



# Mental Wealth in Summer





# Introduction

Summer brings longer days, warmer weather, and opportunities for travel, family time, and self-care. It's a season often associated with energy, activity, and relaxation.

However, the shift in routines, rising temperatures, and increased expectations can sometimes affect mental wellbeing. This guide highlights key challenges that may arise during the summer months and offers practical strategies to support emotional balance and overall wellness.

## How can summer lift your Mental Health?

Despite the challenges summer can bring, the season also offers unique opportunities to support and improve mental health and well-being. With longer days, warmer weather, and often more flexible schedules, individuals can engage in activities that promote psychological resilience.

### Sunlight Exposure

Exposure to natural light increases serotonin production, which helps regulate mood and energy levels. It also supports vitamin D synthesis, linked to lower depression risk.



## **Physical Activity**

Outdoor exercise such as walking, swimming, or cycling improves endorphin levels and reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression.

## **Social Connection**

Summer gatherings, events, and travel can foster meaningful relationships, which are protective against loneliness and stress-related conditions.

## **Time for Rest and Recovery**

Annual leave, school breaks, or long weekends provide time to recharge, engage in hobbies, and reduce burnout.

## **Creative Engagement and Exploration**

Summer may offer time for travel, learning new skills, or pursuing passions, all of which contribute to a sense of fulfillment and mental stimulation.



# Why Summer Can Impact Mental Wealth?





# Why Summer Can Impact Mental Health?

Several summer-specific factors can influence mental health:

- **Heat and Dehydration:**

Elevated temperatures can cause fatigue, sleep disturbance, irritability. These stressors may affect mood and motivation and worsen psychiatric symptoms.

- **Changes in Routine:**

Disruptions in daily schedules such as vacations, travel, or school breaks can lead to instability in sleep, meals, and activity levels and may increase anxiety or depression.

- **Body Image Pressure:**

Media portrayals of the "ideal summer body" may contribute to self-esteem issues or eating disorders.

- **Financial Stress:**

Summer expenses like travel, events, or children's camps can create financial stress, contributing to feelings of anxiety or emotional fatigue.

- **Sleep Disruption:**

Longer daylight hours can interfere with sleep patterns, a key regulator of mood.

- **Social Isolation:**

While some socialize more, others may feel left out, especially if away from support networks.



# Common Summer-Related Mental Health conditions

## Mood Disorders

Depression may be exacerbated by disrupted routines or social comparison.

## Anxiety and Panic Attacks

Triggered by overstimulation, heat, or travel-related changes.

## Burnout in Parents or Caregivers

Juggling childcare, work, and activities can elevate stress levels.



# Summer-onset Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)





# What is Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)?

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a type of depression linked to seasonal changes. It can occur during specific times of the year and affects how people think, feel, and function.

There are two main types:

- **Summer depression**

Symptoms begin in late spring or early summer

- **Winter depression**

Symptoms begin in late fall or early winter

## Common Symptoms of Summer Depression

- Difficulty sleeping
- Loss of appetite or weight loss
- Agitation or anxiety
- Fatigue or low energy
- Trouble focusing
- Feeling disconnected or emotionally withdrawn

## Risk Factors

- Personal history of depression
- Family history of mental health conditions
- Gender: Women tend to be more affected by SAD
- Geography: Those living in hot or equatorial regions with extended daylight hours may be more sensitive to seasonal changes

## Possible Complications:

- Social withdrawal and loneliness
- Reduced academic or work performance
- Disordered eating habits
- Substance abuse
- Self-harm thoughts or behaviors



# Individuals with pre-existing mental health conditions and summer

Individuals with pre-existing mental health conditions may face unique challenges during the summer months. While summer is typically associated with positive energy and social activities, the season can worsen symptoms in some due to physiological and environmental stressors:

- **Disruption in routines:**

School breaks, work vacations, or travel can destabilize carefully structured schedules that support mental stability.

- **Medication side effects:**

Many medications can increase sensitivity to heat or sun exposure (e.g., antipsychotics, SSRIs), posing health risks.

- **Increased social expectations:**

Pressure to socialize or attend gatherings can intensify social anxiety or feelings of inadequacy.

- **Seasonal triggers:**

In individuals with bipolar disorder, longer daylight hours may trigger manic episodes due to circadian rhythm disruption.

- **Reduced access to care:**

Vacation periods may delay follow-up appointments or reduce therapy availability.



# Protective Strategies for Mental Well-being in summer

- 1 Maintain regular routines for sleep, meals, and breaks.
- 2 Stay cool and hydrated throughout the day.
- 3 Engage in light physical activity during cooler hours.
- 4 Set realistic expectations for summer plans.
- 5 Avoid comparing your experience with others on social media.
- 6 Budget and plan ahead to reduce financial stress.
- 7 Practice Mindfulness through Meditation, journaling, or breathing exercises to reduce stress.
- 8 Engage in Meaningful Activities: Volunteering, hobbies, or goal-setting can foster purpose and fulfillment.
- 9 Stay Socially Connected
- 10 Create a Sleep-Friendly Environment: Use blackout curtains, limit evening screen time, and cool your room.
- 11 Individuals with pre-existing mental health conditions should assure to have their medications in travel and to monitor their symptoms.



# Children and Summer

- 1 Talk openly with children about feelings and routines.
- 2 Limit screen time and encourage creative play.
- 3 Ensure children have a balanced daily schedule (e.g., play, rest, meals).
- 4 Watch for signs of stress, sleep disturbance.
- 5 Model healthy behaviors and self-care.
- 6 Avoid over-pressuring academic or physical achievements during summer.

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