

Wintering Well: Living with Seasonal Affective Disorder

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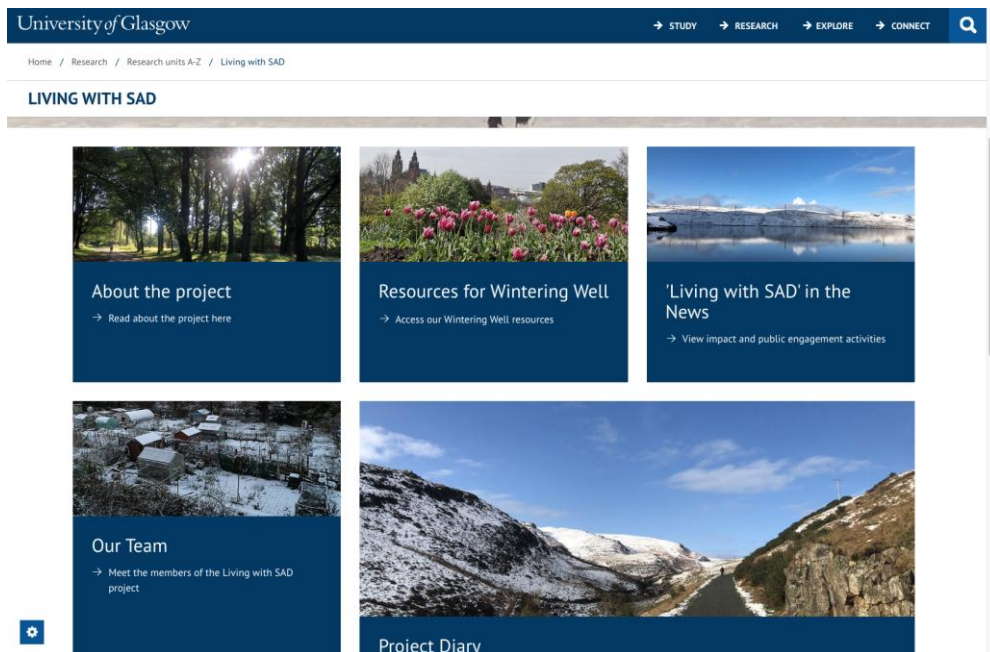
THE UNIVERSITY
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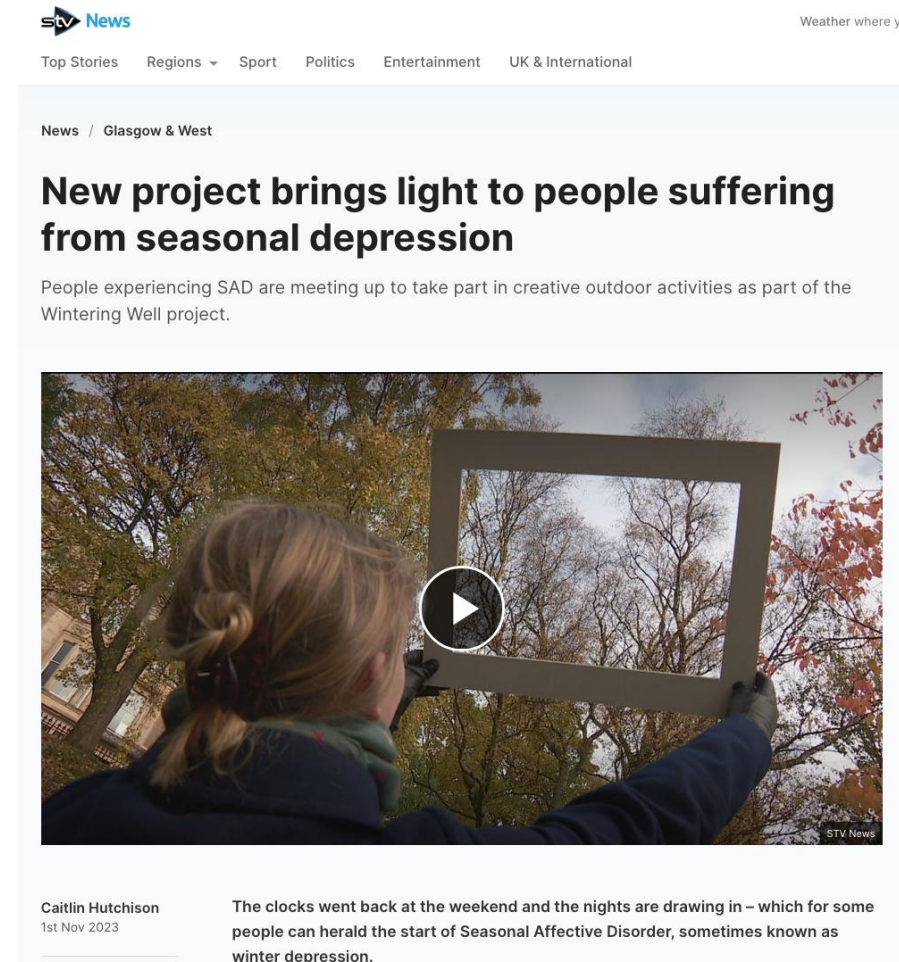
Economic
and Social
Research Council



Arts and
Humanities
Research Council



Read more about the research here:
<https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/az/livingwithsad/>



Introduction to resources and a partnership opportunity with Scotland's Community Link Workers

Pilot with some brief evaluation from Glasgow's CWL

The Guide to Wintering Well [has] useful tips for improvement in general mental wellbeing and coping better in winter months'

'Client(s) found online course of interest, a meaningful use of time, helpful tips advice dealing with life during winter months.'

The *Living with SAD* research team

University of Glasgow

→ STUDY → RESEARCH → EXPLORE → CONNECT

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LIVING WITH SAD

- Living with SAD
- About the project
- Our team
- Wintering Well Resources
- Project diary



Hester Parr (Principal Investigator)

Hester is Professor of Human Geography at the University of Glasgow with expertise in cross-disciplinary mental health research, creative research methods and the geohumanities. She manages all aspects of the project's research programme, timetable and impact plan.



Hayden Lorimer (Co-Investigator)

Hayden is Professor and Chair of Human Geography at the University of Edinburgh with expertise in creative geohumanities and cultural geography. He assists in overall project coordination and will co-direct the Wintering Well workshop series and creative data collection.



Shawn Bodden (Research Associate)

Shawn is a researcher in human geography at the University of Glasgow with expertise in interdisciplinary research approaches and geographies of community. He is responsible for data-collection, management and publication, as well as administrative duties within the project.

All from different backgrounds

No one way to approach SAD and low winter mood

Geographers, an artist and a psychologist



Chris Williams (Education and CBT Expert Partner)

Chris is Director of Five Areas Ltd. and Emeritus Professor of Psychosocial Psychiatry at the University of Glasgow with expertise in design and management of computer-based self-help and educational resources drawing on CBT-based life skills



Alec Finlay (Artistic Partner)

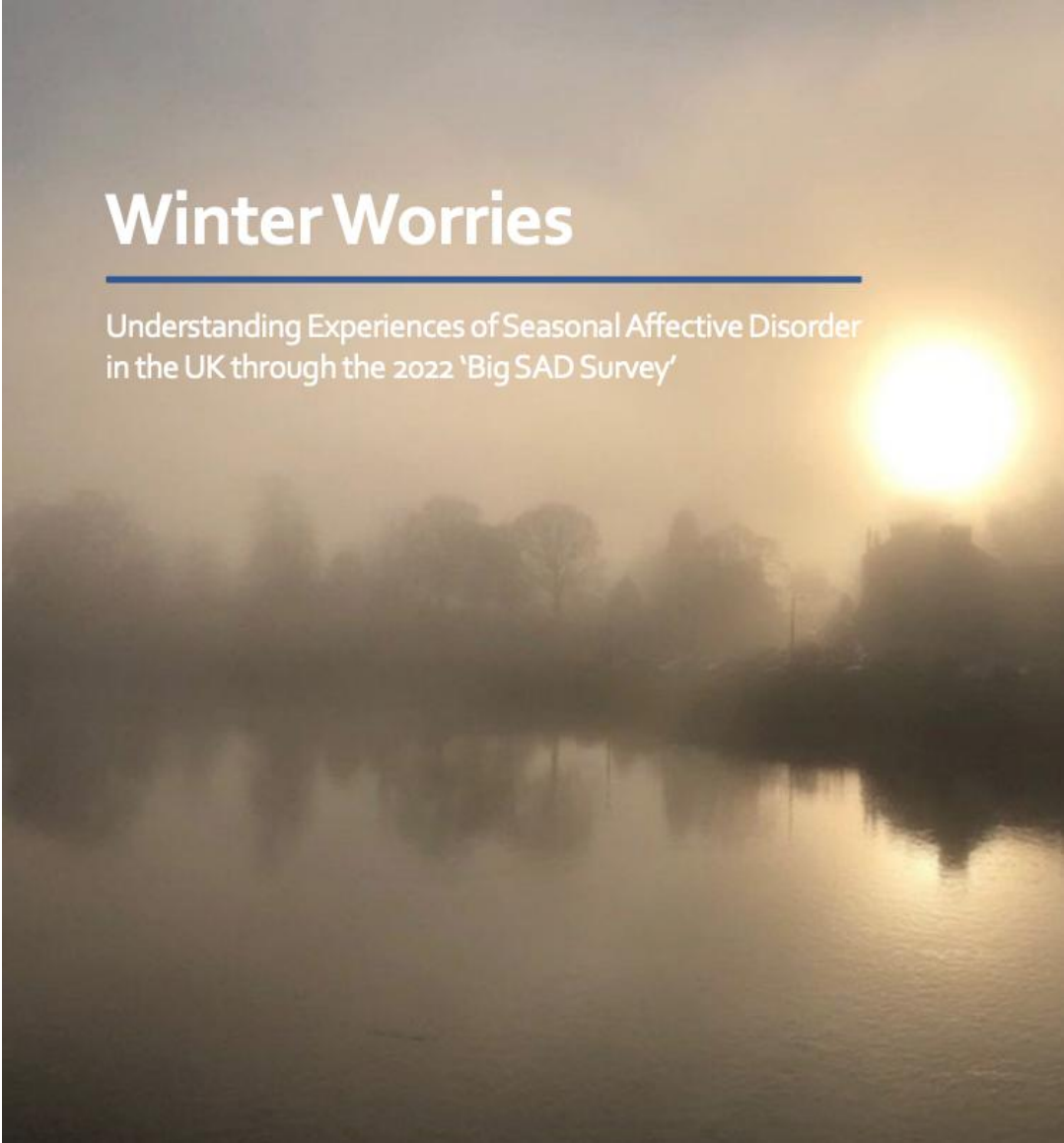
Alec is an artist and poet with expertise in creative research and public engagement with a focus on relationships between culture, landscape, wellbeing and healthcare. He will co-direct the Wintering Well workshop series and deliver artistic outcomes.



Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that has a seasonal pattern. The episodes of depression tend to occur at the same time each year, usually during the winter.

Low light is associated with low mood, lethargy, social isolation and struggle for people on a 'SAD spectrum'.

It is rare to have a clinical diagnosis but many recognize their SAD self.



Winter Worries

Understanding Experiences of Seasonal Affective Disorder
in the UK through the 2022 'Big SAD Survey'

WINTERING WELL

Would you like to take part in WINTERING WELL, a series of free creative workshops that will share ways to experience the shorter days and lowered light of winter differently?

Over 6 workshops, participants will join in a range of creative outdoor activities, inviting personal responses to the weather, light and dark, the skies, and the seasons. Each workshop will be led by a team of creative practitioners and university researchers interested in understanding experiences of lowered wintertime mood and Seasonal Affective Disorder. Workshops will take place in community spaces in Glasgow's Southside and West End on the following Saturdays from 1:00pm to 4:00pm:

October 29, 2022	January 7, 2023
November 12, 2022	January 21, 2023
November 26, 2022	February 4, 2023



The workshop series will culminate in a final celebration event on March 25, 2023 as we prepare for the clocks to jump forward.

To register your interest or for further information, please contact the research team by emailing shawn.bodden@glasgow.ac.uk by October 15. Hot drinks and snacks will be provided, and participants can be reimbursed for travel expenses.

‘I feel I’m half the person I know I am. I feel as if I’m in a cocoon waiting for the better weather. Just button down until it’s over then I can re-emerge as the real me.’

‘Low mood sets in, like a blanket covering you, creeping up slowly, then covering your whole body and soul.’

‘My mood affects the quality of my relationships with colleagues: everything is flat there is no energy enthusiasm.’

I don't get to see daylight as I go to the shift before it is properly light and finish after sunset. ***It doesn't really feel like there is a life outside of work during the winter.***

‘I struggle to concentrate for longer periods of time. I also find work harder when I'm cold - but heating is expensive. ***I'm less inclined to socialise after work.*** I don't wake up with enough time to do anything before work.

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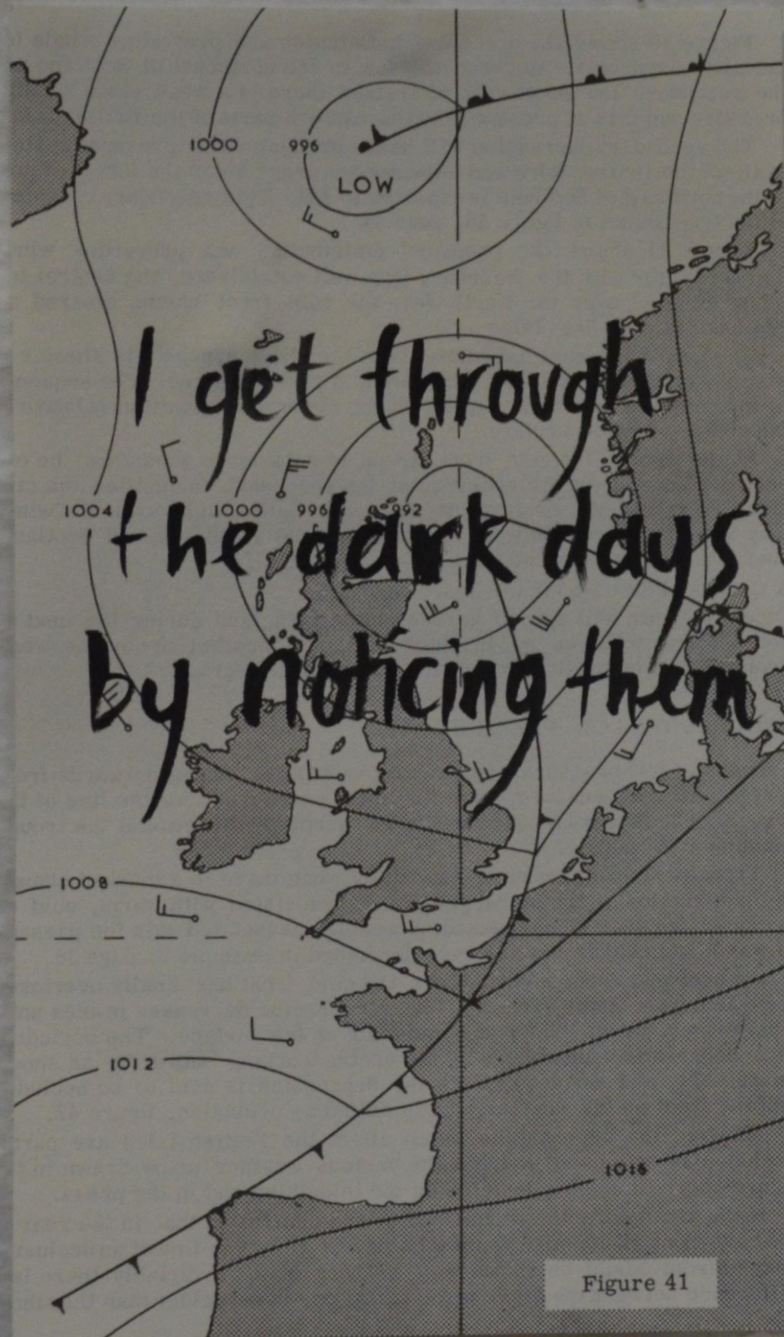
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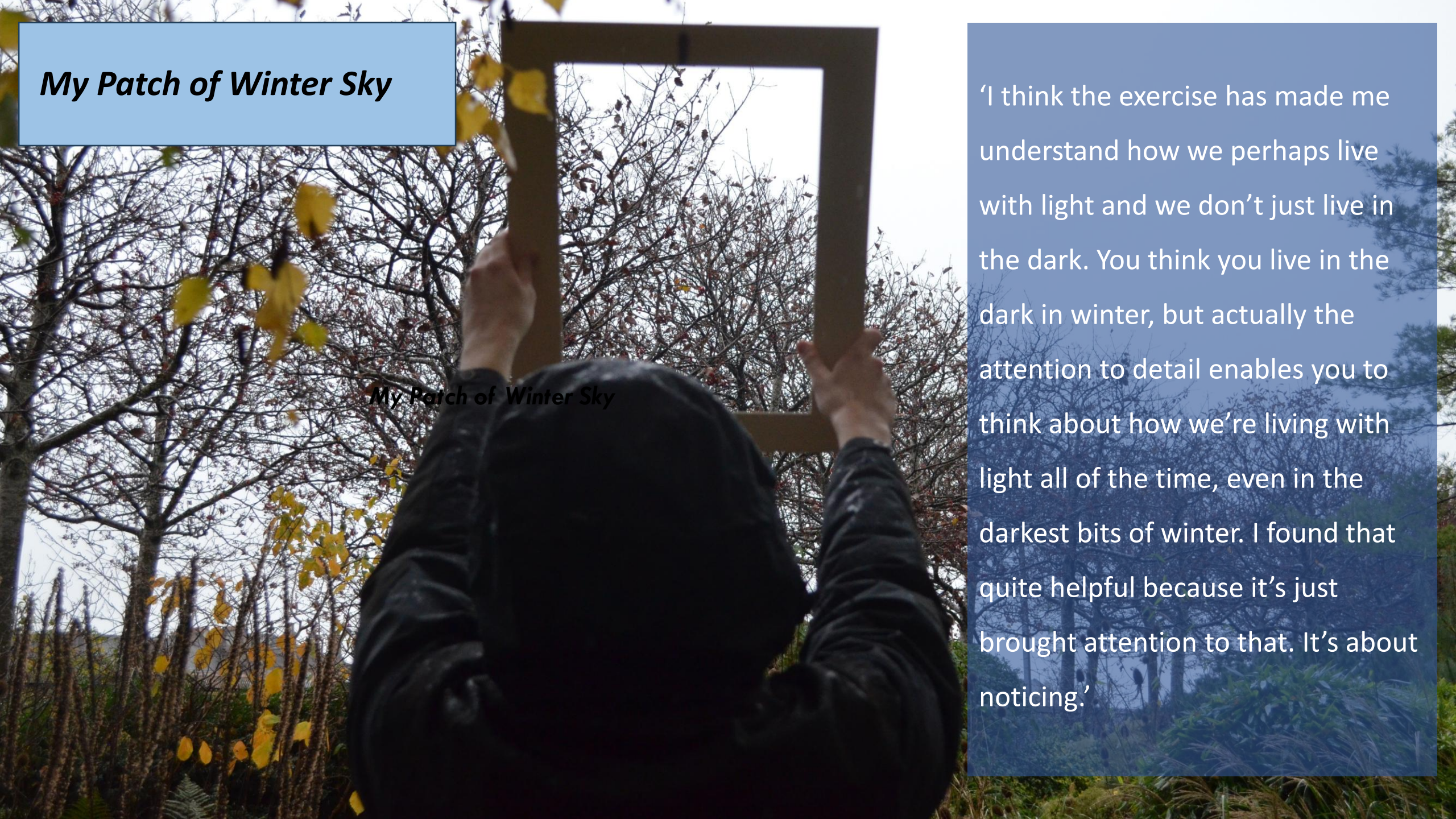




‘Wintering Well’
– working with
lived experience



*'I want to be able to winter well.
We live here. We live in a
country which will be
grey a lot of the time and
we've got to find a way
that helps us get through it.'*



My Patch of Winter Sky

My Patch of Winter Sky

‘I think the exercise has made me understand how we perhaps live with light and we don’t just live in the dark. You think you live in the dark in winter, but actually the attention to detail enables you to think about how we’re living with light all of the time, even in the darkest bits of winter. I found that quite helpful because it’s just brought attention to that. It’s about noticing.’

Key Messages

Wintering Well is not a cure

Wintering Well is a social and place-based process

Wintering Well is about finding your own path

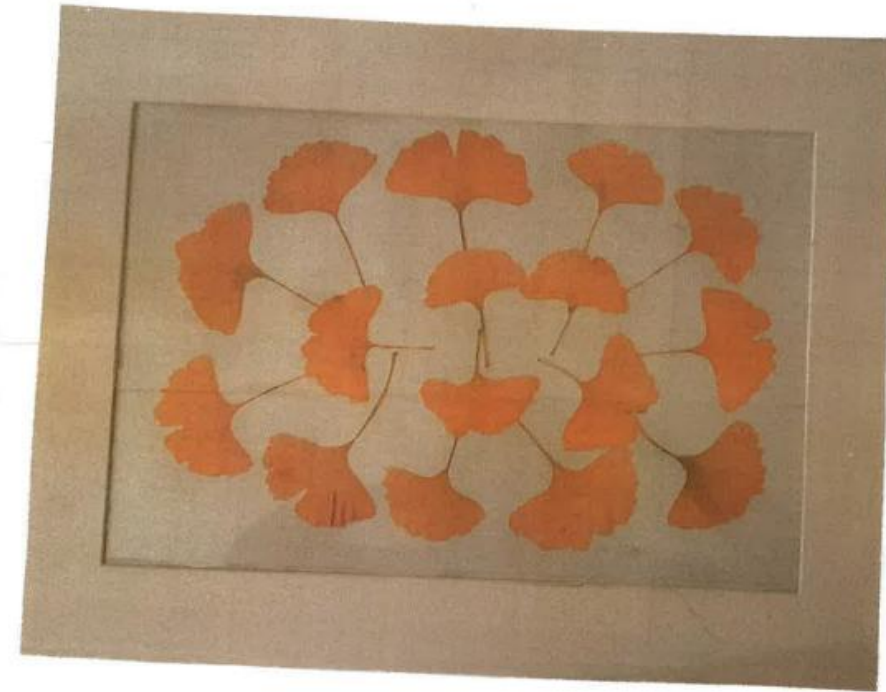
Isolation
↙ SAD ↘

Differently.
Being vulnerable
(to the right ppl
to the right extent)
could be really rewarding
+ connection-making

Session 2

There is no right or wrong way of dealing with SAD, but there is for each one a way.

Keep going out, focusing on bright thoughts and positive things, however small they may be.



Wintering Together Toolkit

A set of resources to support individuals in organising a Wintering Well group in their own local or online community

➤ Toolkit available soon (28 October)



WINTERING TOGETHER

A TOOLKIT FOR BUILDING YOUR OWN WINTERING WELL COMMUNITY
CREATED BY THE MEMBERS AND PARTICIPANTS OF THE LIVING WITH SAD RESEARCH PROJECT



Light is a Right: A Guide to Wintering Well

A creative guidebook for learning to live well in winter with written and photographic reflections from individuals who experience SAD

➔ [Access the book](#)



light is a right
a guide to wintering well

Living Life To The Full

for people who experience a pattern of feeling worse in the winter months

My daily winter routine:
Doing things that make you feel better

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 @liffnews  www.liff.com/facebook





Introducing the Living life to the full for **SAD** course

For people who experience a pattern of feeling worse in the winter months. Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) affects large numbers of people, and can be debilitating and limiting, resulting in emotional challenges, lowered mood, and feelings of anxiety in the winter months.

Seasonal Affective Disorder Online Course

This course has been informed by interviews and the shared experiences of people affected by low winter light.

The creation of the course was led by the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh working with the LLTTF® team and funded by the ESRC (the Economic and Social Research Council).

Content:

- Understanding SAD: Why do you feel as you do?
- Understanding winter thinking-: What do you see?
- A winter room of my making: creating your cosy space for winter
- My daily winter routine: Doing things that make you feel better
- Looking at things differently: Changing unhelpful thoughts
- Relationships in winter – Socialising my SAD self
- Wintering well with food and exercise

Plus a Lived experience course.



[Sign up for the course](#)

Making changes

- Why do you feel as you do?
- Understanding winter thinking:-
- Creating your cosy space for winter
- My daily winter routine: Doing things that make you feel better
- Looking at things differently: Changing unhelpful thoughts
- Relationships in winter –
- Wintering well with food and exercise

Plus a Lived experience course.





Self-directed online course

Living life to the full with SAD – for people who experience a pattern of feeling worse in the darker winter months

FREE

This research-developed course (funded by the ESRC) is based on and modified from the widely used and recommended Living life to the full online course and was developed for people who are living with SAD.

Type

Free self-directed online course ▾

Clear

1

Add to Basket

Wintering Together Toolkit

A set of resources to support individuals in organising a Wintering Well group in their own local or online community

→ Access the toolkit



<https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/az/livingwithsad/winteringwell/resources/>

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- Connecting with Others
- Finding Your Space and Pace

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- Plotting Your Own Course through Winter
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4 A SAMPLE WINTERING WELL PROGRAMME

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3. Our Sense of Winter Self
4. Winter Rooms of Our Making
5. Our Winter Neighbourhood
6. Socialising Our SAD Selves

5 CREATIVE PROMPTS

1. Turning to the Seasons
2. Winter Reading Club
3. Solstice Celebration
4. Walking, Together
5. Places to Be

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- A Sample Flyer
- Disclaimer



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A SAMPLE WINTERING WELL PROGRAMME

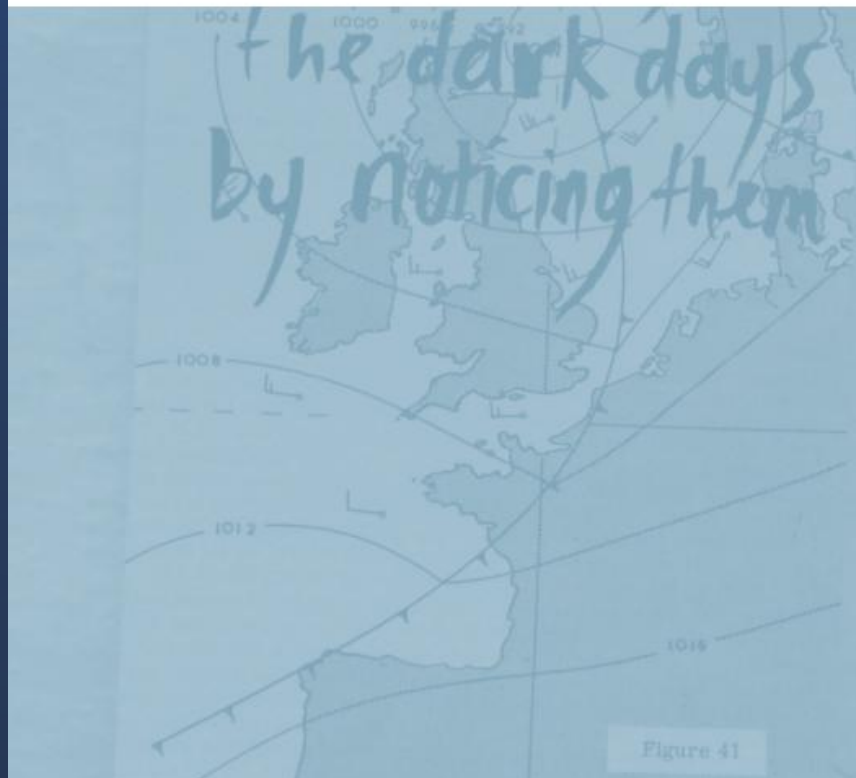
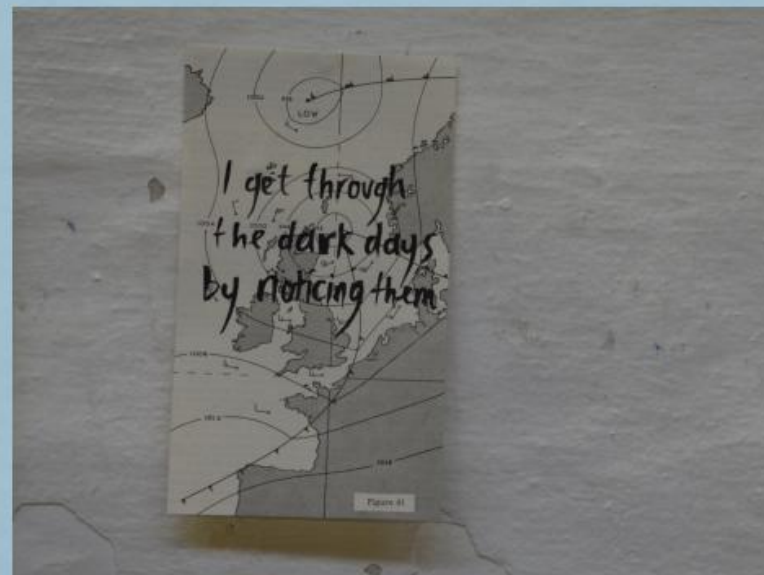


Figure 41



Light is a Right: A Guide to Wintering Well

A creative guidebook for learning to live well in winter with written and photographic reflections from individuals who experience SAD

→ Access the book



https://issuu.com/livingwithsad/docs/light_is_a_right_issuu

my patch of winter sky

make your own portable sky-frame,
stiff cardboard is good (cereal boxes, card),
or shape with index fingers and thumbs

then whatever the weather, step out-of-doors,
and, standing on one spot, tilt up your chin
hold the frame above your head
find a patch of sky that calls you

now wait for whatever thoughts happen,
watch the movements and the changes,
see the winter sky's colours and tones
write a few words to describe the light
in your patch of sky, and what you feel
using your wintering well journal

revisit your sky-patch when you need,
become familiar with it, tend to it,
heal with it, share it with friends

remember things beyond grey,
feelings more than gloom

Monday, 21st Nov.
PINK SUNRISE (with orange light)
glowing pink and
orange.
going out for a
few minutes
in the fresh air

The orange light
reflects on the elements' window, lighting them up like little
candle-sticks. I went out for a walk around the block
a few minutes, feeling more aware of the daily changes.

Thursday 24th just before sunrise
- intense blue sky, then
the color of the sun starts
lighting it up from the East
only a few clouds here
and there. Feeling tired, but
the light lifts me up. Wappa almost finished,
the day needs to start.

Friday 25th November - Sunrise with up of tea
Beautiful colours of
the sky. Feeling a bit
groggy this morning
(and that my journal
is messy and... some

Public awareness that winter depression is not inevitable

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News / Glasgow & West

New project brings light to people suffering from seasonal depression

People experiencing SAD are meeting up to take part in creative outdoor activities as part of the Wintering Well project.



Caitlin Hutchison
1st Nov 2023

The clocks went back at the weekend and the nights are drawing in – which for some people can herald the start of Seasonal Affective Disorder, sometimes known as winter depression.

The Guardian
Journalism with £5 per month

The Guardian
Newspaper of the year

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Dear winter, apparently writing a letter to you can help me hate you less

Anita Chaudhuri



Research suggests writing down your 'feelings' about winter can help with seasonal affective disorder. I'm willing to give it a go





Writing a letter to winter can help lift the blues for those with seasonal affective disorder, researchers say... As HORATIO CLARE writes: Dear Winter, so you're on your way again!

By [HORATIO CLARE](#)
PUBLISHED: 01:27, 26 October 2023 | UPDATED: 02:02, 26 October 2023



4
View comments

I am getting in touch on the advice of researchers at [Glasgow](#) University who suggest that people like me, who fear you, should send you a letter.

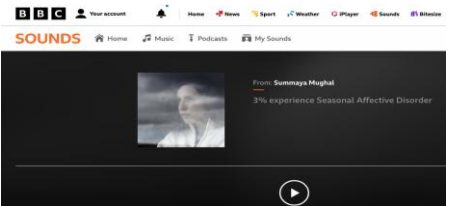
The idea is that writing to you can help lift the blues from those of us who dread your coming, both the seasonal affective disorder sufferers (about three per cent of us, who experience [depression](#) between November and February), and all of us who loathe your dark and dank, your flus and coughs, your leaking roofs and heating bills, your train cancellations and your endless, shuddering cold.

HEALTH
Exclusive by Helen McArdle
Health Correspondent
@HMcArdle17
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No Comments



Catherine (left) and Professor Hester Parr, of Glasgow University. Ms Inglis took part in a pioneering set of "Wintering Well" workshops run by Prof Parr last winter to create coping strategies for those living with Seasonal Affective Disorder. (Glasgow Herald/Terraviva)

The end of October already a "beautiful autumnal dawn" for Catherine, and she is not



ROBERT CRAMPTON

Why I'm writing a Dear Winter letter — and you should too

[Robert Crampton](#) | Tuesday October 24 2023, 12:01 am, The Times

As the nights close in, the mercury plummets and half the country finds itself under water, researchers at the University of Glasgow have come up with an innovative way of dealing with the gloom: we should all write a letter. A letter to whom, you ask? To winter. The cold season. The one between autumn and spring. The three months covering December, January and February. We should tell winter how it makes us feel, and perhaps this full and frank confession will help alleviate the coming sadness.



featured item on the latest Out of Doors broadcast. Catch-up listen from the weekend here: [bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m0...@HesterParr @Dailies54153708](#)



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News / Glasgow & West

New project brings light to people suffering from seasonal depression

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RADIO 4

Winter Well

Home

Episodes

BBC

WINTER WELL



A survival guide to winter, offering advice on how to get through the dark months.

RADIO 4

Winter Well

Home

Episodes

Episodes

All

Available now (5)

Next on (0)



Episode 5 - Winters of the Future

A guide to thriving in winter, offering advice on how to get through the darker months.



Episode 4 - Embrace the Darkness

A guide to thriving in winter, offering advice on how to get through the darker months.



Episode 3 - Get Out and Notice

A guide to thriving in winter, offering advice on how to get through the darker months.



Episode 2 - Let the Light In

A guide to thriving in winter, offering advice on how to get through the darker months.



Episode 1 - What Is SAD?

A guide to thriving in winter, offering advice on how to get through the darker months.

‘Living with SAD’ ‘Wintering Well’ working with Scotland's CLW



- Addressing low mood in winter
- Does not need SAD diagnosis
- Flexible model that encourages outdoor light and positive ways of noticing winter
- Guides for individuals and CWL group leaders or others in the community



‘Light Touch’ Evaluation

- **Evaluation form for community link workers or other professionals** who use our resources

- [‘Wintering Well’ & ‘Living with SAD’ resources: evaluating use for community link workers – Fill in form](#)

‘Wintering Well’ & ‘Living with SAD’ resources: evaluating use for community link workers

You have been linked to the University of Glasgow and Edinburgh’s ‘Wintering Well’ resources, which are free to use, public facing guides to living well in winter: <https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/az/livingwithsad/winteringwell/resources/>. This form ask for your evaluation of these resources. Thank you for your time.

The answers are anonymous, unless you choose to leave your email, and will be retained in the University of Glasgow in a data secure online environment for evidence of use-value with different professional communities.

1. Please state your job title and geographical area in which you work (be as general or specific as you wish).

Enter your answer

2. Which ‘Wintering Well’ resource did you use or refer to a client/patient ? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Light is a right: a guide to wintering well
- ☐ Living with SAD CBT online course
- ☐ The ‘Wintering Together’ toolkit

3. Please tell us anything about how you think one or more of these resources helped you or your patient to ‘rethink Winter’ and ‘rethink SAD’?

Enter your answer

LIVING WITH SAD

The following testimonials describe the changes the Living with SAD resources have enabled for the people who use them:

'I have worked through the online course... it has helped me recognize the seasonal dimension and given me a number of strategies to respond to it.'

'I love the frame the sky activity, I also look for light wherever I can. It does feel different. The materials and event have certainly helped me.'

'The collective experiences and knowledge and tips shared have helped me feel less alone and in better condition to face the difficulty.'



The original Wintering Well collective from 2022-23 have also formed their own legacy group and continue to meet and support each other in their experiences of SAD.

Contact: Hester.parr@glasgow.ac.uk