



**SAFE HARBOR  
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**Dr. Beth  
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**26-Nov-18**

## **WSPY, Your Life Matters, SAD**

Mike Williams      It is time now for **Your Life Matters** with **Clinical Social Worker, Dr. Beth Placketka** from **Safe Harbor Counseling** and **Dr. Beth Speaks** as we welcome in Dr. Beth Placketka, how we doing this morning?

Dr. Beth Placketka      Just fine Mike, how are you?

Mike Williams      We are all right as we are working our way towards Christmas time and we've brought this, I think we've talked about this briefly before, and it's something that affects a lot of people this time of year and it's literally called **SAD** it's a Seasonal Affective Disorder

Dr. Beth Placketka      Correct!

Mike Williams      And we're going to be focusing on that now because it's a joyous time of year, but maybe not so much for everybody and there's some factors that we want to let folks know about. So today is a topic on seasonal affective disorder and how it affects us.

Dr. Beth Placketka Exactly! And I'm really glad to be able to make people are aware, allow them to find out some things about **SAD**, Seasonal Affective Disorder, so that they can get the help that they need. Before we go too far though I think is really important to remember that Christmas was actually set at this time of year because Christ is the light of the world and so it's right after the Winter Solstice when things the days start getting slightly longer. We are now with the time change in the darkest time of the year in it's getting darker every day. Some people, well, all people, have a gland in the brain that registers the amount of light that comes in and affects our moods. And when that gland, I believe it's called a pineal gland, but I could be wrong, when that gland doesn't register light correctly it allows people, causes them to feel down, irritable, overwhelmed, they can't have any fun even when it's the holidays. It has nothing to do with the fact that Christmas itself is coming or Hanukah or Kwanza or whatever. It's talking about the fact that their bodies just not working. Now people will say just get over it, go have fun, pretend, but when your body is not working it's just not working.

Mike Williams So it is not so much mental but there is actually a physical part here where they're just not responding properly to the time of year and it's making them feel down, overwhelmed maybe.

Dr. Beth Placketka Exactly and when those symptoms come up people will associate it with things that are going on in the holiday season, but really what it amounts to is, it's dark and people, their brain is not getting what it needs. And it's kind of like you have diabetes, you don't have enough insulin, it doesn't work. The same thing right here. Now there are things we can do because there's a cyclical nature to it. So when we begin to see the pattern, I would say the first thing we want to do is consult with a doctor. It's a biologically thing. Some people need medication for the short period of time that the days are on longer, or excuse me, shorter and the nights are longer. It gets really bad if there's long weeks when it's cloudy, overcast, there's no sun, you feel drained out. Now there's other things you could do as well. There is light therapy. There are certain kinds of lamps that have full spectrum light that kind of mimic the sunlight. And if you sit with it for half an hour day where it's not shining in your eyes, but near your eyes, many people report improvement. You have to make sure it is the right kind of light, but it can be very effective.

Now this is one that many people would love to say I would do and that is to go on vacation in a sunny, warm sort of place and get a good dose of sun, but it's really important that we think, OK is this my biology, or is this the events, and if it's biology, you really need to get the help.

Does that make sense?

Mike Williams      And the one thing too folks can always have in the back of their mind is it's going to get better.

Dr. Beth Placketka      Absolutely!

Mike Williams      Get to the spring and the summer. Then the light obviously increases. Days are longer and hopefully moods change. You mentioned the cloudy days and doesn't help too that all leaves are off the trees everything seems gray and dull and it just kind of all adds up together.

Dr. Beth Placketka      It does. It builds up on you and some days you just can't take it. And I think it's also really important an act of love, if you see someone in your family whose suffering that way and you notice the pattern, pointed out to them because when you're feeling that way it's very hard to tell yourself.

Mike Williams      Any final points on Seasonal Affective Disorder?

Dr. Beth Placketka      It's real. It's not in somebody's imagination and they need the support because they're life matters as well as ours.

Mike Williams      It does in deed. Thanks as always Dr. Plachetka and will see you again next week. That's all the time we have left for today always remember you can submit your questions at [safeharboril.com](http://safeharboril.com) and tune in next week maybe your question will be answered on our next show. It is **Your Life Matters** with **Clinical Social Worker Dr. Beth Plachetka** from **Safe Harbor Counseling** and **Dr. Beth Speaks** We'll see you next week.

