

BATTLING SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER



IN THIS ISSUE

by *Jamie Leslie*

PAGE TWO

Three Trails Book Review,
“Hold Me Tight: Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love”
by Sue Johnson, Ph.D.
Review by Liz Kornkven, LPC

PAGE THREE

News Updates
including
Coronavirus-19

PAGE FOUR

Continuation of *Battling
Seasonal Affective Disorder
Diffuser Blends*
by Trish Hussion

Here at Three Trails Employee Family Assistance Program (EFAP), we often do preventive workshops for our businesses/organizations. A popular one that we have been providing is titled “Are you SAD”. It examines statistics, symptoms and possible treatments for Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Due to the popularity of the presentation and how frequently SAD is experienced by individuals in our beautiful state, I figured covering it in a newsletter might be beneficial to those who haven’t had the chance to view the presentation.

Seasonal Affective Disorder is defined as depression that tends to occur during the late fall and winter seasons and is usually associated with shorter hours of daylight. For those of use here in Wyoming, we most likely experience it from October – March.

According to the book *Seasonal Affective Disorder: What It is and How to Overcome It* by Norman E Rosenthal, MD, there are different spectrums of SAD. Some folks are mildly affected but it doesn’t impact their daily functioning. They may notice some mild fatigue and an urgency to eat more comfort food but usually it doesn’t cause any issues with their daily life. Moderate SAD is the next level that is experienced by individuals. Folks who experience this level of SAD may find the symptoms bothersome, but they manage to function. Moderate SAD often gets coined the term “Winter Blues”. The highest level on the SAD spectrum is extreme SAD. Those on this spectrum are heavily impacted by the symptoms of SAD. They may have great difficulties managing their daily functions.

(continued on page 4)



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Hold Me Tight: Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love

by Sue Johnson

Book review by Liz Kornkven, LPC

Sue Johnson, Ph.D. is a clinical psychologist, developer of Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (EFCT), author of *Hold Me Tight* and a leader in the science of relationships. I first learned about EFCT in my Master's program and later I took Sue's week long externship in EFCT.

Johnson states that love is about connection. When we feel distressed, we ask the question, "Will you be there for me?" Johnson uses information from Attachment Theory to help couples with reconnection. Studies from childhood attachment are used to develop theories about adult attachment. Usually, couples are either pursuing or withdrawing. When both partners are withdrawing there is no connection. Sometimes, we see one partner pursuing and the other withdrawing so there is hope to re-establish a secure bond. When we feel securely bonded with our partner, the answer to the question of "will you be there for me" is yes.

In *Hold Me Tight*, Johnson describes seven transforming conversations. The first conversation is "Recognizing the Demon Dialogues". The first Demon Dialogue is called Find the Bad Guy. It's purpose is self-protection but the tools are mutual attack, accusation, or blame. The second Demon Dialogue is the Protest Polka. The characteristic of this dance is that one partner reaches out, perhaps negatively, and the other steps back. This pattern repeats. In this dance, any kind of response from a partner is better than no response. In a healthy relationship, we want our responses to connect and reassure us. The third Demon Dialogue is Freeze and Flee. If a relationship is like a dance, both partners are sitting out of the dance. Both partners are withdrawing.

The second conversation is called "Finding the Raw Spots". The raw spot is an emotional place where it is tender to the touch, it's easily rubbed, and deeply painful. Johnson states, it's formed by moments in a person's past or current relationships where attachment needs have been neglected, ignored, or dismissed.

Conversation number three is "Revisiting a Rocky Moment". Dr Johnson has couples revisit past arguments and teaches them to de-escalate. Johnson describes seven ways to de-escalate an argument (pp. 124-127).

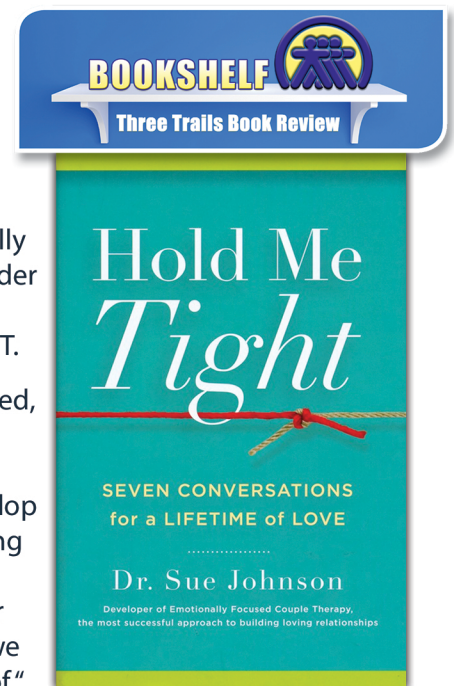
"Hold Me Tight-Engaging and Connecting" is the fourth conversation. This conversation builds on the previous conversations which have helped to bring a sense of safety to the relationship. Partners learn to let their attachment needs be seen at this point. Our partners are safe havens because of the secure bond we have built with them.

Conversation five is "Forgiving Injuries". Safety must be present in the relationship before forgiveness can be given and received. Johnson states there are six steps to forgiveness (pp.173-178). Attachment Theory is elemental to forgiveness. In most cases, there has been an Attachment Injury and it needs healing.

The sixth conversation is "Bonding Through Sex and Touch". Johnson states that sex can help keep us together and help build a lasting relationship. In this conversation, Dr. Johnson describes three kinds of sex: Sealed-Off, Solace, and Synchrony. When a secure connection is created between partners, their sex life often improves.

The final conversation is "Keeping Your Love Alive". Love is a continual process of seeking and losing emotional connection, and then reaching out to find it again. Sue notes that "the bond of love is a living thing. If we don't attend to it, it naturally begins to wither."

Each conversation builds upon the next. There are Play and Practice segments for each conversation. This is a great book to help tune up your relationship. It can also be used alongside with couple's counseling. All the books we review are available for checkout in our lending library.





CERTIFIED EMDR THERAPIST

Three Trails congratulates Liz Kornkven for completing her requirements to be a Certified EMDR therapist! To be Certified in EMDR the counselor needs to be fully licensed in their mental health professional field for independent practice and has had a minimum of two years' experience in that field. They have completed an EMDRIA approved training program in EMDR therapy, have conducted a minimum of fifty clinical sessions in which EMDR was utilized, and have received twenty hours of consultation in EMDR by an Approved Consultant. To show continuing education for this credential, they must complete twelve hours of continuing education in EMDR every two years.

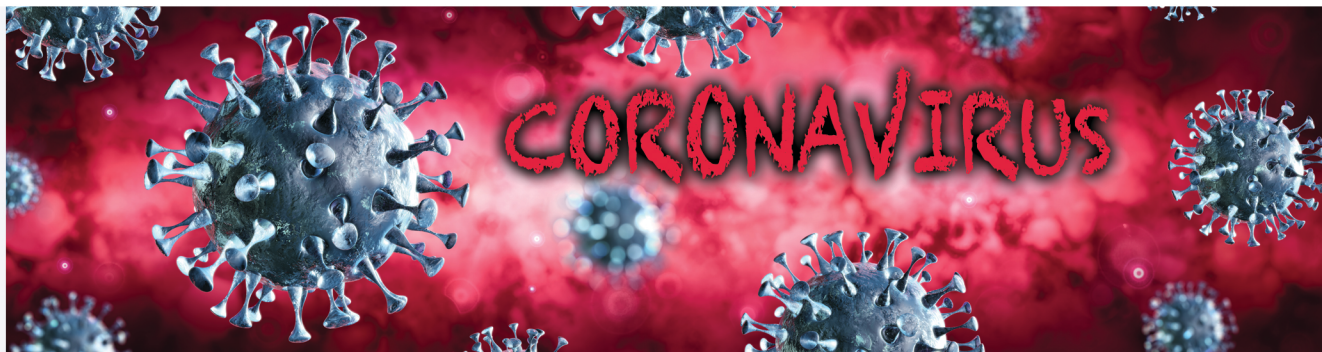
PART-TIME POSITION

We are working on getting another part-time therapist (LPC, LMFT, LCSW) hired to provide more evening availability. The part-time position is looking for at least 6 hours a week. Pay is determined by direct client contact. Interested applicants can mail their resume, a letter of interest and 2 letters of recommendation to Three Trails EFAP, 812 South David Street, Casper, WY 82601.

PLAY-ROOM and MINORS IN WAITING ROOM

Because we are growing and needing to add another part-time counselor onto our team, we will be changing the playroom into a counseling office. We appreciate your patience and understanding during this time of transition. Counselors may store play therapy items in their offices and utilize their office spaces when using play therapy.

Please be aware that we do not provide child-care services. Minors cannot stay alone in the playroom or waiting room during their parents' therapy session. If you bring any minor child (17 or under) to your own session, they will need to attend your session with you. Please make child-care accommodations so that you may have your personal time with your counselor.



The CDC recommends that anyone experiencing symptoms (that are not expressly urgent) should use a form of telemedicine as their first point of care. Local doctors and emergency rooms do not test for Covid19, so it's best to "talk" through symptoms with a health care professional before showing up in-person. The more contact a person has with "sick environments", the more likely they will unwittingly participate in the spread of a disease.

How can I help prevent illness?

Prevention measures are similar to those utilized against the common cold and flu.

Get a flu shot.

We strongly recommend that everyone obtain seasonal flu vaccination.

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- If you can, avoid close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms.
- Clean and disinfect shared surfaces and objects that are touched frequently (e.g. door knobs, desks, phones).
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue. Then throw the tissue in the trash and disinfect your hands.
- Don't share food and drinks.
- Stay home when you are sick.

Details & Updates

US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/>



(continued from page 1 - Battling Seasonal Affective Disorder)

Psychology Today estimates that about 10 million Americans suffer from SAD. They also note that Women are more likely to suffer from SAD than men. Individuals who experience light deprivation are more likely to experience SAD. This can occur in their natural environment if they live in an area that has little to no exposure to sun. But it can also be experienced by individuals whose work environment have decreased exposure to sun and are mainly exposed to florescent lights. So, for those of you who work in cubicles you might be more susceptible to the symptoms. Folks who are experiencing high stress are also more likely to develop SAD.

In the Book, Seasonal Affective Disorder: What It is and How to Overcome It by Norman E Rosenthal, MC, the author examines the common symptoms of SAD. The most common symptom is a decrease in energy. Most people will notice that it doesn't seem to matter the quality or quantity of their sleep. Even if they had a good night's rest, they will still be waking up extremely groggy and have notable lethargy throughout the day. Changes in sleep patterns is also noted (noted urgency to take naps and sleep in more). SAD can also impact the sex drive and decrease libido. Cognitive functioning is also impaired. People who experience SAD will notice they have problems thinking clearly and quickly. Mood changes, such as increased sadness or increased irritability are also reported. Another symptom may include physical symptoms (backaches, muscle aches and headache and increased premenstrual difficulties).

There are effective treatments to help battle SAD. One is to consider some light therapy. Light therapy usually consists of a specific light box that is made for SAD. It needs to emit as little UV light as possible. It is usually recommended to use these light boxes first thing in the morning to get the best success with them. Another form of light therapy may involve a light hat or light visor that is specifically designed for battling SAD. All of these can be purchased on Amazon and various other websites. Increasing Vitamin D can also help alleviate symptoms. Since people are not getting enough natural sunlight, they are usually deficient in Vitamin D. Exercising can also combat the symptoms. In Rosenthal's book he discussed using a Paleolithic Diet. He notes that people who experience SAD often consume carbs and get a general sugar rush followed by an energy crash. A paleolithic diet can improve on general energy. Some antidepressants are helpful (Wellbutrin, Celexa and Prozac). Also increasing Vitamin B12 can help diminish the severity of SAD.

Hopefully this article gets you thinking about your own mental health and provides you with some healthy tips to consider. If you experience SAD and would like to talk with a counselor for more tips to battling this common ailment for our climate, give our office a call.



Diffuser Blends for Wintertime Blues

by Trish Hussion

Blends for Energy:

- 1 drop Rosemary, 1 drop Peppermint, 1 drop Lemon
- 3 drops Wild Orange, 3 drops Peppermint

Peace or Happiness Blends:

- 2 drops Lavender, 2 drops Bergamot
- 3 drops doTERRA Peace®,
2 drops Wild Orange,
1 drop Grapefruit
- 2 drops doTERRA Peace,
3 drops Siberian Fir,
2 drops Frankincense

