



# WKU®

# Counseling & Testing Center

January 2015

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## Welcome Back

*It's another new year  
and another fresh start.  
We hope it will be a great  
year at WKU.*

## Seasonal Affective Disorder

# How to recognize this disorder

Anyone can feel a little "down" or sluggish in the winter when it's dark and too cold to be outdoors much. However, some people experience a severe depression, which recurs every winter and abates as the year turns toward summer. It is known as Seasonal Affective Disorder or SAD.

SAD can occur in the summer, but it usually strikes in the winter months and in colder climates. In fact, you are about seven times more likely to suffer from SAD if you live in New Hampshire than if you live in Florida!

### What does SAD feel like?

A diagnosis can be made after three or more consecutive winters of symptoms including a number of the following:

- A desire to oversleep
- Lethargy
- Craving carbohydrates and sweets (usually resulting in weight gain)
- Irritability and social isolation
- Tension and reduced tolerance for stress
- Decreased interest in sex and physical contact
- Mood changes in spring and autumn

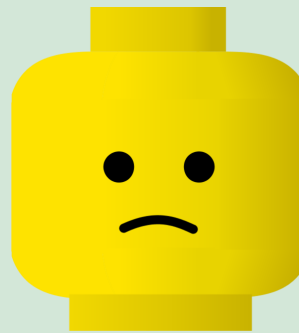
### Who is most likely to get SAD?

Risk factors include:

- Living far from the equator
- Limited light exposure
- Being young (onset of SAD often occurs between 18 and 30 years of age) or female
- Being predisposed toward clinical depression

### What causes SAD?

SAD has been linked to a biochemical imbalance brought on by the lack of sunlight in winter,



which has the following effects:  
Melatonin (sleep hormone) decreases when its light  
Serotonin (hormone associated with elevated mood) increases when it's light  
Vitamin D helps the body maintain levels of serotonin during the winter  
Light stimulates the production of cholecalciferol, which the body eventually transforms into vitamin D

### What can I do to prevent SAD?

- Keep a regular routine
- Have a regular pattern of sleep (and get enough sleep)
- Increase your exposure to light
- Exercise regularly
- Eat properly
- Have fun!

### What should I do if I think I might have SAD?

- Increase your exposure to light, sunshine or photo-therapy
- The WKU Wellness Center provides counseling for students seeking help with SAD or with any other kind of depression. Please stop by or call 745-3159 for an appointment with a counselor

### Helpful Links:

- [Seasonal Affective Disorder, What It Is and How to Overcome It](#)
- [Treatment Information](#) from the Seasonal Affective Disorder Association
- [Q & A on Bright Light Therapy](#)
- [Tips for Coping with SAD](#) from the American Psychiatric Association

# A recipe for disaster?

By Dr. Karl Laves

Let me begin by stating I dislike resolutions; the kind a lot of us make on New Year's Day. It really is an odd social custom that stirs up guilt and resentment. I am all for people wanting to be happier but I get nervous when people want to be better. Better implies competition and competition usually ends in someone losing. America is so obsessed with being better and look where it has brought us as a nation. We lead the world in earned income but we also lead the world in heart disease, obesity, divorce and most crime. Maybe it is time to stop making resolutions to be better or to get ahead.

And what is up with all these magical dates; why does a change have to start on the first day of the year? Nothing special about Jan. 1; just like why do we all have to have broken hearts if we are single on Valentine's Day. It is just a day on the calendar. If you are going to make a change, you are going to make it for life, so who cares what day you started? Here is a well kept secret... people make resolutions on Jan. 1 because it only comes around once a year. If you blow your resolution, you get to wait until the next January to start again.

But if you insist on torturing yourself with some kind of "change" here are some things that help people stick to a plan.

Announce your plan to change to your friends and family. Announcing a plan to change seems to increase your level of commitment; it is harder to skip out on a plan after you have told everyone about it.

Think of the three R's: remind, reward, and renew.

**Remind:** making a change takes time and it takes prompts or reminders. Leave notes and photos about your goals, make small motivational charts, posters, etc. to remind you all day long about your plan.

**Reward:** change takes effort and you need to reward yourself when you stick to the plan. The rewards don't have to be big, but you need to give yourself a little something every day you stick to the plan. Like a point system, 10 points a day, and when you have 50 points you get something like a trip to the book store, a movie, coffee with a friend, etc.

**Renew:** change takes energy; you need to plan on how you will re-energize. You need to plan your naps, sleep, diet, recreation and relaxation. Change is hard work. You have to plan on how to keep your energy level going strong.



Take small steps; break one big goal into smaller goals so that you don't get frustrated. Instead of saying you are going to lose fifty pounds, set your first goal for five pounds. One step at a

time; don't get ahead of yourself.

Do it with a friend; nothing helps people get through hard times better than having someone to suffer along with you.

Don't become a zealot. Change can be a good thing and you might really get into your plan and it becomes a new way of life but don't be the person who becomes a zealot and then has to convert the world. If you start running, great. Have fun. Enter some races. But go easy on posting every workout and how much you sweated on Facebook. Remember, this change you are making is for you and about you. It isn't about getting points, attention or status from others. Changing for others is a recipe for disaster.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE  
WKU COUNSELING & TESTING CENTER**

**CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE AT [WWW.WKU.EDU/HERETOHELP/](http://WWW.WKU.EDU/HERETOHELP/)**

# CLEP

## English 200 exams no longer accepted beginning Fall 2015 term

The College Level Exams for English 200 (Analyzing and Interpreting Literature) will no longer be accepted beginning with the Fall 2015 semester. English 100 will now be College Composition which will include an essay. Students wanting to receive credit for English 200 can still register for the CLEP test through Summer 2015, but must be completed prior to the beginning of the Fall semester.

If you have students interested in taking either of these exams they must purchase the exam from the College Board at collegeboard.org and then register for the testing date at registerblast.com/wku. The cost of the test is \$80 and \$25.50 to register. Testing dates are posted on Registerblast and updated approximately every two weeks.

Test dates fill quickly and seats are limited. For more information, please contact the Counseling and Testing Center at 745-3159 or sharon.ercey@wku.edu.

## Counseling & Testing Center Closed



The WKU Counseling & Testing Center will be closed Jan. 23 for training.

## Though the weather outside is frightful, Spring Break is going to be delightful



Although the snow is falling and the wind is howling, we are looking forward to warmer weather and spring break in just eight short weeks. The average temperatures will be back in the lower 50s with longer days and increasing sun.

So just remember, as of Jan. 26, there are only 40 days until Spring Break



# PLEASE SHARE

The Counseling & Testing Center encourages all faculty and staff to share this newsletter with students throughout the campus. Information provided in this newsletter can benefit everyone! Thank you and have a safe and happy holiday season.

## Did you know . . . ?

*January is . . .*

Be Kind to Food Servers Month  
Birth Defects Month  
Book Blitz Month  
Celebration of Life Month  
Financial Wellness Month  
Get Organized Month  
International Brain Teaser Month  
International Creativity Month  
International Quality of Life Month  
National Braille Literacy Month  
National Clean Up Your Computer Month  
National Glaucoma Awareness Month  
National Hot Tea Month

National Mentoring Month  
National Poverty in America Awareness Month  
National Radon Action Month  
National Soup Month  
National Stalking Awareness Month  
National Volunteer Blood Donor Month  
Teen Driving Awareness Month  
Thyroid Awareness Month

Daily Observances . . .  
National Cut Your Energy Costs Day: 10  
League of Nations Day: 10

National Clean Off Your Desk Day: 12  
Public Radio Broadcasting Day: 13  
Rubber Duckie Day: 13

Dress Up Your Pet Day: 14  
Organize Your Home Day: 14  
Pooh (Winnie The) Day: 18  
Martin Luther King Day: 19  
Penguin Awareness Day: 20  
National Hugging Day: 21  
Celebration of Life Day: 22  
National Handwriting Day: 23  
National Pie Day: 23  
Belly Laugh Day: 24  
National Compliment Day: 24  
National Peanut Butter Day: 24  
Talk Like A Grizzled Prospector Day: 24  
Opposite Day: 25  
Holocaust Memorial Day: 27  
National Puzzle Day: 29  
Fun at Work Day: 30

# SPOTLIGHT

## ELIZABETH MADARIAGA



As you can tell by receiving my undergraduate in psychology, then my graduate in mental health counseling from Western Kentucky University, I am a true Big Red fan! I came "home" in December of 2003 as a staff

counselor and the Sexual Assault Services Coordinator for campus. As a Licensed Professional Counselor, I get to do lots of really cool stuff with my job including individual counseling and outreach. I have a special interest in sexual assault and violence. I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, music, movies and my latest craze is the Wii! Oh, and did I mention that I think BIG RED ROCKS!! I love a good laugh but most importantly, life isn't about waiting for

the storm to pass... It's about learning to dance in the rain.

## KARL LAVES



I am the Counseling and Testing Center's Assistant Director and Licensed Counseling Psychologist. I am a former guidance

counselor and assistant principal who did not want to grow up, so I entered a doctoral program at the University of Missouri-Columbia and came to WKU to work in a college counseling center. I love my family, I love my job, and I love to eat. I like to use humor and encouragement when working with students and I like to challenge people to see their own strengths. I believe that life is too short to be miserable and too precious to be cautious.

## Counseling Services

*College should be challenging, not overwhelming*

That's why we're here to help, offering our services Monday thru Friday from 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. There is a ONE-TIME \$20.00 fee for paperwork and documentation. After the one-time fee, students have access to unlimited visits for their entire college career here at WKU. Our services are confidential and NO information is released without the student's written permission, unless in an emergency situation. So if your mom, grandma, or next door neighbor calls to learn about your counseling appointment, "mums" the word.

We offer individual and group counsel-

ing services to help with coping strategies, conflict resolution, and crisis situations related to:

**College Adjustment**    **Eating Disorder**  
**Decision Making**      **Bipolar Disorder**  
**Problem Behaviors**    **Stress Management**  
**Grief/Loss**              **Depression/Anxiety**  
**Relationship Issues**    **Suicide Prevention**  
**Sexual Assault/Abuse**    **....and more!**

**Don't Forget! We also offer counseling for couples of all kinds: friends, relationships and roommates.**

## Testing Services Available

The Counseling and Testing Center offers most national tests such as CLEP, MAT, LSAT, DSST, ACT, HESI and COMPASS. Residual ACT and Chemistry Placement tests are also available. For more information on testing dates, see [www.registerblast.com/wku](http://www.registerblast.com/wku)

PRAXIS testing dates are at [www.ets.org/praxis](http://www.ets.org/praxis).

Questions may be e-mailed to: [testingcenter@wku.edu](mailto:testingcenter@wku.edu).

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