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January... the bottom line blues



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What happens when the reality of winter sets in? If your workers are sluggish and slow, their ability to perform is impaired, as is your bottom line.

SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder) is more than a mood; SAD is a direct hit to your business. SAD is a profit-draining disorder, but fortunately can be addressed in the workplace.

SAD occurs most frequently in the late autumn and winter months as the amount of sunlight decreases and the outdoor temperature drops. This change in nature prompts genuine physiological changes in people; not everyone is impacted severely, but we all experience a shift in mood and energy when seasons change.

Symptoms might include:

- Daytime drowsiness prompted by night sleeplessness;
- Lessened energy, especially in the afternoon;
- Sluggish movement;
- Increase in appetite, especially for carbs to get quick energy;
- Loss of interest in work overall and in social interactions; and
- General irritability, lack of happiness and enthusiasm.

Telling people to snap out of it doesn't work.

Awareness is helpful alongside directives for people to seek out their health-care practitioner for guidance, if you are concerned. Additionally, there are steps that can be taken at work.

Solutions include:

- Light therapy. Illumination from a very bright fluorescent light (10,000 lux) mimics sunlight and has been found to be effective. Incorporate them into the work space.
- Organized daylight walks and exercise routines. Incorporate them into office routines, breaks, or as a new format for meetings.
- Healthy eating. Encourage good food choices throughout the day, excluding simple carbs in the afternoon.

January is a perfect time to set the tone for a psychologically healthy year. Your bottom line will benefit as well.

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