



WELL NOW

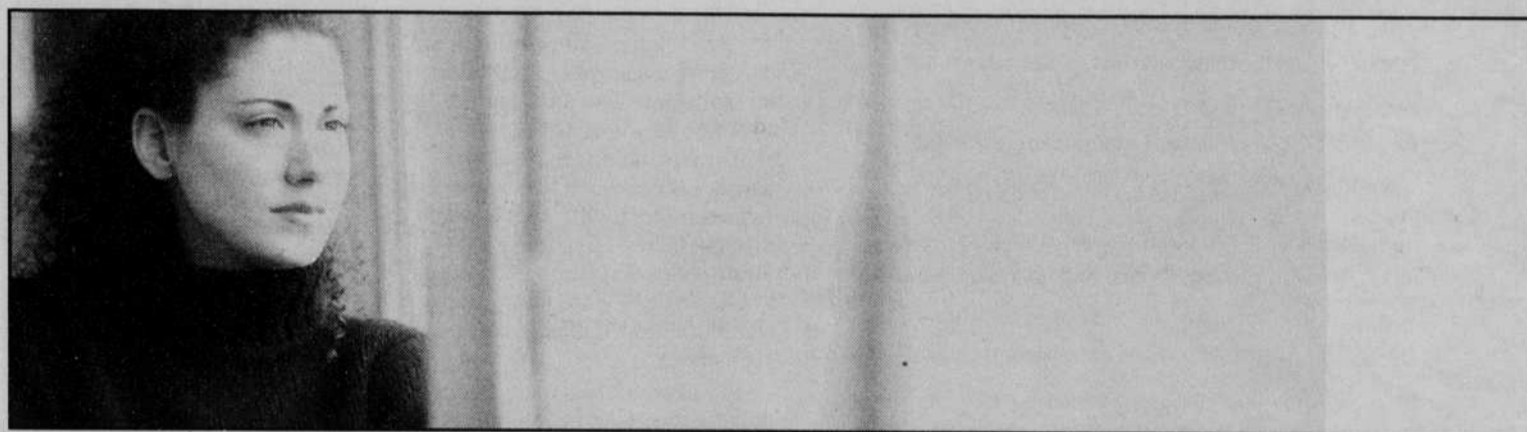
Winter, 2004



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Feeling SAD?

shedding light on seasonal blues



By Lauren Peters

It's that time of year again...the dark, dreary days of winter in Oregon. For many students this simply means pulling on a rain jacket and grabbing an umbrella on the way out the door. But for others, this darkness is the culprit for a condition called SAD, Seasonal Affective Disorder. Put simply, SAD is a kind of depression in the winter months, typically from October through March.

According to University of Oregon Psychiatrist, Dr. Jerome Vergamini, the onset of this disorder is correlated with the increased level of melatonin that is released from the pineal gland in the brain. Melatonin is a hormone produced only in the dark. The increased levels of melatonin have been shown to have a direct relationship with

increased levels of depression.

HOW COMMON IS SAD

Students, especially those new to the Northwest, may notice a change in their mood during these dark months. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, SAD affects 10 to 25 million Americans, with at least 80 percent of the cases being women. You may be at risk for Seasonal Affective Disorder if you have three or more of the following symptoms during the dark months of the year:

1. **Depression**
2. **Not motivated**
3. **Irritable**
4. **Lethargic**
5. **Sleep difficulties**
6. **Crave a high carbohydrate diet**
7. **Avoid friends and family**

LIGHT THERAPY ON CAMPUS

Luckily there are several resources available for students who may have Seasonal Affective Disorder. The Health Center employs two licensed psychiatrists that can help rule out other medical conditions, prescribe use of full spectrum lights and/or medication. The Counseling Center also has a set of full spectrum lights (often called SAD lights) that students can use on a drop-in basis or schedule by calling 346-2706. The SAD lights are 5-20 times brighter than normal indoor lighting. In a typical light therapy treatment, an individual reads under the light every day for 30-60 minutes. It takes about four days to have effects and should be continued daily throughout the winter months. For more information you can contact the Counseling Center at 346-2706 and the Health Center at 346-2770.

Helping a Friend

what to do when someone you love has a drug problem

By Ursula Evans-Heritage

The use of alcohol and other drugs is common among college students, so it is sometimes difficult to make the distinction between social use and problem use. Seen by many of us as a fun way to be with friends, problems can creep into our lives with stealth. In an attempt to better identify problem use, I spoke with a professional at the UO Counseling Center. She talked to me about how I can help friends that I worry about.

WHEN IT'S A PROBLEM

Symptoms of problem drug use vary from person to person, but an easy indicator is if substance use is interfering with the

achievement of personal goals. According to Counselor Stephanie Allred, only the individual is truly able to determine whether or not they have a problem. However, if you are worried about a friend, here are a few strategies for approaching them.

First, do not approach your friend in an intimidating or embarrassing manner. Try to talk to them alone or with just a few close friends. Do not attack them by using accusations, such as "You're an alcoholic." Instead, focus the conversation on how you feel, and try to have specific events to back up your argument. For example, "I was really scared last weekend when you..." It is important that you express empa-

thy for the person, while at the same time empowering them to make their own decisions. One such decision can include visiting the counseling center.

HOW TO SUPPORT

If your friend does decide to get help, they will need your support. This can come in the form of listening to them or joining them in healthy social activities. It is important to realize that there is only so much you can do to help another person; the individual has to really want to get better in order for recovery to work.

For more information the UO Counseling Center may be reached at 346-3227. Both individual and group counseling are offered free of charge.

WARNING SIGNS OF DRUG RELATED PROBLEMS

[http://www.stopdrugaddic-](http://www.stopdrugaddiction.com/drug-facts.htm)

- mood swings
- unreliable, unable to finish projects
- unexpressed resentment and secret hatreds
- dishonesty; lies to family, friends, employers
- withdraws from those who love them; isolates self
- may appear chronically depressed
- may begin stealing from family and friends

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Carbohydrates: Uncovered!

Why carbs are not as bad as they may seem.

Under pressure?

Blood pressure is not just an issue for our parents! Learn how you might be affected by high blood pressure.

Just Don't Dip It

Chewing tobacco is no safer than smoking cigarettes.

Read why.

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Feeling Groggy?

Take this quiz to learn whether you have good sleep hygiene

Caffeine savvy?

Learn how much caffeine is ok for your body

Factoids

Interesting health tidbits to get you thinking

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Herbal Supplements

Coming out with student herb use.

The Young Man's Cancer

What to feel for when checking for testicular cancer

Health Happenings

Find out about upcoming events through the University Health Center's Health Education Program