



# MoodNews

UPDATES FROM THE MOOD TREATMENT CENTER | SUMMER 2016

## What's Behind the Umbrella?

You may have noticed a new logo around here. It's not a beach ball – it's a rainbow umbrella. We worked with local artist Mike Foley to create an image that would capture what we do. It represents the many colors that moods bring – some vibrant and creative, others dark, angry or anxious. The umbrella symbolizes what we hope you'll find here: some shelter from the storm.

## When Sleep Meds Don't Work

Many things can get in the way of a good night's sleep, and sleep medications can't cut through all of them. Here are some strategies to make them work better:

**Food:** Take your sleep medicine on an empty stomach. Food, especially high-fat meals, can slow down their effect by 1-2 hours.

**Caffeine:** Avoid caffeine after 2pm (including chocolate). You can analyze how specific caffeine products effect your sleep at [www.rozerem.com](http://www.rozerem.com).

**Light:** Evening light shuts down melatonin, the hormone that helps you sleep. Special bulbs, glasses and computer programs can fix this

problem, see:

[moodtreatmentcenter.com/bluelight.pdf](http://moodtreatmentcenter.com/bluelight.pdf)

**Heat:** Sleep in a colder room (60-65°) to deepen sleep quality.

**Habits:** Daytime napping and irregular wake times can disrupt your body's clock in ways that block any benefits from sleep meds.

**Underlying problems:** Sleep medicines won't work as well if you have mental health problems that haven't resolved, including depression, bipolar, anxiety, ADHD and addictions.

Is your sleep medicine still not working? Talk to us – you may benefit from a brief therapy called CBT-insomnia. It takes some effort, but often works better than sleep medication. Read more at: [moodtreatmentcenter.com/cbtinsomnia.pdf](http://moodtreatmentcenter.com/cbtinsomnia.pdf)

## Therapy with Yoga

Yoga pulls together a number of stress-reduction techniques – including exercise, mindfulness and controlled breathing – so it makes sense that yoga helps depression and anxiety. Yoga reduces the physiologic stress response, such as racing heart, panicked breathing and high blood pressure. It also improves sleep, concentration, energy and chronic pain. Anna Leisa Sauser offers yoga instruction as part of individual and group therapy at our center.



## Seasonal Report

### Sunburn from Meds

Sunburn is more than just a painful rash. It causes premature aging and raises the risk of skin cancer.

Sunburn is worse for people taking certain medications, such as:

Lamotrigine, antipsychotics and tricyclic antidepressants.

Other commonly used medications that increase sensitivity to the sun include ibuprofen, naproxen, celecoxib, hydrochlorothiazide (HCTZ), doxycycline, tetracycline, ciprofloxacin, isotretinoin and acitretin.

To prevent sunburn, use broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30. Among brands recommended by *Consumer Reports*, the most affordable are: Up & Up Sport SPF 30 (at Target), No-Ad SPF 45, and Equate Baby SPF 50.

Apply sunscreen 15-30 minutes before going outside and reapply as directed (usually every 1-3 hours). A broad-rimmed hat (with a rim that

sticks out at least 4 inches), and sun-protective clothing (e.g. Solumbra brand) can also help. Sunglasses can further protect your eyes from ultraviolet rays. Look for the following specs in your sunglasses: UV 400 protection, blocking at least 99% of UVB and UVA rays, and glasses that meet ANSI Z80.3 requirements.

## New Hope for Cognition

Most mental health problems impair memory and concentration, and these symptoms are among the most difficult to treat. Exercise is actually more effective than medication here, and the dose is not too intense: 30-45 minutes of aerobics every other day (you can also break it up into 10 minute chunks).

Medications are starting to offer hope as well. Clonidine and guanfacine are both blood pressure medications that treat ADHD, and a new study found they improved cognition in schizophrenia. Unlike other treatments for ADHD, such as stimulants, these medications are generally safe in schizophrenia and mood disorders.

Another recent breakthrough is vortioxetine (Brintellix), which is one of the first antidepressants that improves both mood and cognitive symptoms (the other is bupropion

(Wellbutrin)). Vortioxetine may not be safe in bipolar disorder, but a few medications – pramipexole (Mirapex), modafinil (Provigil, Nuvigil), and lamotrigine (Lamictal) – do bring benefits in concentration and one of the main treatments for bipolar – lithium – is now known to prevent dementia.

Among natural approaches, an extract of Indian ginseng called Sensoril offers hope. It strengthens the brain's memory center (the hippocampus) and improves memory, processing speed and intuitive thinking in people with bipolar. Other promising natural products include omega-3 fatty acids, n-acetylcysteine, curcumin, and – for people who've abused cocaine or amphetamine – citicoline.

New psychotherapies are available that improve cognition. Innovative programs that help people develop new cognitive and social skills can make a difference for people with bipolar and schizophrenia. These go by names like *functional remediation* and *cognitive rehabilitation*, and they bear some resemblance to popular brain-training apps like luminosity. Rehabilitative therapy is standard for people who have problems walking, and we believe those who have trouble with memory deserve that kind of care as well.

## Changes You Can Use

Too many things stand in the way of people getting the healthcare they need. Thanks to Lisa Aiken, our new practice manager, we're making changes to lower those barriers:

**No more phone tag.** Reach your provider directly through the secure email link on our website. You can also use that link to schedule a phone or email consultation if you can't make it in to the office for a visit.

**Online scheduling and bill-pay.** You can schedule appointments and pay bills online through our patient portal. It also accepts payments from health-care savings accounts. Ask us for an invitation if you're not registered on the portal (the code to sign on – once you get an invitation – is 1212).

**Quicker med auths.** Insurers are declining more and more medications, so we now have full-time staff dedicated to fight for that coverage. Contact them through the link on our website.

**Faster check-in.** We've increased our front-desk staff and expanded into evening hours to speed up the appointment check-in process.

**Insurance Precertification.** It's increasingly difficult to know what services are covered as insurance plans change so rapidly. Let us help you with our new insurance precertification service.

## Cam Hines, New Therapist

Before coming to the Mood Treatment Center, Cam Hines ran an intensive therapy program for people with depression, bipolar, anxiety and other mental health problems. That background gave him a deep respect for the struggles those problems bring, and helped him develop effective techniques – like cognitive behavior therapy – for mood and anxiety disorders. Cam treats adolescents and adults in our Winston-Salem and Greensboro offices.