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For immediate release

News release

Conquer the winter blues

Calgary, AB – Jan. 19, 2015 – Feeling blue? You are not alone. January 19, 2015 marks the most depressing day of the year, often referred to as Blue Monday. The holidays have wrapped up, the post-holiday stress is setting in.

A combination of cold weather, bills piling up, returning to work and failed New Year’s resolutions, this time of year can be a challenge for many.

“Although the research behind Blue Monday is not scientifically-proven, this day provides a great opportunity to create awareness around mental health,” says Kim Busch, Calgary Counselling Centre, Associate Director of Counselling Initiatives. “Use today as an outlet to start positive conversations with those around you; family, friends, co-workers or your trusted support network, to help take a stand against the stigmas surrounding mental health.”

Five tips to manage the winter blues:

1. **Seek social support:** don’t underestimate the power of friends, family, mentors, co-workers, and neighbors. Don’t be afraid to ask for help or encouragement when you need it. Something as simple as a phone call, a chat over coffee, or an email can brighten your mood.
2. **Rejuvenate yourself:** make a conscious effort to eat well and exercise during this period. This will help get both your body and mind back on track and keep you from falling back into negative thoughts or feelings.
3. **Get some sun:** not only will the extra sunlight boost your Vitamin D levels, but it can also improve your mood. Winter is full of shorter and darker days and because of the cold weather most of us flock to indoor activities. Try keeping the blinds open and sit near windows where you can – and of course head outside during chinooks!
4. **Expect good things:** give yourself something to look forward to so that you feel better about leaving the holidays behind. Plan a weekend getaway, try a new sport, or meet a friend for lunch.
5. **Check-in with yourself:** it is important to take a moment and check in with yourself to gauge whether the feelings you are experiencing are temporary, or something more than that. **Take a short online and anonymous depression screening test to check in with your emotional well-being this time of year.**

Calgary Counselling Centre will be opening our online depression screening test for Blue Monday. It will allow people to take a short online and anonymous questionnaire to check-in with their emotional well-being. **You can find it at calgarycounselling.com on January 19th.**

Calgary Counselling Centre is always here to help. With no waitlist, a sliding fee scale based on income, and barrier-free access to counselling for all Calgarians.

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For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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