

**Wellspring Newsletter**

- HOME
- WHAT IS WELLSPRING
- STAFF
- NEWSLETTER
- DIRECTIONS
- Fees
- LINKS

Volume 2, Issue I

**Hank Verkaik**

Hank and his wife, Nancy, were, for many years, foster parents to teenage girls. Not only did they enjoy those relationships but, over the course of time, Hank was affirmed by others that he was very good at working with the girls. A friend once said to him, "Larry Crabb really speaks your language." So Hank read *Inside Out* and was impressed by Crabb's work. At that point, Hank had worked for the State of Michigan for 30 years. When offered an early out, he retired and decided to become a counselor and attended Colorado Christian University where Larry Crabb worked and wrote. When asked what he most enjoyed about his work at Wellspring, Hank replied, "I'm heartened when I see people struggling to work through their issues, when they honestly and sincerely get to know themselves more completely as Christians and as individuals." He also said, "When I worked for the State I was exhausted at the end of the day. Now I work 9 to 9 but I'm still energized. Energy is emitted from working with people." Hank has been at Wellspring for 8 years. He works with teens, adults, and couples.

<p><b>Staff:</b></p> <p>Victoria Fitton, CSW</p> <p>Chassity Glinke, MSW</p> <p>Karen Massoll, MA, LPC, RPT-S</p> <p>John McPhail, MA, LPC, CRC</p> <p>Deb Reusser, MA, LLPC</p> <p>Cheryl Saylor, CSW, DAPA</p> <p>Kathy Tait, MA, LPC</p> <p>Hank Verkaik, MA, LPC</p> <p>Paul Liu, DO, Psychiatrist</p> <p>Dawn Paul, Office Manager</p>	<p><b>Devotional by R. C. Sproul</b></p> <p><b>"Now Jehoshaphat built a fleet of trading ships to go to Ophir for gold, but they never set sail—they were wrecked at Ezion Geber."</b></p> <p><b>1 Kings 22:48</b></p> <p>Solomon's ships had returned in safety, but Jehoshaphat's vessels never reached the land of gold. Providence prospers one, and frustrates the desires of another, in the same business and at the same spot, yet the Great Ruler is as good and wise at one time as another. May we have grace today, in the remembrance of this text, to bless the Lord for ships broken at Ezion Geber, as well as for vessels freighted with temporal blessings; let us not envy the more successful, nor murmur at our losses as though we were singularly and specially tried. Like Jehoshaphat, we may be precious in the Lord's sight, although our schemes end in disappointment.</p>
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**SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER**

**What is Seasonal Affective Disorder?**

Some people suffer from symptoms of depression during the winter months, with symptoms subsiding during the spring and summer months. This may be a sign of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). SAD is a mood disorder associated with depression episodes and related to seasonal variations of light that affects an estimated half a million people every winter.

SAD was first noted before 1845, but was not officially named until the early 1980's. As sunlight has affected the seasonal activities of animals (i.e., reproductive cycles and hibernation), SAD may be an effect of this seasonal light variation in humans. As seasons change, there is a shift in our "biological internal clocks" or circadian rhythm, due partly to these changes in sunlight patterns. This can cause our biological clocks to be out of "step" with our daily schedules. The most difficult months for SAD sufferers are January and February, and younger persons and women are at higher risk.

**Symptoms Include:**

- regularly occurring symptoms of depression (excessive eating and sleeping, weight gain) during the fall or winter months.
- full remission from depression occurs in the spring and summer months.
- symptoms have occurred in the past two years, with no non-seasonal depression episodes.
- seasonal episodes substantially outnumber non-seasonal depression episodes.
- a craving for sugary and/or starchy foods.

**Possible Cause of SAD**

Melatonin, a sleep-related hormone secreted by the pineal gland in the brain, has been linked to SAD. This hormone, which may cause symptoms of depression, is produced at increased levels in the dark. Therefore, when the days are shorter and darker the production of this hormone increases.

### Treatments

Phototherapy or bright light therapy has been shown to suppress the brain's secretion of melatonin. Although, there have been no research findings to definitely link this therapy with an antidepressant effect, many people respond to this treatment. The device most often used today is a bank of white fluorescent lights on a metal reflector and shield with a plastic screen. For mild symptoms, spending time outdoors during the day or arranging homes and workplaces to receive more sunlight may be helpful. One study found that an hour's walk in winter sunlight was as effective as two and a half hours under bright artificial light.

If phototherapy doesn't work, an antidepressant drug may prove effective in reducing or eliminating SAD symptoms, but there may be unwanted side effects to consider. Discuss your symptoms thoroughly with your family doctor and/or mental health professional.

### For More Information:

Contact your local Mental Health Association, community mental health center, or:

#### National Mental Health Association

2001 N. Beauregard Street  
12th Floor  
Alexandria, VA 2231  
Phone 703-684-7722  
Fax 703-684-5968  
Mental Health Resource Center  
TTY Line 800-433-5959

#### Society for Light Treatment/Biological Rhythm

174 Cook Street  
P.O. Box 591687  
San Francisco, CA 94159-1687  
<http://www.sltr.org/>  
800-969-NMHA

#### SunBox Company

19217 Orbit Dr.  
Gaithersburg, MD 20879  
Phone: 800-548-3968  
[www.sunbox.com](http://www.sunbox.com)

**Source:**  
The Harvard Mental Health Letter

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## TIPS FOR COPING WITH THE "WINTER BLUES"

- **Wear a warm jacket**, gloves, hat, wool socks and water proof boots to stay warm and dry.
- **Keep busy. Keep moving.** Do things that are enjoyable regardless of the season. Involve yourself with indoor and outdoor hobbies and interests. Get as much fresh air and sunlight as possible. Remember to keep your head covered when it's really cold. You can lose 30 to 50 percent of body heat otherwise.
- **Go for a walk when the sun does shine.** Studies have shown that a 60-minute walk alleviates SAD symptoms in 50 per cent of sufferers. The good news is that a walk seems to work even on a cloudy day. So summon up the willpower.
- **Wear layers of clothes** rather than heavy pieces to avoid feeling weighed down.
- **Wear brightly colored clothes.** Color will give you a real lift. You might be surprised at how many of your friends and family will admire you for bringing color into your life and wardrobe. Who knows, you could start your own fashion statement and trends. Dare to be different, dare to be yourself!
- **Turn on some upbeat music.** Play worship and praise music. Sing to the Lord.
- **Maintain a normal sleep schedule.** Keep your body on a normal sleep schedule throughout the year. Don't sleep more during the winter even if you feel more fatigued. Increasing activities, such as walking, can help to reduce fatigue by improving your stamina.
- **Eat well-balanced meals.** You may be craving carbohydrates, but don't forget proteins, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Your mind and body are partners in this process. Eat foods rich in complex carbohydrates (i.e. pasta) to keep energy levels high.
- **Keep the lights on in your home.** Staying in dim lighting may add to your feeling of depression and increase your desire to withdraw from family and friends. Keep bushes around your windows trimmed to allow light to come inside. Open the window curtains. Use bright colors on walls and upholstery. Let in as much light as possible at your home and at work. If possible, move your desk or workplace to the lightest part of the room.
- **Bring color into where you live.** Paint a room with bright cheerful colors. Bring flowers into your home, fresh when possible, dried or even artificial ones when it's not. Surround yourself with beauty.
- **Try taking a winter vacation.** If possible, take a break and go somewhere warm and sunny.
- **Try something new and challenging** such as a dance class or rock climbing session—anything that you've been wanting to try or experience.
- **Start a hobby** like sewing, woodworking, ceramics, quilting, letter writing, painting or indoor gardening.

- **Visit a greenhouse** at a local botanical garden. The warmth and brightness will lift your mood.
- **Develop a personal plan of action** to help yourself maximize the opportunities to enjoy the beauty God created in the fall and winter seasons.
- **Stay involved socially** with friends, school and church activities, and outside organizations.
- **Invite friends or family over for a meal**, or dessert, or to play games, or to worship together, etc.
- **Use scripture and positive affirmations** to lift your mood and keep you balanced and centered.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Please Read Carefully!</b></p> <p><i>It is important not to confuse SAD with clinical depression. A major depressive episode is characterized by a pervasive loss of pleasure and at least four of the following symptoms:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appetite and weight disturbances</li> <li>• Energy diminution</li> <li>• Fatigue and weakness</li> <li>• Sleeping poorly or oversleeping</li> <li>• Slowed movements or restless agitation</li> <li>• Anxiety, helplessness, despair</li> <li>• Loss of interest in usual activities</li> <li>• Reduced sex drive</li> <li>• Slowed, confused thinking, inability to concentrate</li> <li>• Unusual indecisiveness</li> <li>• Self-reproach, feelings of worthlessness</li> <li>• Inappropriate guilt</li> <li>• Crying spells, recurrent brooding, suicidal thoughts</li> </ul> <p><i>If these symptoms are present every day for at least two weeks, see your doctor or mental health professional.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>What is Wellspring?</b></p> <p>Wellspring Counseling Services is a Christian, biblically-based therapy office providing services to adults, teens, children, couples, and families. Treatment areas include, but are not limited to: marriage, parenting, relationships, depression, anxiety, loss, grief, life adjustments, identity, development, ADD/ADHD, sexual abuse, physical abuse, and chronic health concerns. At times, anyone may feel the need for more than a friend, family member, or pastor to listen to their concerns. At Wellspring, we believe hope exists in the midst of every problem. Wellspring accepts many insurances, is actively working to become paneled with more providers, has therapists who work on an income-based sliding scale, and maintains a scholarship fund through the generous donations of people in the community. The Wellspring office works hard to assist those suffering financial hardship.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Give Wellspring Counseling Services a call today.</b></p>
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