

# Light Therapy Information Sheet

*(The Multi-Faith Chaplaincy Centre has a 'Lumie Brazil' bright light therapy box)*

## When should I use it?

It's best to tackle the winter blues and SAD as soon as possible. Look out for early signs – often in September/October – and if you start to feel lethargic, anxious or irritable, start using the light box.

Most people can skip a day here and there, especially when the weather is bright. As Spring comes around you will probably start to cut back your light therapy; your body will tell you if it's too soon and if you notice your symptoms returning, you can contact us to book light therapy sessions.

Light therapy is proven to put you in a better mood, to boost alertness and to help you feel more awake.

## What time of day?

If you're using light therapy to help with the winter blues or SAD - bright light in the morning has been shown to be most effective although some people find early evening light exposure is beneficial. Whether you are using light therapy for winter blues, SAD or as a general pick-me-up, once you've found a pattern that's right for you, try to use it around the same time every day if possible.

***I find it difficult to get going in the morning*** - try to have a lightbox therapy session in the morning

***I feel sleepy or fall asleep too early*** – try to have a lightbox therapy session in the late afternoon (not too close to bedtime as you may find it difficult to get to sleep)

## How long?

Everyone is different but if you use the 'Lume Brazil' approximately 35cm/14" as suggested by Lumie, 30 minutes will probably be enough for effective SAD treatment. There's no harm in using it for longer and if you're more comfortable with the box further away from you, then less light will reach your eyes and you'll need to use it for longer.

If you find your eyes ache slightly, try moving it further away or switching it off for a while.

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Light therapy treatment should be used daily in winter (and dull periods in summer)

Start in early Autumn, preferably before the first symptoms appear

Always follow the manufacturer's instructions (see above)

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It is fine to carry out normal activity such as reading, working, eating etc. whilst sitting in front of the box

There is no need to stare directly at it as long as the light enters the eye

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Treatment is usually effective within 3-4 days and the effect continues provided it is used every day

Do not wear tinted lenses or any device that blocks the light to the retina of the eye

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***NB - If you suffer any adverse effects after using the light box, please consult your GP.***

Suggested resources –

Mind – Seasonal Affective Disorder Information (booklet downloadable as a PDF) from -

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

[www.sad.org.uk](http://www.sad.org.uk)

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/seasonal-affective-disorder-sad/treatment/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/seasonal-affective-disorder-sad/treatment/)