



Post-Holiday Blues

The holidays bring opportunities to connect and celebrate. We are surrounded by sounds and colors that can brighten our mood and signal good things to come. Now the holidays are over and the credit card bills will soon arrive. And those pants that fit in October have shrunk. It's not uncommon to experience post-holiday blues. For some, this is a passing sadness but for others, signs of depression may continue.

These symptoms can be triggered by many things. If family came together over the holidays, we may feel lonely or abandoned when they leave. Already difficult relationships may be exacerbated and if we are estranged from someone, the hole seems larger. Feelings of grief, especially if the loss is recent or was traumatic, can be magnified. If we have visited with older or ill relatives and friends we haven't seen in a while the change can be significant, or we may believe we won't see them again. If it's your parent, you may realize that you will have to step in and it won't be easy. We may also have unmet expectations, feel that we, or our gifts, are unappreciated and experience guilt because of the amount we spent or the amount we ate (or drank).

The holidays themselves may be the hardest for those who are grieving and facing other life difficulties. It may be a relief that the holidays are done.

Sometimes post-holiday blues are mitigated by resuming (or starting) a healthier lifestyle and engaging with things you are passionate about. After the busy holiday season, we have more time to take better care of ourselves. If resolutions or goals start small, we're more likely to achieve them. LCL's Mindfulness groups are a great resource.

For some, this may not be enough. Symptoms that there is a bigger problem can include difficulty eating, sleeping or concentrating. The things that normally bring enjoyment do not. A sense of emptiness can surround us and the world seems gray and heavy. Then it's time to ask for help.

An internet search turns up many options discussing symptoms and resources. Here are a few:

http://www.stressdoc.com/post_holiday_blues.htm

<http://www.webmd.com/balance/features/blow-off-post-holiday-blues>

<http://www.webmd.com/video/post-holiday-blues>

<http://psychcentral.com/lib/how-to-manage-post-holiday-depression/>

A good resource for depression generally is www.lawyerswithdepression.com. A great resource for law students is www.lawlifeline.org.

A related area of winter blues is seasonal depression or seasonal affective disorder (SAD). SAD is triggered, in part, by access to less natural light. In general, light therapy or increased vitamin D are found to be helpful and should be started in advance of symptoms to gain the most impact. Here are some resources if you wish to learn more:

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/seasonal-affective-disorder/DS00195>

<http://www.namihelps.org/assets/PDFs/fact-sheets/illnesses/Seasonal-Affective-Disorder.pdf>

<http://www.nami.org/About-NAMI/NAMI-News/Less-Sunlight-Means-More-Blues-for-Some>

You may contact LCL for help or contact counselors through LCL's counseling partner, The Sand Creek Group, directly. Up to 4 free and confidential counseling sessions are available to lawyers, law students, judges and immediate family members. To speak to a counselor or make an appointment, call 651-430-3383, option 1. When asked the name of your "employer", say you were referred by Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers. Sand Creek also has a website, www.sandcreekeap.com that includes many resources on issues ranging from stress to mental health to alcohol, drugs and compulsive behaviors as well as a variety of coping and wellness topics. Click on *work life wellness login* and enter the password LCL1.