

Opinion

How to help combat seasonal depression

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As Wisconsinites, we get the privilege of experiencing all four seasons. This inherently means winter. Everlasting, frigid Wisconsin winters are not for the faint of heart.

It gets dark by 4 p.m. and, for some people, the thought of this is already scary. The downward spiral into what we refer to as “seasonal depression” is quick after Halloween. But it doesn’t have to be this way!

There are many ways to combat this gloomy feeling so that you can enjoy winter — what feels like our longest season — to the fullest extent, all while keeping your mind intact. This list doesn’t include a self-tanner, but maybe it should?

Get out of the house!

It’s so easy to coop ourselves up in our homes in winter, refusing to leave the warmth of our beds — but trust me, you need to get out of the house. Make plans with friends and keep them. It can be as simple as ice skating or maybe it’s putting forth the extra

effort to organize a ski getaway. Winter can actually be enjoyable with the right people and activities.

Exercise

Yeah, yeah. I know that everyone pawns exercise off as the cure to all things wrong in this world, but this time I actually mean it. This doesn’t mean that you need to wake up at the crack of dawn and drag yourself to the gym in snowpants. It could be as simple as walking on the treadmill or signing yourself up for that yoga class you’ve always wanted to try. And maybe going to the gym at the crack of dawn is your thing. Stay active this winter and your mind will thank you.

Engage in the little things

Maybe this means finding a new TV series to watch or buying a new book to read. It could mean cooking or baking new seasonal recipes. We all have our different hobbies to pass the time and they usually become more important in the winter. It’s the perfect time to finally learn that one confusing card game or finish building that Lego set you

started in the summer. Completing little tasks and projects are great sources of happiness.

Establish a routine

It’s so easy to fall out of routine when the weather plummets along with our motivation. A good way to keep away the winter blues is to find a good regimen that works for you.

Establish consistency in one way or another each day. Get yourself out of bed by making a really good cup of coffee; set aside time at night to journal or fold your laundry. It can be little things, possibly even chores, that you do daily that will establish a purpose and routine for yourself.

Talk to someone

Winter can be a difficult time for people in many different ways. This goes for holidays, too. Sometimes reaching out to talk to someone can be a really good thing. As the saying goes, starting is the hardest part. Try talking to a therapist; you may be surprised at how relieving it is, even if you think that you don’t need therapy. Maybe you don’t need it in the ways that other



Aubrie Selsmeyer / Advance-Titan

people need it, but that doesn’t mean it won’t help.

Winter does not have to be a dreadful time of the year, even though it seems to last so long in Wisconsin. We almost have to enjoy it in order to get through it. Waking up to wind chills of negative 20 degrees never gets easier, but maybe a warm cup of

coffee can make it bearable.

Don’t forget how magical the first snowfall is and how nice it is to swap pumpkin spice with peppermint. Be gentle on yourself this winter and take it day by day. Prioritize your mental health and make sure your family and friends are doing the same.

It’s time to support student free press

By the Advance-Titan Staff
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Being the victim of a home invasion, crashing your car while answering a text, going down in a plane crash. As humans, we often assume it will never happen to us; we believe those things happen to other people.

The same could be said of student First Amendment rights. Everything is going along fine until a school newspaper tries to cover a topic that school administrators feel is inappropriate or puts the school in a bad light. Often they’ll enact a policy stating all requests for comments must go through the marketing department or they’ll request to vet the interview questions first.

What many public information officers or school administrators fail to acknowledge is that they are placing illegal gag orders over the school’s community.

The Advance-Titan staff believe that Assembly Bill 551, which would protect student First Amendment rights by stipulating that student journalists are responsible for determining the content of student publications at public secondary schools and colleges, will improve our ability to learn real life journalistic skills in a student newsroom. The past has shown us that violations to our First Amendment rights can happen here unless we do something to stop it.

Take for example the Cardinal Columns, the Fond du Lac High School newspaper. In 2014, the staff had to fight back when their administration imposed a restrictive policy of prior review after the publication of a story on rape culture.

Then, in 2019, the



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The Advance-Titan staff works on this week’s paper in their Reeve Memorial Union office.

North Star, Oshkosh North High School’s student newspaper, was the victim of administrative censorship when the school took down a factually accurate story regarding the suspension of the assistant principal. On top of this, the school pressed the students to reveal an anonymous source and subsequently established a prior restraint process on the paper, two further blatant violations of the publication’s First Amendment rights.

And just last year, the Advance-Titan fought back against prior restraint when the UWO

marketing and communications department tried to require Advance-Titan writers and editors to submit interview questions to them in advance so they could vet them before granting us interviews.

It was nearly impossible for the A-T staff to report unbiased pieces about our campus to the community surrounding us without having access to all necessary sources. Assembly Bill 551 would stop that from happening.

We are going through higher education in a time unlike any other before it. In the age of in-

formation overload and constant technological advancements, the ability to learn journalistic skills freely is more important than ever.

There must be a specific, standard set of rules for student journalism. Students shouldn’t have to worry about ambiguous, subjective rulings from school administrators determining what students can and can’t write.

Bill 551 would allow students like us to experience the field in a safe and supported way while we pursue our education. Students at every level need to know

they can ask questions about and report on topics that are important to them and their communities without fear that their choices will be made for them or removed altogether.

It’s more important than ever that our institutions put learning first and foster environments that develop critical thinking and communication skills students will need to succeed in future workplaces and as citizens in a democracy.

Bill 551 will also encourage civic engagement among young people. UW studies have shown that students are unlikely to engage in difficult conversations, whether out of fear of being wrong or upsetting someone. Student journalism is a way to understand how to communicate in a professional, civil manner while thinking critically about any given topic.

We are preparing to become the next voices of the news in Wisconsin and by granting us the unrestricted access to prepare ourselves to be the best reporters possible, you are improving the entire state.

According to the Student Press Law Center website, 17 states have legislation that protects student press freedom, with West Virginia becoming the latest state on the list in March.

If you agree with us, join us in this fight to make Wisconsin No. 18. Support Assembly Bill 551 by emailing Rep. David Murphy, R-Greenville, chair of the Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities, at Rep. Murphy@legis.wisconsin.gov. Together we can help make the student press in Wisconsin truly free.