



## Seasonal Shifts: Navigating the Impact of Spring on Mental Health

The potential challenges individuals may face with the changing seasons, particularly focusing on how trauma can intersect with seasonal shifts. Practical tips for mental health providers to support their clients during this time.

**1- Body Image Issues:** As warmer weather prompts lighter clothing, individuals who are self-conscious about their bodies may experience heightened anxiety, stress, or depression.

**2- Allergy-Related Mood Changes:** For some, allergies in spring and summer can have an impact on mood. This can be due to poor sleep quality from symptoms or the inflammatory response triggered by allergies, which can affect the brain and lead to mood changes.

**3- Manic Episodes in Bipolar Disorder:** Exposure to light during the day and darkness at night helps regulate circadian rhythms. Seasonal changes in light exposure may disrupt circadian rhythms and trigger a mood episode in people with bipolar disorder.

**4- Disruptions to Routine:** The change in season can disrupt routines established in the colder months. This disruption can lead to stress and anxiety for individuals who rely on a strict routine for emotional stability.

### The Intersection with Trauma

- Anniversaries and Memories:** For some, spring can be a reminder of traumatic events or losses that occurred during this season, leading to increased anxiety, depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms.
- Sensory Triggers:** The smells, sounds, and sights of spring can act as triggers for individuals with trauma, bringing back memories or feelings associated with past experiences.

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## Cultivating Resilience

Harnessing the power of spring for trauma recovery involves a multidisciplinary approach, intertwining the natural themes of growth and renewal with evidence-based resilience-building strategies. Mental health providers can draw upon these themes to foster a supportive environment for trauma recovery, implementing practices that promote well-being, understanding, and resilience in their clients.

- **Community and Educational Programs:**

Use trauma and community resiliency models to teach communities about mental health and resilience, fostering inclusive environments for problem-solving and cooperation ([Psychology Today](#)).

- **Promoting Resilience:** View resilience as a common phenomenon that grows from adversity, emphasizing the importance of optimism, social support, and cognitive reappraisal in overcoming trauma ([Psychology Today](#)).

- **Trauma-Informed Care for Children:**

Implement comprehensive trauma-informed care by recognizing and responding appropriately to the symptoms of trauma, making environmental adjustments, and avoiding re-traumatization ([ChildTrends](#)).

- **Continuous Learning and Development:** Focus on ongoing training in trauma-informed practices to create safe, supportive environments that encourage recovery and resilience building ([Relias](#)).



## Practical Tips for Mental Health Providers and Caregivers :

1- **Be Observant:** Pay close attention to changes in your clients' moods, behaviors, and patterns as the seasons change. This includes being mindful of anniversaries of traumatic events or significant changes in their life.

2- **Educate and Prepare:** Help your clients understand how seasonal changes can affect their mental health and discuss strategies to cope with these changes. Preparing them for possible emotional fluctuations can make the transition easier.

3- **Encourage Healthy Routines:** With the change in daylight and temperature, encourage clients to adjust their routines in ways that support their mental health. This could include integrating more outdoor activities, adjusting sleep schedules, and finding healthy ways to enjoy the new season

4- **Sensory Awareness:** For clients sensitive to sensory triggers, work on developing coping strategies that can help them manage their responses to the sights, sounds, and smells of spring.

5- **Flexible Support:** Offer additional support or adjust therapy sessions according to the needs of the client during seasonal transitions. This may include more frequent sessions or incorporating new therapeutic approaches.

6- **Promote Social Connections:** Encourage clients to engage in social activities and support systems. Social connections can provide emotional support and mitigate feelings of isolation or loneliness during seasonal changes.

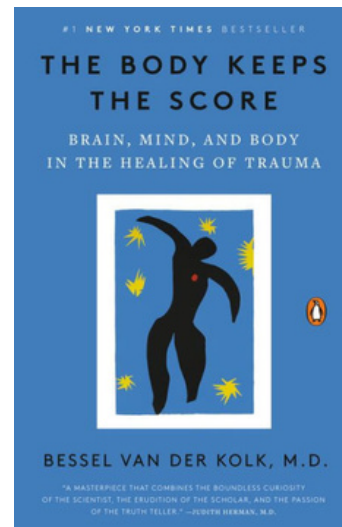
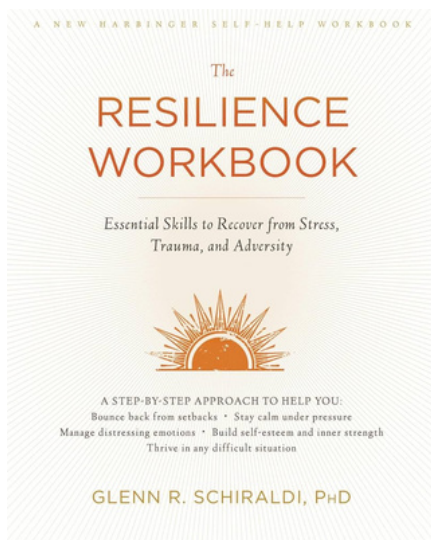
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## Helpful tools:



Meditation and mindfulness apps that offer guided sessions to help manage stress, sleep, and anxiety, useful for clients struggling with the transition into spring

## Reading Suggestions



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## Sources

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.). Seasonal affective disorder. National Institute of Mental Health. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/seasonal-affective-disorder>
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- Circadian rhythms. (2023). <https://www.nigms.nih.gov/education/fact-sheets/Pages/circadian-rhythms.aspx>