



# Lakeview Beacon

**Helping People Find Solutions**

**Fall 2014**

**Lakeview Counseling**

1844 Oak Hollow Drive, Suite B

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Traverse City, MI 49686

The more we physically move, the more we improve our outlook and mind.



**SMILE!**

It can help jump-start the process of being happier.

Don't isolate, call someone. Reach out and volunteer.

## It's Spring! Why aren't I feeling happier?

Often people experience an increase in symptoms of anxiety and depression in the spring. We understand why that long dark winter often increases our depression, but it's more difficult to understand why we are not feeling better in the spring. Here are some of the theories.

**Expectations** – We kept thinking we would feel better in the spring, and are disappointed that we are not. We may be witnessing others who appear happy and we are saddened that we are not. This may include attending more graduations, weddings and life events where people are looking happy and engaged, while we are feeling disconnected. A new season requires that we adapt to new expectations, new chores, new schedule, new goals, new activities, and sometimes even different people than we see in the winter.

**Circadian Rhythm** – Spring produces a change in our circadian rhythm (when to sleep, eat and work). This shift in our hormonal melatonin can produce anxiety. Some people find it difficult to sleep, which throws everything off.

**Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)** can show winter symptoms (weight gain, depression, oversleeping) or spring symptoms (anxiety, irritability, insomnia). A small percentage of people with SAD actually experience more melancholy in the spring.

**Allergies** – People affected by seasonal allergies can feel extremely tired and irritate. Allergens can cause inflammation in your brain and increase your bad moods.

### OK, NOW WHAT?

1. Enhance your physical health – Get sleep. Avoid alcohol (even a small amount can act as a depressant). Walk, hike, bike, anything; get physically active. Ask a friend to join you. Start with a small walk, and put your exercise time right in your calendar. Eliminate one unhealthy thing such as switching from soda to water or reducing food portions.
2. Re-energize with mental relaxation and renewal activities. Learn mediation techniques (there are lots of apps and webpages devoted to it). Make quiet time for yourself. Take six slow deep breaths. Fight against negative thoughts. Try a new activity such as kayaking, hiking trails, or biking. Surround yourself with beauty. Sit on a beach, walk a trail, check out the cherry blossoms, have a picnic along a river.



Get outside and into the sunlight. This can stimulate Serotonin and enhance a sense of calm.



People who spend a large amount of time on social media tend to view their own lives more negatively.

3. Quit criticizing yourself and all your decisions. Most of what we learn in life is through making hundreds of mistakes. That's what we do, that's how we learn; it doesn't mean you're a failure or doing anything wrong.
4. Apologize and forgive often. If you feel bad about something you did, go and tell the person, then let it go.
5. If you're faced with an overwhelming task, break it up into small parts. Just make a list and cover up all the steps, except the first one and just focus on that. If you're overwhelmed with cleaning, just pick one corner of the room.
6. Finally if you are continuing to feel depressed or anxious and it is interfering with your work or personal life, GET HELP!

## RESILIENT CHILDREN, RESILIENT ADULTS

The best way to help our children handle the ups and downs of our world and their own lives is to teach them resiliency. Of course our children benefit from the opportunities we provide them to grow and achieve but they also need the opportunity to learn to handle falling down and getting back up. With these skills your children will become easier to soothe and will be better prepared to navigate through life's challenges on their own.

### BE A ROLE MODEL OF RESILIENCY

Show your children to cope with the disappointments of life by staying cool and calm in the face of difficulties. Acknowledge your own shortcomings when you do have strong reactions. Avoid catastrophizing or hyper focusing on the dangers of our world.

### EDUCATE THEM ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Children need to learn to recognize the emotions that they are experiencing, they need vocabulary to communicate their emotions and they'll need guidance on how to effectively manage their own emotions.

### TEACH THEM THE SKILLS YOU USE

You may need to narrate your experience by letting them know when something is upsetting and share with them what you do to calm down and how you get back on your feet after you fall down.

### LET THEM MAKE DECISIONS

You can teach your children to identify problems, use their critical thinking skills to analyze options, brain storm solutions and take action. They will make mistakes, they need to make mistakes to grow and learn.



Reduce caffeine. It can increase stress and anxiety.



Eliminate alcohol. Even a small amount can add to depression.

Volunteer or start a new activity.

## KEEP KIDS SAFE BUT DON'T OVERPROTECT THEM OR SHIELD THEM FROM EVERY STRESSORS

Of course it's your responsibility to provide a safe environment for your children to grow up in, one that is free from abuse and injury. But our children need to experience small doses of stress, disappointment, or rejection to help them become strong and learn when to use their coping skills.

## Fall down seven times, get up eight times. Slow It Down this Summer

Many of us have been practicing mindfulness, living in the moment and focusing on one thing at a time. In some ways this is a reaction to a cultural message of being busy, productive, exhausted and competitive as a sign of success. So, as we look to the summer ahead, how can we help ourselves and our children slow down? First, we give ourselves permission to NOT sign up for loads of structured activities and allow time for exploration, internal and external....and maybe even some boredom. We all need time and space to explore our world and integrate our experiences. Whether this includes, hiking, crafts, biking, camping, beaches, reading or a mixture of all the bounty that Northern Michigan offers, we can choose the speed and the depth with which we want to explore.

\*Savor every day. Your way. Watch the sunrise. Or sunset. Do whatever you plan to savor with focus. Eat fresh berries, play a card game, color, knit, hit golf balls. Every day set your intention and meet it.

\*Weigh your options. Extend and accept invitations that you truly want to engage in. Say no to those that don't appeal, or that you feel you SHOULD not accept.

\*Open time and space for minds to wander. Yours, your kids, their friends, your friends. Practice being instead of doing.

\*Be spontaneous. If you have open chunks of time it allows for flexibility and opportunity to be open to creative ideas as they happen.

\*Sleep. Soundly. Because maybe your mind has quieted and has an easier time falling and staying asleep.

## **Lakeview Counseling**

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**ON THE WEB!**  
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### **More reading on this topic**

- [treehugger.com/culture/kids-need-more-time-play.html](http://treehugger.com/culture/kids-need-more-time-play.html)
- [parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/04/08/what-is-slow-parenting/](http://parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/04/08/what-is-slow-parenting/)
- [slowfamilyproject.wordpress.com/](http://slowfamilyproject.wordpress.com/)
- [grasstainguru.com/](http://grasstainguru.com/)
- [freerangekids.com/](http://freerangekids.com/)
- [simplekids.net/](http://simplekids.net/)
- [dailyom.com/library/000/000/000000452.html](http://dailyom.com/library/000/000/000000452.html)
- [carlhonore.com/books/in-praise-of-slowness/](http://carlhonore.com/books/in-praise-of-slowness/)

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