- Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) / Seasonal depression

COPING WITH YEAR-END PRESSURE AND SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER

The Midweek Sun · 12 Nov 2025 · 23 · By Chedza Chedza Makombo: Life Coach, Mentor Facebook: Chedza Makombo Instagram: Positive you by Chedza TikTok: Chedza Makombo

Almost every year around this time, social media fills up with posts like, “It’s almost year-end but I haven’t achieved anything,” or “It’s one month to December and I don’t know what I’m going to present when I go home this year.”

At the beginning of each year, many of us set goals, resolutions, and dreams we hope to achieve. But by November, when we realise we’ve only ticked off one out of five, frustration creeps in. The pressure to look successful, especially in front of family, friends, or even our children, can be overwhelming. We want to be role models, yet the fear of being judged or seen as a failure often weighs heavily.

In this article, we look at Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), a type of depression that occurs around the same time each year. During this period, many people feel tired, drained, anxious, and unmotivated. November often brings with it the pressure to show tangible results what we have achieved, what we’ve built, or how far we’ve come. But when you look back at your vision board and see only one or two achievements, it can feel discouraging.

One of the major stressors is the coming of December. Many people travel to their home villages for the holidays, and that requires money. If you haven’t saved enough, this can become another source of anxiety. The festive season also comes with expenses for weddings, Christmas parties, bridal showers, and entertainment events, all of which can stretch finances even further.

Some common symptoms of SAD include feeling sad, hopeless, or empty. Others may experience fatigue, oversleeping, or difficulty sleeping due to overthinking. You might find it hard to focus, make decisions, or pay attention. These symptoms are often made worse by high expectations, financial pressure, and the desire to create a perfect festive experience. The combination of increased social obligations, financial strain, and selfcriticism can lead to stress, anxiety, and even burnout.

Another factor is social isolation. Despite the busy holiday season, some people feel disconnected from others, especially if they cannot participate in holiday activities because of financial or emotional struggles.

There are, however, ways to cope with Seasonal Affective Disorder. Practicing self-care is key. While it’s good to have dreams and resolutions, it’s also important to accept that we may not achieve everything in one year. Appreciating small victories and being kinder to ourselves can make a big difference.

Engage in stress-reducing activities such as meditation, deep breathing, or yoga to boost mood and energy levels. Take short walks or spend time outdoors during daylight hours. Focus on

things that bring you joy and reduce stress. Connect with friends and family to ease feelings of loneliness.

If symptoms persist, speak to a mental health professional who can help you create a coping plan. In some cases, medication may be recommended. Scheduling activities to look forward to, staying hydrated, and limiting caffeine and sugary drinks can also help improve mood and focus.

By incorporating these strategies, individuals experiencing SAD can better manage their symptoms and still find joy and meaning in the festive season. Remember, progress no matter how small ,is still progress.