

# Maryland Behavioral Health Integration in Pediatric Primary Care (MD BHIPP)

## Diagnosing and Managing Seasonal Depression in Primary Care

*BHIPP Resilience Break*

*January 20th, 2022, 12:30 PM*

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1-855-MD-BHIPP (632-4477)

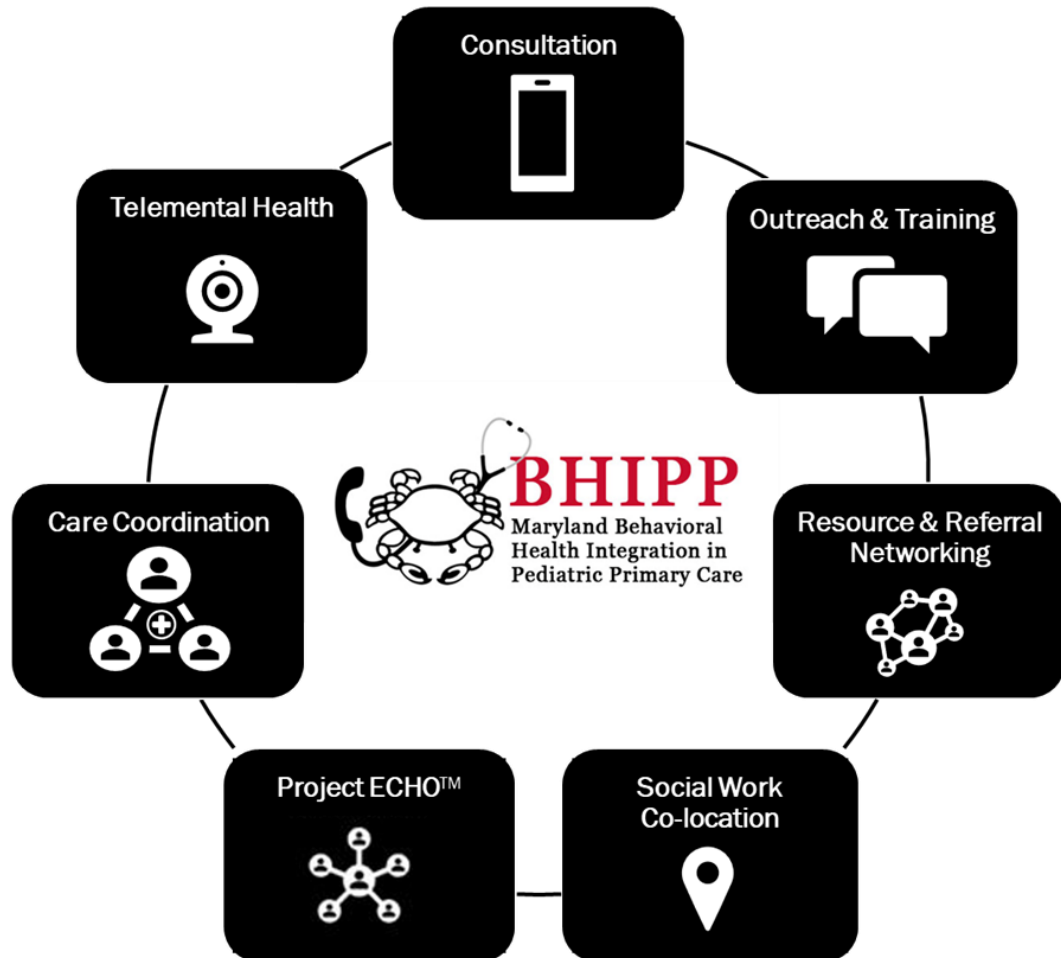
[www.mdbhipp.org](http://www.mdbhipp.org)

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# Conflicts and Off-Label Prescribing

- No Conflicts of Interest
- Some Off-Label Prescribing May be Discussed

# Who We Are – Maryland BHIPP



**Offering support to pediatric primary care providers through free:**

- Telephone consultation (855-MD-BHIPP)
- Resource & referral support
- Training & education
- Regionally specific social work co-location (Salisbury University and Morgan State University)
- Project ECHO®
- Direct Telepsychiatry & Telecounseling Services
- Care coordination

# Partners & Funding

- BHIPP is supported by funding from the **Maryland Department of Health, Behavioral Health Administration** and operates as a collaboration between the **University of Maryland School of Medicine**, the **Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine**, **Salisbury University** and **Morgan State University**.
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# Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Understand how to screen and diagnose depression in pediatric primary care
- Differentiate between Seasonal Affective Disorder vs. MDD vs. situational depression
- Understand basic principles of non-pharmacologic therapy for depression, including the seasonal subtype, in children and adolescents
- Understand how to implement and monitor medications to treat depression in children and adolescents

# Outline

- **What is SAD/Seasonal Depression?**
- Clinical Assessment/Diagnosis
- Treatment Overview
  - Nonpharmacological
  - Pharmacological

## Case Example: December 2021

- 15 year old female BIB parent, “not herself” for the past month
- Refusing family dinner and sports practice
- Isolating to room
- Failed 2 tests, low motivation
- Irritable
- Difficulty sleeping
- “Something similar” happened last year but went away

# Major Depressive Disorder

- 5+ symptoms, 2+ weeks:
  - Depressed/irritable mood\*
  - Markedly diminished interest or pleasure\*
  - Appetite or weight change
  - Insomnia or hypersomnia
  - Psychomotor retardation or agitation (observable by others)
  - Fatigue or energy drop
  - Worthlessness or excessive/inappropriate guilt
  - Impaired concentration, indecision
  - Recurrent thoughts of death, suicidal ideation, suicide attempt
- Distress or functional impairment
- Not due to substance use or another medical condition



# Seasonal Affective Disorder

Depressive OR bipolar spectrum disorder **with seasonal pattern**



# Major Depressive Disorder, Recurrent, with Seasonal Pattern

- Pattern of depressive episodes occurring during a particular time of year
  - Doesn't count if mood change is due to a different seasonally-related stressor (eg. School schedule)
- Full remissions also occur at a characteristic time of year
- For past 2 years, 2+ seasonal episodes, no non-seasonal episodes
- Lifetime: seasonal mood episodes >>> non-seasonal ones

# Major Depressive Disorder, Recurrent, with Seasonal Pattern

- Typically, episodes start in fall/winter, remit in the spring
  - Decreased light, effects on circadian rhythm
- Spring/summer recurrence pattern possible too (less common)
- Sleep and appetite: strongest seasonal pattern (Lukmanji et al 2020)

# Epidemiology of Seasonal Depression

- Affects between 1.7% and 5.5% of children (Glod et. Al 1997)
- Childhood prevalence increases with age (Swedo et. Al 1997)
- More symptoms seen in northern latitudes (Carskadon and Acedo 1993)
- More common in females than males (Childmind)
- MDD generally more common after puberty

# Demoralization, situational depression

Understandable reaction to troubling circumstances

*Diminished interest or pleasure is not present*

Useful concept for most preteens with low mood/irritability

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Not a DSM-5 diagnosis, but is an ICD-10 diagnosis

Explanation for placebo response of 50% in depression studies?

Think COVID-19 pandemic (and low motivation)

# Winter Blues

- Less severe form of seasonal mood change
- Look for:
  - Decreased energy, increased appetite, low enthusiasm, low productivity
  - NO severely depressed mood, NO loss of interest/pleasure
- Not a DSM diagnosis

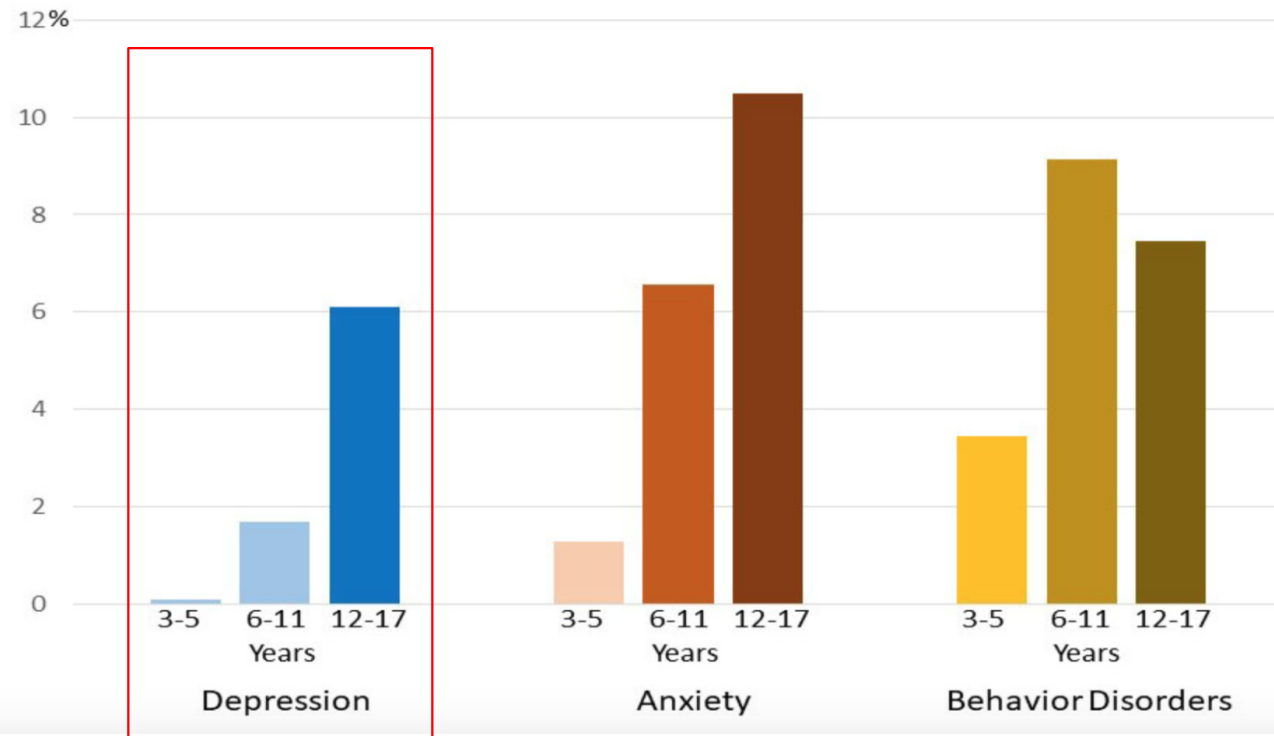
(Targum and Rosenthal 2008)

# Outline

- What is SAD/Seasonal Depression?
- **Clinical Assessment/Diagnosis**
- Treatment Overview
  - Nonpharmacological
  - Pharmacological

# Screening for Depression – When to start?

Depression, Anxiety, Behavior Disorders, by Age



- Begin at age 12
- USPTF and GLAD-PC recommend **annual** universal depression screening among adolescents, 12-18
- High prevalence of depression by age 20 – 20%

Siu, AL., Screening for Depression in Children and Adolescents: US Preventative Services Task Force Recommendation Statement. (2016). *Pediatrics*. 137(3): e20154467.

Zuckerbrot RA, Chung A, Jensen PS, et al. (2018). Guidelines for Adolescent Depression in Primary Care (GLAD-PC): Part I. Practice Preparation, Identification, Assessment, and Initial Management. *Pediatrics*. 141(3):e20174081



# Screening for Depression – What to use?

- PHQ-9: Patient Health Questionnaire 9 Depression Screening Tool:  
<http://www.pedpsychiatry.org/pdf/depression/PHQ-9%20Modified%20for%20Teens.pdf>
- CES-DC: The Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale for Children: [https://www.brightfutures.org/mentalhealth/pdf/professionals/bridges/ces\\_dc.pdf](https://www.brightfutures.org/mentalhealth/pdf/professionals/bridges/ces_dc.pdf)

# DEPRESSION Screening Tools: PHQ-9: Modified for Teens

- For ages 11-17
- Past two weeks
- 13 Items, self-report (from DSM)
- Scored--0, 1, 2, 3-- based on days per week symptoms occur
- Evidence that tool has good sensitivity and specificity
- Past year (persistent depressive disorder)
- Function: work (school), home, relationships
- Suicidal thoughts past month; Suicide attempt ever

# DEPRESSION Screening Tools: Scoring the PHQ-9

## PHQ-9 Adolescent Report

For Youth at least 11 years old to complete

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

How often have you been bothered by each of the following symptoms during **the past 2 weeks**. For each symptom, put an "X" in the box beneath the answer that best describes how you have been feeling.

|    |   | (0)<br>Not at<br>All | (1)<br>Several<br>Days | (2)<br>More<br>than<br>Half the<br>Days | (3)<br>Nearly<br>Every<br>Day |
|----|---|----------------------|------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| 1  | Feeling down, depressed, irritable or hopeless?   | 0                    | 1                      | 2                                       | 3                             |
| 2  | Little interest or pleasure in doing things?  | 0                    | 1                      | 2                                       | 3                             |
| 3  | Trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or sleeping too much?   | 0                    | 1                      | 2                                       | 3                             |
| 4  | Poor appetite, weight loss, or over-eating?   | 0                    | 1                      | 2                                       | 3                             |
| 5  | Feeling tired, or having little energy?   | 0                    | 1                      | 2                                       | 3                             |
| 6  | Feeling bad about yourself - or feeling that you are a failure, or that you have let yourself or your family down?  | 0                    | 1                      | 2                                       | 3                             |
| 7  | Trouble concentrating on things like school work, reading, or watching TV?  | 0                    | 1                      | 2                                       | 3                             |
| 8  | Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed?<br>...Or the opposite-- being so fidgety or restless that you were moving around a lot more than usual?  | 0                    | 1                      | 2                                       | 3                             |
| 9  | Thoughts that you would be better off dead, or of hurting yourself in some way?   | 0                    | 1                      | 2                                       | 3                             |
| 10 | In the <b>past year</b> , have you felt depressed or sad most days, even if you felt okay sometimes?<br>[ ] Yes [ ] No  |                      |                        |   |                               |
| 11 | If you are experiencing any of the problems on this form, <b>how difficult</b> have these problems made it for you to do work, take care of things at home, or get along with other people?<br>[ ] Not difficult at all [ ] Somewhat difficult [ ] Very Difficult [ ] Extremely Difficult |                      |                        |   |                               |
| 12 | Has there been a time in the <b>past month</b> when you have had serious thoughts about ending your life?<br>[ ] Yes [ ] No   |                      |                        |   |                               |
| 13 | Have you <b>EVER</b> , in your <b>WHOLE LIFE</b> , tried to kill yourself or made a suicide attempt?<br>[ ] Yes [ ] No  |                      |                        |   |                               |

## Total Score

• 0 – 4

• 5 – 9

• -----

• 10 – 14

• 15 – 19

• 20 – 27

## Depression Severity

No or minimal

Mild

Moderate

Moderately severe

Severe

# DEPRESSION Screening Tools: CES-DC

- For ages 8-17
- 20-item self-report form
- Focus on past week
- Scored:
  - 0 = Not at all
  - 1 = A little
  - 2 = some
  - 3 = a lot
- Scores range from 0-60
- $\geq 15$  significant levels of depressive symptoms

| DURING THE PAST WEEK   | Not At All | A Little | Some | A Lot |
|--|------------|----------|------|-------|
| 1. I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me.                                    | ___        | ___      | ___  | ___   |
| 2. I did not feel like eating, I wasn't very hungry.   | ___        | ___      | ___  | ___   |
| 3. I wasn't able to feel happy, even when my family or friends tried to help me feel better. | ___        | ___      | ___  | ___   |
| 4. I felt like I was just as good as other kids.   | ___        | ___      | ___  | ___   |
| 5. I felt like I couldn't pay attention to what I was doing.                                 | ___        | ___      | ___  | ___   |

| DURING THE PAST WEEK                                      | Not At All | A Little | Some | A Lot |
|---|------------|----------|------|-------|
| 6. I felt down and unhappy.                               | ___        | ___      | ___  | ___   |
| 7. I felt like I was too tired to do things.              | ___        | ___      | ___  | ___   |
| 8. I felt like something good was going to happen.        | ___        | ___      | ___  | ___   |
| 9. I felt like things I did before didn't work out right. | ___        | ___      | ___  | ___   |
| 10. I felt scared.  | ___        | ___      | ___  | ___   |

| DURING THE PAST WEEK  | Not At All | A Little | Some | A Lot |
|---|------------|----------|------|-------|
| 11. I didn't sleep as well as I usually sleep.  | ___        | ___      | ___  | ___   |
| 12. I was happy.  | ___        | ___      | ___  | ___   |
| 13. I was more quiet than usual.  | ___        | ___      | ___  | ___   |
| 14. I felt lonely, like I didn't have any friends.                                    | ___        | ___      | ___  | ___   |
| 15. I felt like kids I know were not friendly or that they didn't want to be with me. | ___        | ___      | ___  | ___   |

| DURING THE PAST WEEK                         | Not At All | A Little | Some | A Lot |
|--|------------|----------|------|-------|
| 16. I had a good time.                       | ___        | ___      | ___  | ___   |
| 17. I felt like crying.                      | ___        | ___      | ___  | ___   |
| 18. I felt sad.                              | ___        | ___      | ___  | ___   |
| 19. I felt people didn't like me.            | ___        | ___      | ___  | ___   |
| 20. It was hard to get started doing things. | ___        | ___      | ___  | ___   |

# DEPRESSION Screening Tools: Preschool Feelings Checklist

- For ages 3-6
- 16-item parent report form
- Score by summing all items answered with yes
- $\geq 3$  indicates need for more mental health evaluation

## MY CHILD:

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| Is almost always interested in playing with other kids.  | Y | N |
| Frequently appears sad or says he/she feels sad.   | Y | N |
| Has a lot of trouble following simple directions or rules.   | Y | N |
| Seems not to be as excited about play or activities as much as other kids.   | Y | N |
| Whines or cries a lot.   | Y | N |
| Can't pay attention to games or tasks for very long.   | Y | N |
| Keeps to him/herself.  | Y | N |
| Pretend plays about scary or sad things.   | Y | N |
| Blames him/herself for things.   | Y | N |
| Seems to lack confidence.  | Y | N |
| Doesn't react to things that other children his/her age find exciting or upsetting.                                      | Y | N |
| Often seems to be very tired and has low energy.   | Y | N |
| Seems to feel overly guilty.   | Y | N |
| Failed to gain weight or has lost weight (without being on a diet).  | Y | N |
| Used to behave his/her age but now seems to act younger (for example, used to be potty trained but now soiling clothes). | Y | N |
| Seems more irritable or grouchy than other children his/her age.   | Y | N |

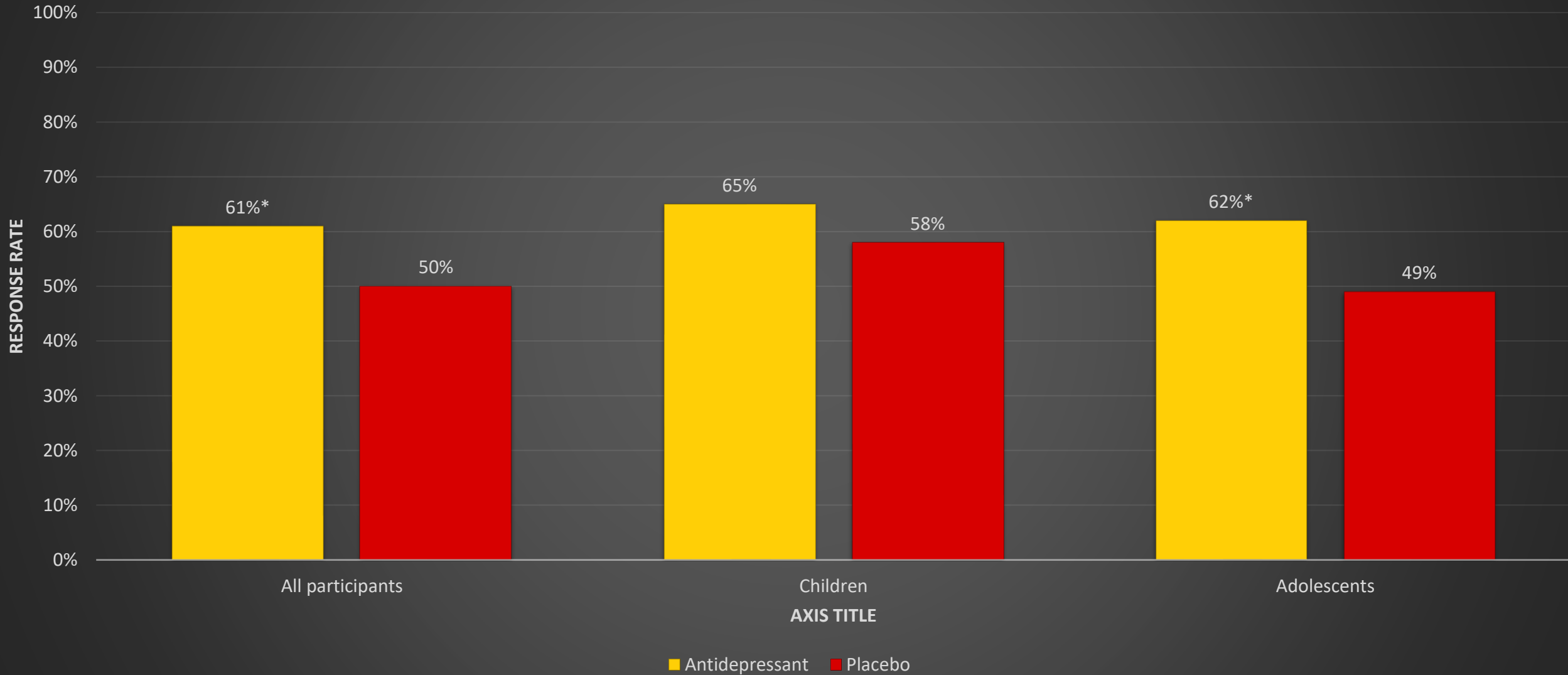
# Seasonal Depression: What to ask?

- In the Winter, do you...
  - Feel worse (more sad) ?
  - Eat more?
  - Gain weight?
  - Sleep more?
  - Have less energy?
  - Socialize less with others?
  - Feel better on sunnier days?

# Outline

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- Clinical Assessment/Diagnosis
- **Treatment Overview**
  - Nonpharmacological
  - Pharmacological

# JAMA Meta-Analysis of Pediatric Antidepressant Response



Bridge, J. A., Iyengar, S., Salary, C. B., Barbe, R. P., Birmaher, B., Pincus, H. A., ... & Brent, D. A. (2007). Clinical response and risk for reported suicidal ideation and suicide attempts in pediatric antidepressant treatment: a meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *Jama*, 297(15), 1683-1696.



The point is:

Just do something!

# Non-Pharmacological Management

- Active Monitoring
- Sleep improvement
- Exercise
- Bright Light Therapy, Dawn Simulation?
- Psychotherapy

# Seasonal Depression: Prevention tips

- Routines: keep consistent!
- Make time for healthy habits
- Keep expectations realistic
- Team effort!

# Guidelines for Adolescent Depression in Primary Care (GLAD-PC)

- 1) Organize clinical settings to include integrated or collaborative care models
- 2) For mild depression, PCP should consider active support & monitoring first ( 6 – 8 weeks)
- 3) For moderate - severe depression or presence of comorbidities, consultation w/ mental health specialist recommended
  - Moderate: consider treatment in or outside of primary care
  - Severe: consider referral to specialist for treatment
- 4) When treatment needed, recommend EBTs

# Psychosocial Treatments for Depression – Active Monitoring

Active Monitoring (mild to moderate depression):

- Frequent visits w/ PCP
- Phone follow-up in between visits
- Provide educational materials to youth and families
- Prescribe:
  - Behavioral Activation - Exercise and fun activities
  - Peer support group

Probably sufficient for many w/ mild depression

# Sleep

- Sleep disturbances can have a seasonal pattern
- There is a ***simple brief psychotherapy (CBT) for insomnia*** in adults; it has been adapted for use in adolescents
- ***Sleep hygiene counseling*** works but requires persistence!
  - *Scheduled regular awakening*
  - Daytime sleep restriction (no naps) and caffeine restriction
  - Bedtime stimulus control (lights, electronics, music, etc.)
- Melatonin, a sedative at higher doses, is a popular sleep aid, but.....

# Sleep: Melatonin

- Pineal gland hormone regulates 24-hour sleep-wake cycle and other circadian rhythms
- Peak levels during night
- Daytime dose in young adults of 0.1-0.3 mg increased plasma melatonin to normal night range
- Melatonin has **sedative** effect at higher doses
- Adult data: sleep onset about 30 minutes earlier; this effect wears off in about 4 weeks
- OTC melatonin preparations range from 1 to 10 mg
- In a study of 31 melatonin preparations, melatonin varied from -83% to + 478% of labeled content
- *USP verified* preps are accurate, but cost more and only available in 3 and 5 mgs dosages

# Sleep: Melatonin and Children

- Used by lots of parents with or without recommendation of PCP
- Best efficacy data for autism, some for ADHD
- “Data supporting use of melatonin in developmentally normal children are limited and its long-term safety is unknown.” (*Medical Letter*, June 29, 2020)
- Long-term melatonin supplementation can suppress the hypothalamic-gonadal axis and may be associated with delayed onset of puberty, possibly by preventing the decline in nocturnal levels of melatonin that occur during the onset of puberty
- Melatonin may be the most benign sedative for sleep onset, with above caveats, although no meds preferred, if possible



# Exercise

- Exercise is associated with improvement in depression
- It is not easy to get someone who is depressed to exercise
- Type of exercise probably doesn't matter
- Encourage participation in whatever the patient prefers



# Light therapy, Dawn Simulation

- **Adults:**

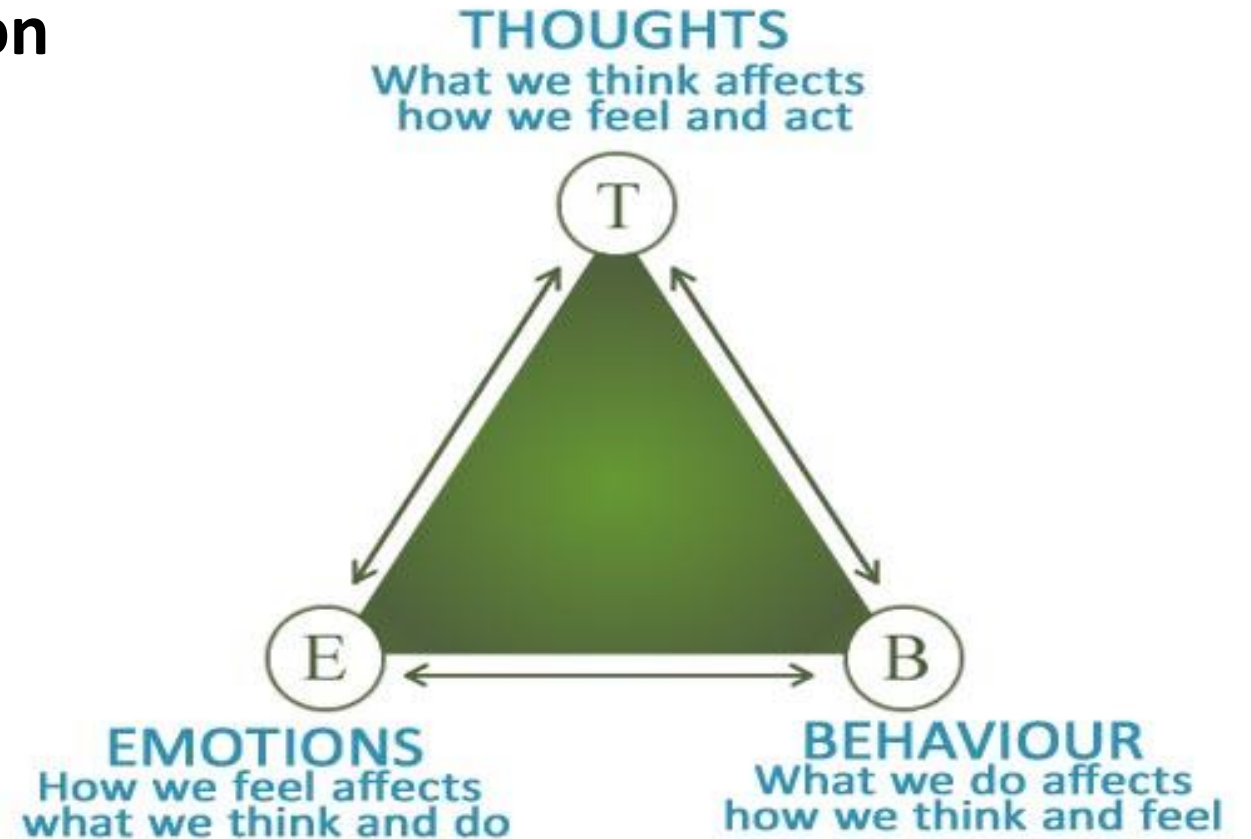
- Fluorescent light box, 10,000 lux of white light (Schwartz and Olds 2015)
  - For reference, sunny outdoor day = 50,000-100,000. Indoor light (even near a window)  $\leq 2500$  lux
- Recommended distance from face varies by device
- Start 30 minutes exposure daily, early morning, as close to awakening as possible

- **Children: limited data**

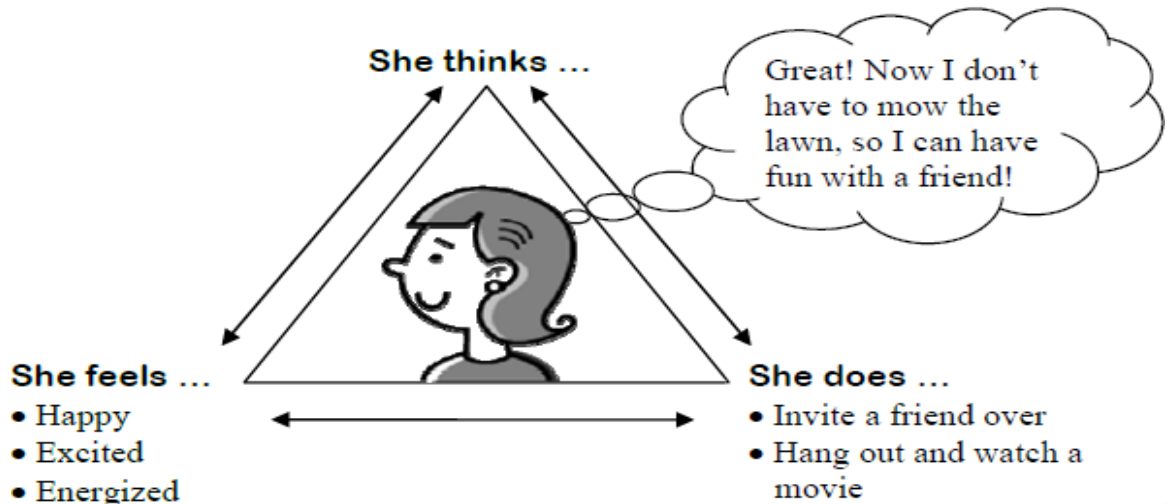
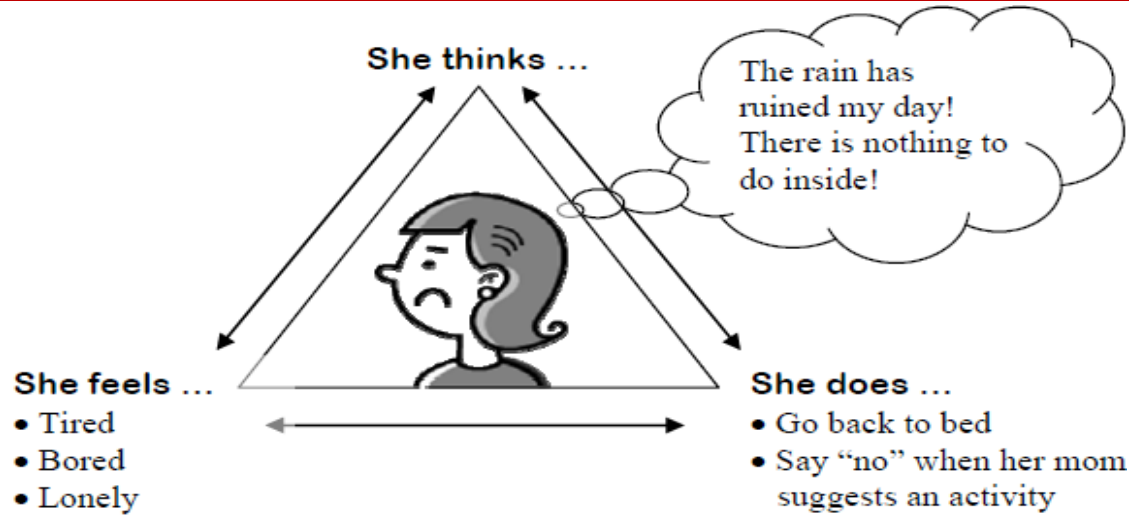
- May help modestly, more in seasonal depression than non-seasonal?
- Time commitment may be prohibitive
- Well tolerated\*
- Dawn simulation may help morning awakening (Fromm et al 2011)

# CBT for Depression Components

- **Psychoeducation about depression**
- Mood monitoring
- **Behavioral activation**
- Problem-solving skills
- Cognitive Restructuring
- Social Skills training
- **Relaxation ~ as appropriate**
- Homework Assignments



# Psychoeducation on Depression Continued –Cognitive Triangle



## What Do YOU Think, Feel, and Do?

What about YOU? Think of a time recently when you got stuck in a bad mood. What did you THINK, FEEL, and DO? If you had different thoughts or took different actions, would you have felt differently?

What was happening?

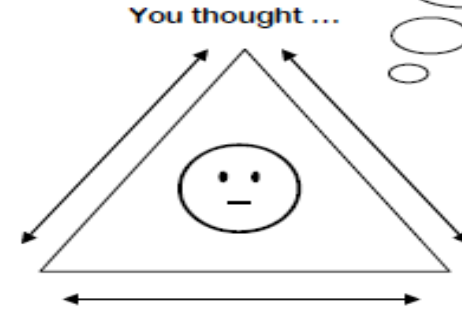
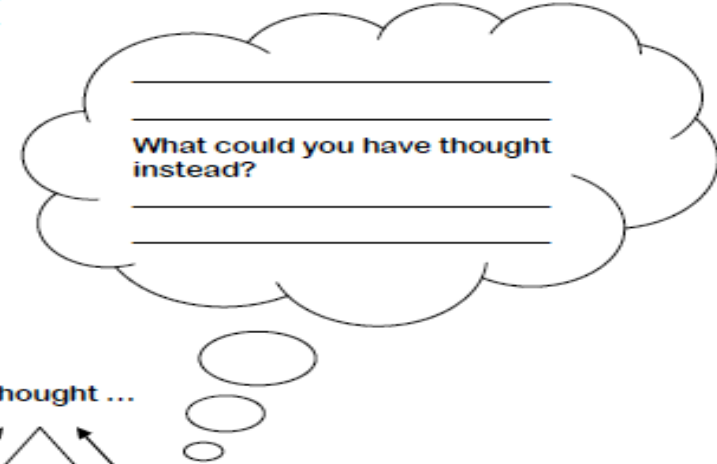
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**You felt ...**

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**You did ...**

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How might you have felt instead?

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What could you have done instead?

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# CBT for Depression Components – Mood Monitoring

- Mood monitoring = paying attention to how we feel so we can learn what situations lead to feeling more or less depressed and identify thoughts connected with those situations and feelings
- Ask youth about specific times when:
  - Felt bad and get details about situations – what happened, what were they thinking about, how were they feeling
  - Felt good or happy and get details about those situations
- Practice ratings together in session, then encourage daily tracking/rating at home
- Review mood tracking at each session

## Daily Feelings Record

Take a feelings rating every day by circling the number on the thermometer. Remember to write down what was happening to make you feel that way.



Date:

What was happening:



Date:

What was happening:

# CBT for Depression Components – Behavioral Activation





Engaging in activities improves mood

4 types of activities improve mood:

- youth enjoyed it before
- w/ someone they enjoy spending time with
- that keep youth busy
- that help someone else

Help patient:

- Generate a list of pleasant activities
- Schedule time for these activities during the week

| <p>Day and Plan</p>  | <p>How I Felt Before (0-10)</p>  | <p>Activity I Did</p>  | <p>How I Felt After (0-10)</p>  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p><b>EXAMPLE</b><br/>SATURDAY: Play soccer with my friend after lunch</p>                              | <p>5</p>  | <p>Played soccer with my friend after lunch</p>   | <p>8</p>   |
| <p>SUNDAY:</p>  |   |   |  |
| <p>MONDAY:</p>  |   |   |  |
| <p>TUESDAY:</p>   |   |   |  |
| <p>WEDNESDAY:</p>   |   |   |  |
| <p>THURSDAY:</p>  |   |   |  |
| <p>FRIDAY:</p>  |   |   |  |
| <p>SATURDAY:</p>  |   |   |  |

# CBT for Depression Components – Problem-Solving Skills

- Solving problems can improve mood while not solving them contributes to low mood



Say what the problem is.



Think of possible solutions. (Try to think of several here. Don't worry yet whether they are "good" or "bad" solutions.)



Examine each possible solution, looking at the good and bad aspects of each one.



Pick one solution to try out.



See if it worked. If it worked, great! If it did not work, then go back to your list of solutions and try another one.

# CBT for Depression Components – Cognitive Restructuring

- Identify and change automatic negative thoughts to more realistic thoughts by asking:
  - What's the evidence?
  - Is there another way to look at the situation?
  - What would you tell a friend who had that thought?
  - If it is true, would that really be so bad?

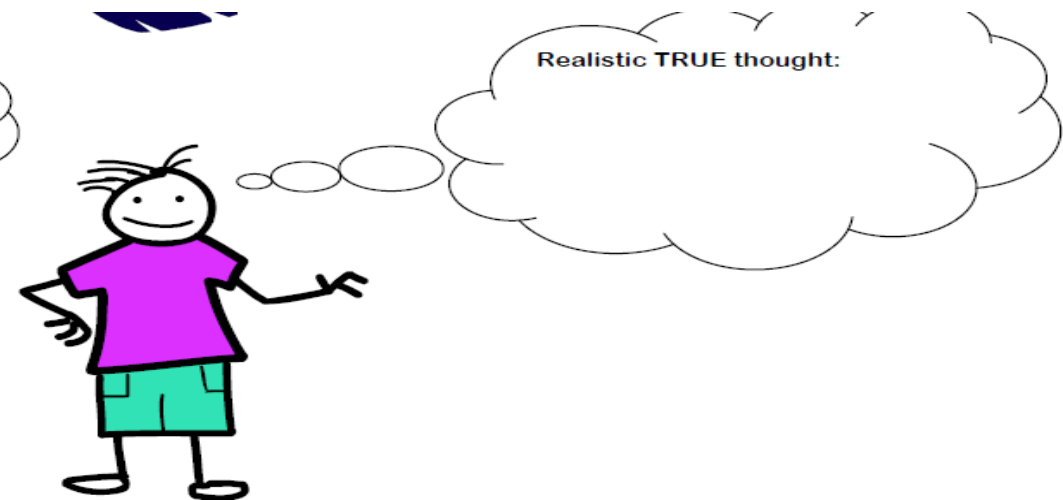
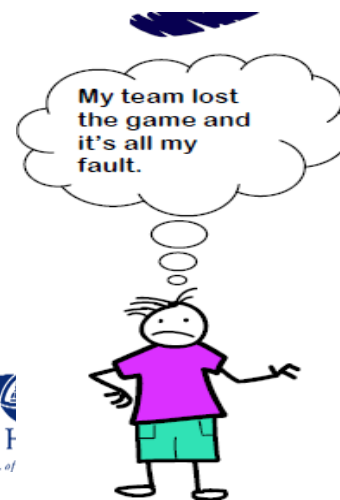
B-L-U-E thoughts are thoughts that are too negative to be true. B-L-U-E thoughts make us feel bad.

**B**laming myself

**L**ooking for bad news

**U**nhappy guessing

**E**xaggerating





# Examples of negative/unhelpful thoughts

- “It’s all my fault that we lost the soccer game”
- “I got 2 answers wrong on my test. This day is ruined”
- “I’m definitely going to fail the test”
- “No one is going to come to my birthday party”
- “I’m not allowed to see my friends because of COVID – my life is horrible”
- “I’ll never be as good as my sister at math”
- “My parents are fighting and its all my fault”

Umm...what  
about the meds?!



# SSRI'S

| Generic                            | Brand Name                 |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Fluoxetine (MDD 8+; OCD 6+)</b> | <b>Prozac</b>              |
| <b>Escitalopram (MDD 12+)</b>      | <b>Lexapro</b>             |
| <b>Sertraline (OCD 7+)</b>         | <b>Zoloft</b>              |
| Fluvoxamine (sigma1)               | Rarely used in USA         |
| <i>Citalopram</i>                  | <i>Less safe than Lexa</i> |
| <i>Paroxetine</i>                  | <i>Nonlinear kinetics</i>  |

# SSRI Differences

## Escitalopram (Lexapro)

- *No major isoenzyme interactions*
- *Generic scored 10 & 20 mg tablets (only one prescription for dose range)*
- *Least activating (better for sleep)*

## Sertraline (Zoloft)

- *Moderate inhibitor of CYP450 2D6, 2B6*
- *Wider dosing range (max is 200 mg/day)*

## Fluoxetine (Prozac)

- *Very long half-life*
- *Strong inhibitor of CYP450 2D6*
- *Most activating*

# General Principles

START LOW, GO SLOW.....BUT not too slow.....

Antidepressant effect size\* (for comparison, stimulants for ADHD = 1.0)

0.7 for anxiety

0.2 for depression (2/2 high placebo response rate)

Side effects generally minimal and *reversible* if SSRI discontinued

4-8 weeks to reach therapeutic dose and maximum benefit

Screening lab: TSH

\*Locher C et al, JAMA Psychiatry, 74: 1011-1020; 2017

# Doses (mg)

| Agent        | Start |       |       | Maximum<br>Adult | Increments |       |       |
|--------------|-------|-------|-------|------------------|------------|-------|-------|
|              | Adult | Teen  | Child |                  | Adult      | Teen  | Child |
| Sertraline   | 50    | 25-50 | ≤25   | 200              | 50         | 25-50 | ≤25   |
| Fluoxetine   | 20    | 10    | 5     | 20*              | 20         | 10    | 5     |
| Escitalopram | 10    | 5-10  | 5     | 20**             | 10         | 5-10  | 5     |

\* 60 mg/day for bulimia nervosa

\*\* 10 mg/day for adults with GAD

# SSRI Dose Equivalencies

- Fluoxetine            20 mg
- Escitalopram        10 mg
- Sertraline            50 mg\*

\*Least valid or the 3 equivalencies; much larger range of values across studies.

NOTE: Adult data; increases to fluoxetine 40 mg equivalent can increase response, higher dose yields only more side effects

Furukawa TA et al. Optimal dose of selective serotonin.....*Lancet Psychiatry*: 6, 601-609, 2019.

# Reversible Side Effects of SSRIs

None (most common)

GI discomfort, nausea

Behavioral activation.....suicidality (1 per 100)  
more common in younger children  
agitation, restlessness, insomnia, impulsivity  
behavioral disinhibition

Sexual

diminished libido

delayed orgasm or anorgasmia

erectile dysfunction

Pregnancy



# Serotonin syndrome\*

*GI:* nausea, vomiting, **diarrhea**

*Mental Status:* **agitation**, delirium, hallucinations, coma

*Autonomic Instability:* tachycardia, labile blood pressure, **diaphoresis, hyperthermia**, flushing, dizziness

*Neuromuscular:* **tremor, hyperreflexia**, rigidity, myoclonus, incoordination

\*5HTP supplements and tryptans for migraines common causative agents

# Discontinuation Syndrome

- Flu-like symptoms
- GI symptoms – nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- -----
- Dizziness, vertigo
- Tingling/numbness
- -----
- Sleep disruption
- Anxiety, agitation
- Irritability, low mood

# Other “Antidepressants”

- Duloxetine (Cymbalta) SNRI FDA indication for C&A GAD, milder sexual AEs
- Bupropion (Wellbutrin) similar to amphetamine, no serotonin effect, seizures
  
- Venlafaxine (Effexor) SNRI more side effects than duloxetine
- Mirtazapine (Remeron) serotonergic; sedating and appetite inducing
- Lamotrigine (Lamictal) rare fatal rash; used for bipolar depression

# Medication Monitoring

- Assess clinical response at 4-week intervals
- If minimal or no response at 8 weeks (at therapeutic dose), may need alternative treatment
- Goal should be remission at 12 weeks
- FDA recommendation:
  - See every week for the first 4 weeks, biweekly thereafter
    - Telephone if not in person
    - **HOWEVER:** no data about impact on suicide risk

# Sources

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Thank you!

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