

# News From Your School Psychologist

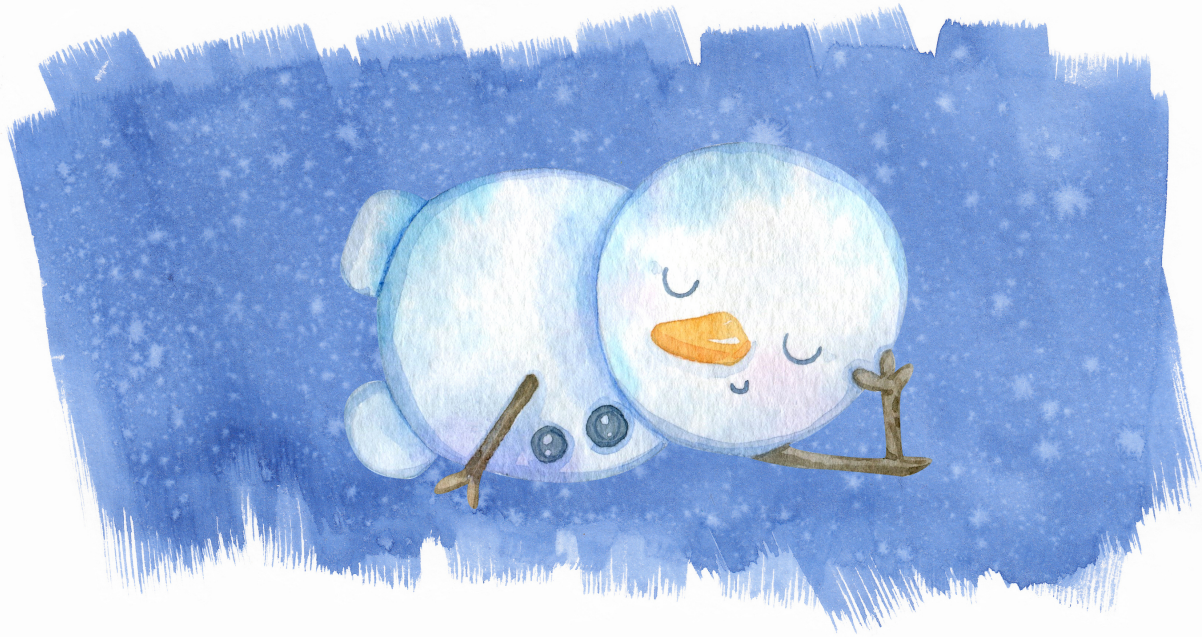
Issue No. 13

Topic: Depression

December 2023

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## BEAT THE WINTER **BLUES**



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### Beat the Winter Blues

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As the days grow shorter and darker, it can become very easy to find yourself feeling sad. Things like snow and cold weather tend to keep us cooped up inside, which can impact our feelings and outlook. This can often be referred to as the “Winter Blues”.

The Winter Blues are considered to be a feeling of depression or deep unhappiness associated with experiencing the cold and darkness of winter. Winter blues is a general term, not a medical diagnosis. It’s fairly common, and it’s more mild than serious. It usually clears up on its own in a fairly short amount of time, according to mental health experts. The Winter Blues are more common in northern than in southern parts of the United States, where winter days last longer. It can look a lot like hibernation for many, as people who are experiencing this may have lower energy, feel withdrawn, and/or oversleep.

Reduced sunlight in fall and winter can disrupt your body’s internal clock, or circadian rhythm. This 24-hour “master clock” responds to cues in your surroundings, especially light and darkness. During the day, your brain sends signals to other parts of the body to help keep you awake and ready for action. At night, a tiny gland in the brain produces a chemical called melatonin, which helps you sleep. Shortened daylight hours in winter can alter this natural rhythm and lead to SAD in certain people.

At this point, you may be asking yourself what you can do to beat the Winter Blues. Below, Mrs. Huff includes various different ways for you and your family to try this winter in your battle against the blues. Changing our behaviors and mindset are important factors in overcoming this challenge. However, if you find that your “blues” are sticking around for several weeks, checking in with your school counselor/school psychologist (or a health care provider in more serious cases) is suggested.

# WAYS TO BEAT THE WINTER BLUES

## EXERCISE

Exercising increases fitness and psychological well-being. When you exercise, your brain releases endorphins, which help you to have more energy and feel good after.



## GET SOME SUN

Open up your curtains and get outside! Sunlight gives us Vitamin-D and helps to make us happier!



## ACT ON YOUR RESOLUTION

Don't wait until last minute to complete your New Year's resolutions. Completing your resolution will help you to feel happy and accomplished.



## GET SOCIAL SUPPORT

Sometimes it can be difficult to be social during the winter months. There are not as many things to do as there are in the other seasons. Ask your parents or a trusted adult things you can do to become involved and stay active!



## EAT RIGHT

Just like bears in hibernation, we may feel less energetic about getting up from our cozy space and finding something healthy to eat. However, good nutrition is a priority! Because we are cooped up inside and lacking exposure to the vitamins we receive from our environment, we need to ensure we are getting them through our food.



## SLEEP DON'T HIBERNATE

Our bodies need rest, so it is important to make sure we are getting our required 8 hours of sleep. You will be more productive and have more success focusing on tasks.



## SELF-CARE

Taking time to care for yourself should be a priority. Winter break is a great time to establish some new self-care routines.



## ORGANIZE

Being cooped up in the house because of the harsh winter weather does not have to be a bad thing. Spend time organizing your things so you won't have to worry about it when the nice weather rolls around. It will also help you to feel relaxed and less stressed.



## Apps to Develop A Healthy Winter Mindset



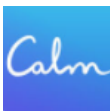
### MindShift

MindShift app is based on to help young adults cope with anxiety, by acting as a portable coach that guides users through challenging situations.



### Headspace

Guided Meditations and Mindfulness takes a calm, relaxed approach to bringing calm relaxation into the lives of adults and kids. Headspace app, aims to keep children "calm and focused" through short meditation exercises.



### Calm

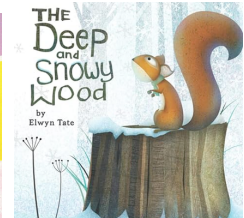
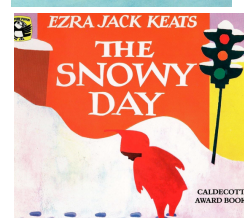
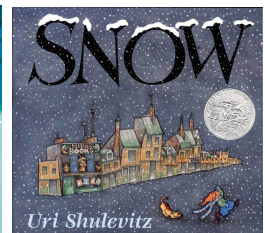
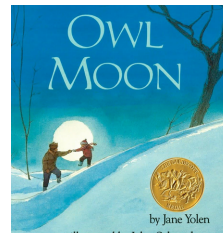
Calm is the perfect meditation app for beginners, but also includes hundreds of programs for intermediate and advanced users. Guided meditation sessions are available in lengths of 3, 5, 10, 15, 20 or 25 minutes so you can choose the perfect length to fit with your schedule.



### Smiling Mind

Smiling Mind is designed to help people pressure, stress, and challenges of daily life.

## COZY WINTER READS for kids



# December Pawsitive Discussion

## Middle and High School Pawsitive Discussion - Leash Up Your Learning Style

This month, Mrs. Huff and Finn help students “leash up their learning styles” through discussing how students can become more academically successful and knowledgeable in retention of skills by identifying their individual learning style(s). Using an individual assessment, students will determine what their learning style is and discover ways to utilize their unique strengths to their advantage.



## Group Counseling

Winter groups begin on January 8, 2024. Mrs. Huff is facilitating the following groups during that time:

- Anxiety
- Mindfulness
- Self-Esteem
- and more!



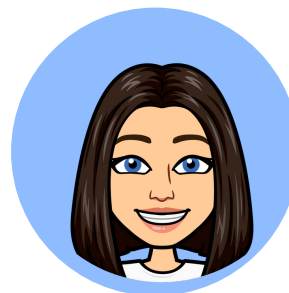
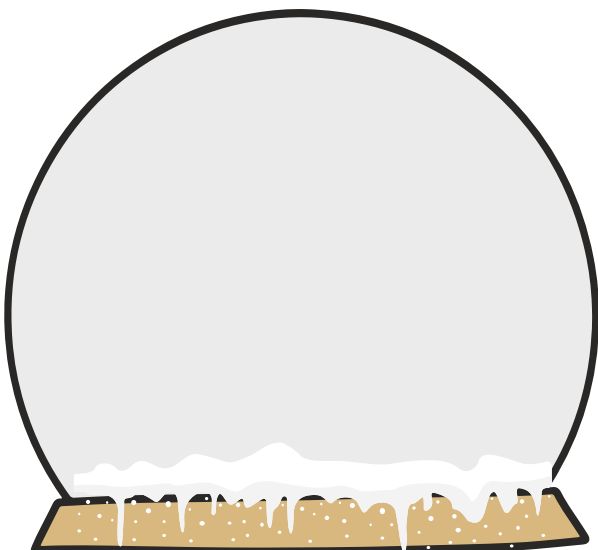
## Individual Counseling

If your student is in need of direct service, please contact Mrs. Huff to further discuss individual session.



## Minute of Mindfulness

Take a minute to breathe! In your snow globe, draw a picture of your favorite activity or thing to do to beat the Winter Blues!



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