Resources to help Northwest Indiana and South Chicagoland promote healthy relationships, personal growth, and healing through professional counseling, education, and consultation from a Christian perspective. Mental health is a vital component of life and our communities. Encouraging people to pursue the benefits of healthy mental living is a must. Over the years, too many people have minimized, reduced, and rejected the lasting impacts of neglecting mental health. But in today's era, we applaud champions like Simone Biles, who help bring awareness to the importance of mental health.



So, you may be wondering who I am and why I, as a pastor, would be willing to become the Executive Director of New Leaf. So, here is a little bit about me. I have the fantastic opportunity to serve as the Pastor of Development and Discipleship at Faith Church Highland. I specialize in tearing down racial and relational barriers. I am originally from Baldwin, Michigan, and obtained my undergraduate youth ministry degree from Eastern University in Pennsylvania. In addition, I earned a Doctorate in Ministry Leadership and have a Master's in Ministry Leadership from Moody Theological Seminary and a second Master's in Marriage & Family Therapy from Liberty University. I am married to Eunice, who is from the Dominican Republic, and we have three daughters: Natalie, Hailey (married to Mateo), and Naomi. In my years of Christian service, the Lord has blessed me to serve in various settings—church, school, prison, and street ministry, along with over 20 years of coaching experience. I am dedicated to helping people understand the Gospel in everyday language and life. The Lord has allowed me to help hundreds of couples restore and prepare for marriage. I have been blessed to have started and worked with many organizations. Before transitioning to New Leaf's executive director position, I served on its board of directors.

So that was a little of who I am, but let's focus on the more important things, such as why I am willing to serve God's Kingdom in this role. My ministry career has made me understand that there is often an emotional and mental caveat when pursuing a holistic approach to spiritual breakthroughs. In a world filled with so much brokenness and

division, it is helpful for people to know the truth about who they are and the mental health the Lord desires them to live in. People need help, hope, and healing in mighty ways. As people press into knowing themselves, they are in a better place to know God. Walking with New Leaf is a beautiful opportunity to help individuals and families know themselves and the Lord better. This helps and blesses families, churches, and communities.



Our Mission:

To promote healthy relationships, personal growth and healing through professional counseling, education, and consultation from a Christian perspective.

The Gift of a Lifetime - Legacy Giving to New Leaf



"I wish I could do more!"

It's one of the most common sentiments we hear from supporters who are passionate about our mental healthcare ministry. It's why many of our dearest friends look into what's called a "legacy gift" in support of New Leaf Resources' mission. It allows them to contribute a substantial gift that would never be possible otherwise. There are a few ways you can give a transformational legacy gift:

- Include a gift to New Leaf Resources in your will or trust
- Name New Leaf Resources as a charitable beneficiary of your retirement account or life insurance policy
- Make a gift that pays you income for life. When you no longer need the income, the balance of your gift will go toward the ministry

A legacy gift fulfills your wish to "do more" for a ministry that means so much to you. You'll increase your giving capacity and help ensure New Leaf Resources continues to carry out this mission, well beyond your lifetime. Ready to learn more?

Call our Development Director, Ryan Matthyse at 219.671.9380

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Gratitude is sewn into everything we do. 'Thank You's here and there just don't cover it. We're grateful to God for every moment of New Leaf's success.

When a client puts their trust in us for help.

When a therapist chooses to join our mental health ministry.

When a donor feels moved to support us.

When an organization looks to us for guidance.

Every referral we receive.
Every volunteer.
Every session.

We're grateful for these moments, these people, and the Spirit we feel moving in all of them.



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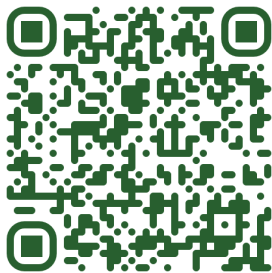
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