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*Darwin Consultant
Psychologists*

*5/90 Frances Bay
Drive, Tipperary
Waters NT 0820*

Phone: (08) 8941 5369

**24 Hours Number:
1800 289 129**

Fax: (08) 8941 3257

**Email:
dcp@dcpnt.com.au**

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Welcome to your DCP Newsletter

Welcome to the March edition of Darwin Consultant Psychologists Newsletter. This month we will focus on the 'wet season blues' and tips to beat the blues at work.

Wet season can get you down



It's not unusual for people to dread the passing of the dry and the onset of the build-up leading then to the wet season. Pleasurable nights spent outdoors are replaced by sticky humid evenings of torrential rain which force people to spend more time indoors.

For some people however, disliking wet season can be much more than simply missing the opportunities presented in the dry season. The wet season can become a difficult and isolating time, leading to feeling blue, strained relationships, diminished performance on the job and absenteeism.

Here's an excerpt from an article on MSN Health called, "Does Weather Really Affect Our Mood?:"

"Rain is gloom and sunshine happiness is metaphorical rather than scientific, though it rings true because we humans are inherently sympathetic to our environment. But we are not its victims."

Did You Know?

The Employment Assistance Program also extends to your family. Your spouse and all dependent children are also entitled to five sessions each under your entitlement.

“Why? Because we are free to make choices that either better our disposition or worsen it.”

It’s interesting because at times we forget how much control we have over our own emotions. And since, as they said, humans are so sympathetic to their environment, it’s easy to fall prey to a bad mood in bad weather.

The good news is that, we can take charge of our emotions to sway them to a more positive place.

“We encourage people to take charge of their feelings,” says Dr. Kalayjian... “Do things that make you feel good, like listening to uplifting music or reading a good novel.” Other methods of mood improvement and stress management will also be helpful, including getting regular sleep and exercise, moderating alcohol intake and meditating.

Tips to Beat the ‘Wet Season Blues’ at Work

Adapted from the Canadian Mental Health Association (2012)

The heat and humidity can really affect employees, dampening overall moods and motivation at work. Bev Gutray, CEO of CMHA’s BC Division explains; "Management and labour can help safeguard against these drops by building a psychologically healthy work environment in which workers can identify and manage the effect of the winter blues."

7 tips to combating the ‘wet season blues’ at work:

1. **Bring in the light, and take it outside:** Provide exposure to natural daylight in the workplace. When this is not possible, ensure adequate provision of bright, fluorescent lighting (cool and white) with ultraviolet screens as it produces light similar in colour composition to outdoor daylight. Encourage people to have a bright well-lit workplace and to take time-out to create their own space; this will improve both mood and energy levels.
2. **Get active:** Exercise is known to boost feel-good chemicals in the brain, and help reduce negative effects of stress that can trigger the blues. Encourage workers to incorporate physical activity into their daily routine, whether by organizing office team activities, offering on-site yoga classes, or by subsidizing gym memberships. Even just taking a 15 minute break helps with that essential mind clarity that we all need.
3. **Look for healthier office snacks:** Whether catered meetings or snacks around the workplace, helping employees to choose the right foods more often and more easily can provide that slow-burning energy that keeps mood and energy levels steady and irritability away. Certain kinds of nuts, fish, fruits and vegetables also contain fatty acids that are good for both mind and body.

4. **Remember the water cooler:** Not only is water great for replenishing brain cells, but is often the place where officemates can talk and connect about work, about stresses, and about each others' lives. Social support is important in building resilience to any kind of mental health trouble, so encourage connectedness and team-building.
5. **Advocate for education:** Provide opportunities for presentations and workshops during work hours to share with employees what the 'wet season blues' are, and how they can be managed. Remind people to contact Darwin Consultant Psychologists for further specialized support if low mood starts to interfere with work or daily life.
6. **Promote physical and mental safety:** When we talk about workplace safety, we often forget to talk about protecting our mental health. Workplace factors such as conflict, bullying, inadequate control over high demands and lack of support all contribute to a psychologically unsafe environment. Addressing these factors will help minimize the effects of the wet season blues.
7. **Allow flexible scheduling:** Consider implementing 'wet season flexible working' by allowing staff to work additional hours in the morning or late afternoon so they can leave early on a Friday.

It's important to remember that people can be incredibly resilient when they're in a supportive workplace environment—one that encourages people to move a little more, take a brain break once in a while, to eat something good, and to have a few moments to chat. All these small things can help change the perspective from a dreary wet season to just a few weeks away from the Dry!

When it's more than the blues?

For some people the 'wet season blues' are more serious and may be a sign of seasonal affective disorder (SAD), a type of depression with a seasonal pattern. According to CMHA, healthy lifestyles that include exercise, relaxation, a healthful diet and a supportive workplace can help to reduce the effects of the wet season blues, and ultimately help prevent or reduce the impact of SAD. If you believe yourself or someone close to you is suffering from SAD or a psychological condition, please refer them to one of our highly experienced consultant Psychologists, at Darwin Consultant Psychologists.



