

NEELY EAP

DECEMBER 2025

GET THE MOST FROM YOUR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



WELCOME

We are so pleased to serve as your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider. The EAP is designed to be your first stop for support, offering prevention and short-term problem-solving services when life gets challenging.

Through the program, you have access to confidential short-term counseling, wellness seminars, legal support, and financial consultation services, all at no cost to you.

Each month, you'll receive a newsletter filled with helpful wellness tips along with updates on upcoming seminars, webinars, and additional resources available to you and your household.



24/7 Helpline: 866-212-6096
For TDD: 800-735-2989
Email: admin@neelyeap.com
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WELLNESS SEMINAR

From Holiday Blues to
New Year Renewals:
Finding Joy and Focus

12/18/25 | Thursday
2:00 PM CENTRAL TIME

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

QUARTERLY WEBINAR

Coaching Instead of Managing:
Turning Employees Into
High-Performers

03/27/25 | Thursday
2:00 PM CENTRAL TIME

REGISTRATION PENDING

From Holiday Blues to New Year Renewals: Finding Joy and Focus

By: Rosalinda Rodriguez, LPC-A

What if the holidays feel heavy instead of joyful? What if you have no idea what New Year's resolutions you're "supposed" to make this year? I hear you and you're not alone. Let's talk honestly about the realities of the holiday season and the pressure to start January with a shiny new plan. While the holiday season can bring happiness, it just as easily brings grief, loneliness, and family or financial stress.

With less sunlight and naturally lower serotonin, winter becomes fertile ground for old grief, stress, or emotional exhaustion to reappear. Maybe you start missing a loved one who passed. Maybe the pressure of your demanding job feels heavier. Please hear me when I say: it is okay to feel sad over the holidays and completely unmotivated for New Year's goals. Truly. And with that in mind, there are ways to honor your pain while still creating space for moments of joy:



- Find your support. Who do you go to when you're overwhelmed or just need someone to listen? Lean on them, intentionally, during this time. And if you don't have a go-to person, you are not out of options. Your EAP counseling services are here to support you.
- Build your own rituals of comfort and connection. If holiday decor or New Year's resolutions aren't your thing, create rituals that are. Weekly movie nights with friends, cleaning your home and lighting your favorite candle, journaling on Sunday mornings, whatever brings you a sense of ease or meaning belongs in your winter routine.

Now, let's talk about New Year's resolutions or, as therapist Britt Frank, LCSW, calls them, "*res-illusions*." It's no secret that resolutions rarely stick long-term. But here's a perspective we don't talk about enough: of course they're hard to maintain. We're trying to reinvent our entire lives in the middle of winter, a season meant for slowing down and introspection, not high-energy goal-setting. Ms. Frank notes *three big reasons resolutions tend to fail: unrealistic expectations, stressful timing, and social pressure*. She offers an alternative: set resolutions in April. By then, most of us have moved out of the deep gloom of winter and have had time to rest, process, and rebuild some energy (Frank, 2025).



Before we move deeper into the season, take a moment to reflect on two things:



- What is draining your energy right now?
- What replenishes your energy, even in small ways?

And remember: if your daily routine is full of draining tasks with only tiny bits of replenishment sprinkled in, it's like pouring water into a colander. Nothing sticks. Nothing fills. You deserve a winter that supports your humanity, not one that demands perfection.

To learn more about this topic, please join the upcoming webinar, [From Holiday Blues to New Year Renewals: Finding Joy and Focus](#) on Thursday December 18th, at 2:00PM CST.

References

Frank, B. (2025, January 2). New Year's Resolutions or Res-Illusions? Why January goals fail—and what to do instead. Psychology Today.

Finding Light in the Dark: Coping with Seasonal Affective Disorder

By: Rosalinda Rodriguez, LPC-A

After a long and hot summer, many of us are *more than ready* to welcome the cooler temperatures of fall and winter. We start thinking about the upcoming holiday season, our favorite cozy outfits, and swapping iced lattes for a warm cup of brew (and to those who stay loyal to iced drinks in the dead of winter, I salute you). But for some, winter doesn't just bring festive vibes and soft sweaters. It also brings feelings of sadness, low energy, loneliness, or racing thoughts that stir up anxiety. My friends, that cluster of symptoms has a name: **seasonal affective disorder, or SAD** (fitting acronym). SAD is a form of depression triggered by the seasonal shift into darker, shorter days, what we casually refer to as the "winter blues," but what can actually be much more intense.



Let's pause to consider the physical impact that reduced sunlight can have. Less exposure to light can disrupt the brain's regulation of serotonin, a key chemical tied to mood and energy. As Dr. Bracamonte, a Mayo Clinic family medicine physician, explains, decreased light contributes to "neurochemical or brain hormonal changes that occur with a change of season or less light," which can leave us fatigued and off-balance (Balzer, 2024). In other words, low light affects our sleep, our mood, our hormones, pretty much everything about how we feel.

So, how do we find light, literally and figuratively, during the darker months? Here are a few research-backed, human-approved ideas:

- **Spend time outdoors.** Even if the sunlight is brief or filtered through a window, take a moment to step into it. Natural light helps regulate our circadian rhythm, our body's 24-hour internal clock that dictates sleep and wake cycles. And honestly, pausing for a few seconds of sunlight can feel surprisingly grounding.
- **Lean on your community.** A natural response to winter is to turn inward: to rest, slow down, and reflect on the year. While that can be restorative, too much isolation can worsen SAD symptoms. Aim for a balance of rest and connection.
- **Move your body.** You don't need a hardcore fitness regimen. A brisk 30-minute walk will do. Movement triggers the release of endorphins, endocannabinoids, and mood-boosting neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine, which naturally dip in the winter months. And if you've been debating getting a dog, here's your sign: built-in walking buddy.

Coming from someone who has personally experienced SAD, *please hear me when I say, this is real*. It isn't "just in your head," and you're not being dramatic. Winter naturally asks our minds and bodies to slow down, yet society often expects the same pace and productivity as the rest of the year, that mismatch alone can feel incredibly overwhelming.

Your winter doesn't have to feel endless or heavy. There is always light to be found and you deserve to feel it. If you ever need someone to walk beside you during this season, your EAP is here with care, compassion, and confidential support.

References:

Balzer, D. (2024, October 31). Mayo Clinic Minute: How change in sunlight can affect your mood. Mayo Clinic News Network.



WHAT CAN MY EAP DO FOR ME?



About Our Logo

For decades, enslaved African Americans looked to the North Star for hope, inspiration, and freedom. Neely EAP (NEAP) provides the **hope** that your situation will improve, the **inspiration** to move you in the right direction, and the **freedom** to live your best life.

At Neely EAP, we understand the challenge of balancing work and life stresses while staying mentally healthy. That's why we've partnered with your employer to offer you the following services free of charge:

- 24/7 Hotline, Access to Confidential Services
- Free Short-Term Counseling and Couch Time Check-In (preventive annual counseling session)
- Legal and Financial Assistance
- Work-life referrals for adult care, childcare, pet care and more
- Wellness Trainings & Online Employee Training Vault
- Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

