



## Does Winter Weather Have You SAD? Some “Take-Aways” from the Winter Warlocks

By Anna Jones, MD

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), it's a real thing. It's cold, it's dark, and if you're working long days, you may ask yourself when it was you last saw the sun. SAD can cause you to feel lethargic, gloomy, and depressed. Combine that with being a trainee, long hours, and a challenging environment, and you may feel that life is a little rough right now. So, let me give you some “take-aways” from our favorite winter warlocks.



**The Yeti:** Yeti means *snowman*, and according to the Nepalese, yetis are an ape-like beast or *man-bear* that are very dangerous to humans. SAD in healthcare workers can be dangerous to humans too, affecting decision-making and patient safety. How do you know if you have SAD? First, be able to recognize it. Plain old winter blues should not affect your ability to enjoy life. However, if you are feeling sad, experiencing a lack of energy, having difficulty

sleeping, having difficulty focusing at home or work, or feeling less social, you may have SAD. What causes it? Lower levels of natural sunlight in the winter cause a dip in serotonin, alters melatonin, and disrupts circadian rhythms, affecting both mood and sleep. What can you do about it? Use sunlight to melt the snowman! We are fortunate to live in a place where we have so many days of sunlight. Consider eating your lunch outside or taking a brisk walk in the middle of the day. If that doesn't work, the current standard of care for SAD is light therapy that mimics the sun. I have used a natural light desk lamp at times and I definitely think it's worth a try if you can't get outside in the daytime. You can find one on Amazon starting at \$35. Of course, if you think you have SAD, talk to your provider and ask for help.



**Jack Frost:** Jack Frost comes from British legends and is the personification of frost, snow, ice, and winter. He is described as a fairy, responsible for changing the color of the leaves and nipping at your fingers and toes in the cold. You've likely seen him in multiple movies, sometimes he's a villain, sometimes he's a hero, but he can be whatever you imagine him to be. Jack Frost is a reminder to take time to get lost in your imagination. How? A recent article in *AMA Morning Rounds* emphasized the importance of residents reading – for fun! Reading has a way of capturing your attention better than other forms of relaxation including mediation, exercise, and yoga.

In addition, reading has been shown to be protective against burnout while those other methods have not. In a recent study, the odds of burnout decreased by 59% for residents who read one book a month for relaxation. So don't feel guilt for reaching for a pleasure book instead of board review. How many times have you woken up thinking, “I *do not* want to get out of bed this

morning!” Well, on your next day off, gets those toes in a warm blanket and grab a good book and remember Jack Frost... he'll protect you from burn-out (insert lame joke sound *be dum tsh*).



The Barbegazi: The Barbegazi is a mythical creature from the French Alps. Barbegazi means *frozen beards*. The Barbegazi is described as a dwarf or gnome with large clumps of icicles that make up his beard; however, his most interesting characteristic is his *insanely* large feet that he uses to ski down the mountain slopes. He is a reminder to get out and exercise... especially in the winter! I don't need to go into all the benefits of exercise, you know them, but did you know that New Mexico is in the top 10 states for skiing and our four corners neighbors, Colorado and Utah, come in first and second place respectively? I hope you are lucky enough to have a day to explore the slopes in the Land of Enchantment. If you don't think you can keep up with the Barbegazi, then grab a snow saucer or inner-tube and go play in the snow, trust me, you'll get plenty of exercise. If you're on a busy rotation and feel like you can't do any of that, then bring your workout clothes to lunch and run the golf course or take advantage of the new gym in the Domenici building. You can't take the time? Did you know that exercise and work breaks have been proven to make you more effective and efficient? If all else fails, run the stairs during rounds or between other duties. Though the stairs are not made of snow, you can't argue with the slope. Whatever the case, remember the Barbegazi and get your feet moving.

### **The Benefits of Infrared Sauna**

By Shiva Sharma, MD, MPH

Try something new to stay warm and relaxed this winter! Have you ever tried an infrared (IR) sauna? It is a dry sauna that uses infrared light to generate heat that is absorbed by the skin. The IR sauna can be just as effective as a traditional sauna to relieve minor musculoskeletal pain (especially useful after a tough exercise session), to increase blood circulation (a plus in the winter), and to induce sleep with the option of less sweating (at lower temperatures). Some users claim that IR sauna has aided them in detoxification, weight loss, and maintaining clear skin. There are several places around town that offer sauna. These are just a couple of locations right by campus – LUMEN: Mindbody Float (2931 Monte Vista Blvd NE) and Gambei Wellness Spa (1016 Lomas Blvd NW). Hope you enjoy a stress-relieving experience!

### **Calling “The Pause” to Reduce Physician Distress**

Several departments have collaborated with Pastoral Care to implement an innovation that has been shown to reduce distress after a code called The Pause. The Pause is a brief silent reflection that the team takes – often with the patient's family, if present - to provide time for reflection after a code that ends in death. The Pause does not replace an in-depth debriefing; however, knowing we can react differently to different deaths, respecting one another and acknowledging the person who just died prior to 'moving forward' is a significant and timely practice.

Any interprofessional team member can call the Pause, although it is often done by a physician. After the code that ends in death is called, a team leader will call the Pause by making a statement such as “I am calling the Pause to respect the efforts just given towards this patient and to respect the effect of this person's death on those who knew them and will grieve their dying.” At the conclusion of 60 seconds, the person who called the code will conclude it by

merely saying “Thank you.” It is not critical to have the perfect language describing the Pause, but it is important to prepare the team for 60 seconds of quiet reflection and to conclude with a statement of thanks. If this is something you would like to learn more about, please contact Dr Michelle Tatlock of Pastoral Care at [mtatlock@salud.unm.edu](mailto:mtatlock@salud.unm.edu).

### **Literacy and Life Hacks**

GME and GME Wellness are offering a series of free workshops to help prepare you for your career – register for as many as you are interested in by emailing [lsundvall@salud.unm.edu](mailto:lsundvall@salud.unm.edu)

- **Developing Interview Skills** – Tuesday, **March 12** and Thursday **March 14<sup>th</sup>** from 5:30-7:00PM, Domenici NW 2706
- **Student Loan Management** – Tuesday, **March 26** and Thursday **March 28<sup>th</sup>** from 5:30-7:00PM, Domenici NW 2706
- **Overview of Financial Planning** – Tuesday **April 9<sup>th</sup>** and Thursday **April 11<sup>th</sup>** from 5:30-7:00PM, Domenici NW 2706
- **Protection Planning/Insurances** – Tuesday **May 21** and Thursday **May 23<sup>rd</sup>** from 5:30-7:00PM, Domenici NW 2706

### **Efficiency Tips**

Much of your work is spent on a computer and on the EMR. Share commonly used PowerPlans/order-sets and add commonly ordered, safe PRN medications to inpatient order-sets to decrease calls and also increase patient-centered care (such as a bowel regimen, safe analgesics, safe antiemetic, and safe sleep aid). Create a folder for commonly used note titles, note templates, and orders. Sign up today for one to one, personalized EMR training by emailing [powerchartsynergy@salud.unm.edu](mailto:powerchartsynergy@salud.unm.edu)

### **Recognize a Colleague with an iCare Award**

Organizations where colleagues thank each other are happier places to work and often have better outcomes because teams function better. One way you can recognize a colleague today is through nominating them for an iCare award. This is fast and easy, and is a small gesture to help make someone’s day. Go to <https://hospitals.health.unm.edu/intranet/Recognition/Index.cfm> from a hospital computer -- it takes less than two minutes!

### **Are you or someone you know looking for more support managing stress or depression?**

All resources are confidential and none are reported to your program or documented in PowerChart.

- **Jeff Dunn, MD**, (Psychiatrist) is available to see residents and fellows generally within 3-5 days, including after hours: 505-272-6130 or [JeDunn@salud.unm.edu](mailto:JeDunn@salud.unm.edu)
- **Agora Crisis Center** <http://www.agoracares.org/> 505-277-3013 or 866-HELP-1-NM provides phone-based counseling
- **Outcomes New Mexico** (Employee Assistance Program) including free personal, family, and relationship counseling with 24-hour crisis availability: <https://www.outcomesnm.org/contact-us/schedule-an-appointment/> 505-243-2551
- **Liz Lawrence, MD**, (Internist) is available to meet with residents and fellows: [elawrence@salud.unm.edu](mailto:elawrence@salud.unm.edu)

**Don't forget to take your Wellness Leave!**

The University provides a 1/2 day of paid leave each quarter to each resident and fellow for the purpose of attending to their personal health and well-being such as seeing the doctor, dentist, etc. A quarter's accrual may be saved up for a total of 1 full day every half-year. Talk with your Chief Resident or Program Director about scheduling this important benefit.

**Do You Have Feedback on the Newsletter or Want to Contribute?**

We welcome your suggestions and your submissions! Email [EBarrett@salud.unm.edu](mailto:EBarrett@salud.unm.edu)

For additional information on wellness programming, please contact:

Dr. Eileen Barrett, Director, GME Wellness [EBarrett@salud.unm.edu](mailto:EBarrett@salud.unm.edu)

Dr. Elizabeth Lawrence, Office of Physician and Student Wellness [ELawrence@salud.unm.edu](mailto:ELawrence@salud.unm.edu)

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