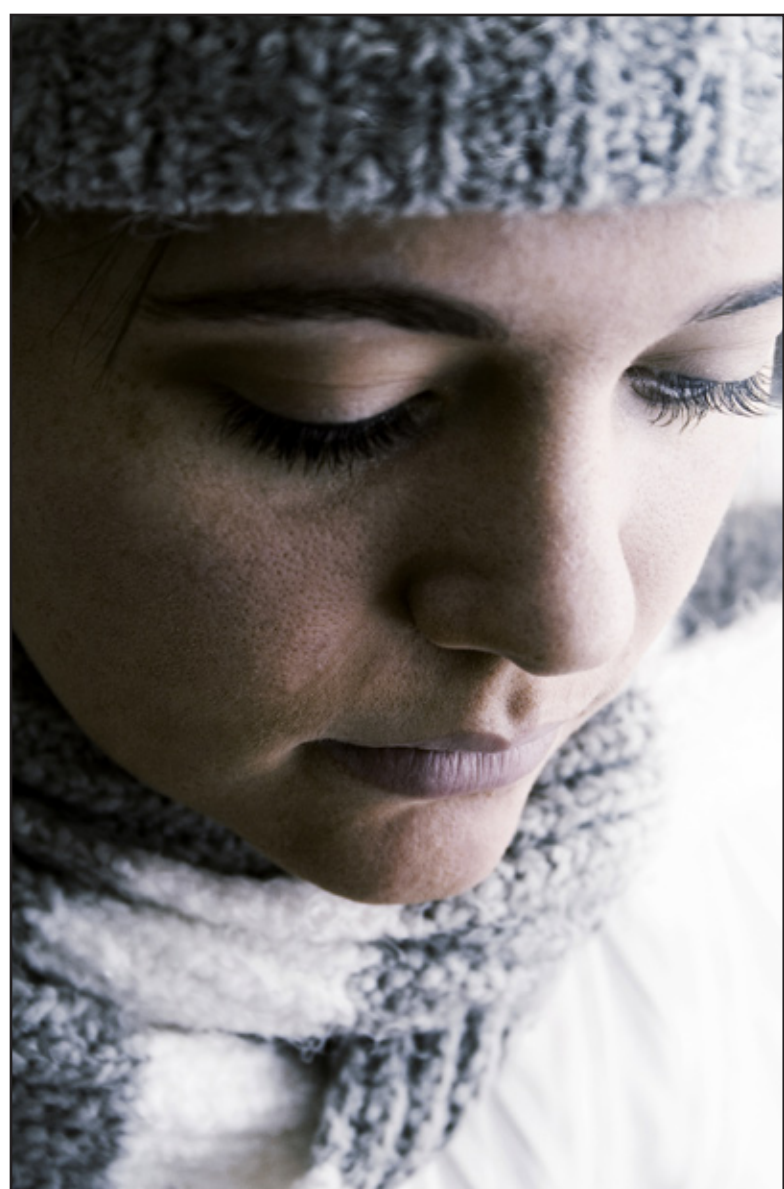


# Getting help for wintertime blues



Stress over the holidays and even into January and February is a common theme. Winter cold, time changes and "failed" New Year's resolutions may trigger and elicit symptoms of depression, fatigue and general "blah" feelings. February is the shortest month of the year, but to some it can seem like the longest.

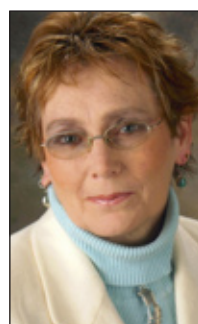
Sometimes you can feel like you're on your own personal emotional rollercoaster. Over small hills and great big ones, going up with joy, happiness and connection, and then down with sadness, loneliness, and frustration. And as with riding a real mechanical rollercoaster, both positive and negative emotions can trigger a stress response in the body.

Feeling sad and depressed does not mean that you have the "diagnosis" of depression. Sadness can begin with other things such as boredom, loneliness, loss of hope or the lack of fun in your life.

Anyone who has said "I'm bored" usually associates this feeling with a lack of things to do. Actually boredom comes from the absence of pleasurable, productive, positive things to do. We all have things to do. In a society where most are taught work before play, we forget that fun and pleasure are not luxuries, but necessities.

Balancing tasks that we enjoy with those that are not so much fun, can help lessen the stress and distress. Also contrary to some societal influences, fun and pleasure can be done without a high price tag. Using creativity to work on a dream board or a bucket list, stepping outside and using your five senses to discover and appreciate the world around you, or share your awakening good feelings by helping a friend or neighbor.

Reaching out to that friend or neighbor also has the benefit of



*'Being productive and giving back to life is also a factor in warding off the blues.'*

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helping to build or renew good support systems. Socialization is something that we often move down the list of priorities, but we know that those people with good support systems have better health overall. Good support systems do not magically appear, but are developed over time by connecting to positive people in varied situations such as organizations, clubs, church, neighbors, and/or family. Limiting your negative interactions with people, and fostering positive interactions has good benefits in the overall coping of life. Doing positive things for someone else today, may bring you a friend in your time of need tomorrow.

Being productive and giving back to life is also a factor in warding off the blues. Knowing that you are being useful and contributing something to society, even if that society is your home and family, can increase your feelings of self value. Being productive does not mean working at a job, it can be as simple as taking the time to pray for someone, picking up someone else's trash on the street, or giving a needy person a hug.

And the most significant factor in managing your mood is hope. Hope is knowing that tomorrow is going to be at least as good if not better, than today. Hope is about having something to look forward to, or it can just be a dream of a better tomorrow. Hope is about

keeping the dreams alive. To have hope, you only need to believe that there is a solution out there to whatever it is that is diminishing your hope today. Hope is about finding things to be grateful for, and not focusing on the things that you are not happy about.

Sometimes the feelings of sadness do progress into the medical diagnosis of a depressive disorder, even when you are expanding your support group or trying to de-stress. It is always good to discuss that as a possibility with your medical provider.

Having the diagnosis of depression requires medical attention and can be managed with the proper treatment: medicines, psychotherapy and or counseling and education.

February blues can be the time to get treatment or to revise your goals and behaviors.

Find a project to do, have fun, meet new people (positive ones) and dream big. If none of this works, then please see your medical provider, a psychiatric provider or a counselor / therapist.

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## Have you experienced any of these symptoms?

A depression diagnosis is made when you experience at least six of the following symptoms, and you are not able to relieve the symptoms with the interventions listed in the article, for more than two weeks, without any relief. Symptoms of depression can include:

- feeling down
- sadness
- change in energy
- change in appetite
- change in sleep habits
- poor concentration
- poor memory
- hopelessness
- helplessness
- suicidal thoughts
- racing thoughts
- self doubt or worsening of self esteem
- inability to feel pleasure or joy
- anxiety
- irritability
- anger
- decrease in self care
- generalized apathy

To reach the 24-Hour Behavioral Health Call Center, call 704-444-2400 or 800-418-2065. Or call 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433.)



## Kings Mountain Hospital offers only Behavioral Health program of its kind in area

Cleveland County HealthCare System offers specialized Behavioral Health Centers to meet mental health needs of all ages.

Services include crisis stabilization, a 24-hour call center, and 24-hour psychiatric emergency care.

Children and adolescents are treated on an outpatient basis.

Kings Mountain Hospital is the only program of its kind in the area, providing inpatient psychiatric, dual diagnosis, and acute medical detoxification services to adults (18 and older).

### TREATMENT PHILOSOPHY

Our goal is to prepare patients to function successfully

in their homes, businesses and communities through intervention, therapy and comprehensive education.

### FEATURES

- Hospital setting
- Acute crisis intervention
- Voluntary and involuntary admissions accepted
- An interdisciplinary approach to substance abuse and psychiatric treatment
- Medicaid, Medicare and most insurance plans accepted
- A 24-hour call center providing confidential screenings, referrals and information.

### TREATMENT OPTIONS

- Medical detoxification

- Psychiatric stabilization
- Inpatient rehabilitation

Referrals can be made by individuals, family members, physicians, friends, employee assistance programs, employers, mental health professionals, managed care organizations, clergy, judicial/legal agencies and other caring individuals or agencies.

Kings Mountain Hospital is one of the area's only dually licensed facilities, offering treatment programs for chemical dependency and psychiatric disorders.

The center takes an interdisciplinary approach to treat-

ment, combining the expertise of social workers, substance abuse counselors, nurses, psychiatrists, and other counselors to establish accurate assessments and create customized treatment plans.

In addition, nurses meet individually with patients to discuss the administration and potential side effects of prescribed medications.

### PROGRAMS

- Acute crisis intervention
- Coping skills
- Stress management training
- Substance abuse education

### REFERRALS/ADMISSIONS

Referrals can be made by in-

dividuals, family members, physicians, friends, employee assistance programs, employers, mental health professionals, managed care organizations, clergy, judicial/legal agencies and other caring individuals or agencies.

Our call center is available 24 hours a day. For referrals, admissions and requests for additional information, call 704-730-5470. You can also reach us by email at: BHC@CarolinasHealthCare.org.

To reach the 24-Hour Behavioral Health Call Center, call 704-444-2400 or 800-418-2065.

## FREE Skin Cancer Screening

Cleveland Regional Medical Center will hold a free skin cancer screening on **Saturday, March 6, from 8am to noon at the Blumenthal Cancer Center.**

Find out how to lower your risks of developing skin cancer and more about the different kinds of skin cancer at the screening. *Screenings are set up by appointment only.*

Call 980-487-3724 to schedule an appointment.



Cleveland County HealthCare System