



# Preparing for Seasonal Weather Changes

## SUPPORT GROUP LEADER DISCUSSION GUIDE

### Session Goals

- Help participants understand how seasonal/weather changes can affect vestibular symptoms
- Share practical preparation strategies
- Reduce anxiety by shifting from fear → preparedness
- Foster peer connection and shared coping strategies

### 0:00-5:00 | Welcome & Ground Rules

Leader Script (adapt as needed):

“Welcome, everyone. Today we’re talking about how seasonal weather changes can affect vestibular symptoms—and how we can prepare in ways that give us a greater sense of control. As always, this is a space for sharing, not medical advice. Please participate at your comfort level.”

Quick reminders:

- Confidentiality
- No pressure to share
- Take breaks if needed

### 5:00-10:00 | Gentle Check-In

Prompt (round-robin or chat):

- “What season or type of weather tends to affect you the most?”

Optional follow-up:

- “One word to describe how weather changes makes you feel?”

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## 10:00-20:00 | Understanding Weather Triggers

Leader Talking Points (brief, simple):

Weather-related triggers may include:

- Barometric pressure changes
- Storms (rain, snowstorms, hurricanes)
- Spring allergies
- Extreme heat
- High winds (can disrupt balance perception)
- Ice/slippery conditions (fall risk)

Also highlight:

- Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) can worsen coping capacity
- Media coverage of storms can heighten anxiety and symptom sensitivity

Discussion Questions:

- "Which weather changes trigger your symptoms the most?"
- "Do you notice symptoms before, during, or after weather shifts?"
- "How does media coverage of storms affect your stress or symptoms?"

## 20:00-35:00 | Preparation & Practical Strategies

Introduce the concept:

"Preparation can help shift us from feeling reactive to feeling more in control."

### 1. Vestibular Toolkit

Ask participants to share what they include or might include:

- Medications
- Sunglasses/hat
- Water/snacks
- Relaxation tools (earplugs, calming apps, essential oils, etc.)
- Mobility aids
- Emergency supplies (if evacuation is possible)

Prompt:

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- “What’s one thing you already use that helps during weather changes?”
- “What’s one thing you might add to your toolkit?”

## 2. Planning Ahead

Topics to cover:

- Tracking the weather with apps
- Planning rest time before/after storms
- Keeping devices charged
- Having essentials accessible

Prompt:

- “How do you currently prepare when you know a storm is coming?”

## 3. Communication Strategies

Highlight:

- Talking with family/friends ahead of time
- Explaining symptom impacts
- Creating a code word or signal if communication becomes difficult

Prompt:

- “Have you talked to loved ones about your needs during weather events?”
- “What would be helpful for them to understand?”

## 35:00-45:00 | Mental & Emotional Coping

Leader Talking Points:

- Anxiety can amplify vestibular symptoms
- Anticipation of weather can be as impactful as the weather itself
- Grounding practices can help regulate the nervous system

Suggested Practices:

- Simple breathing (e.g., slow inhale/exhale)

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- Mantras (e.g., "I am safe. I am prepared.")
- Mindfulness or prayer/spiritual grounding
- Limiting exposure to sensationalized weather news

Discussion Questions:

- "What helps you stay calm when symptoms or weather anxiety increase?"
- "Do you have a grounding phrase or practice that works for you?"

## 45:00-55:00 | Group Sharing: What Works

Prompt:

- "What's one strategy you've learned (today or previously) that you want to try?"
- "What advice would you give someone newly dealing with weather-related symptoms?"

Encourage peer validation and shared problem-solving.

## 55:00-60:00 | Wrap-Up & Takeaway

Leader Script:

"Today we talked about how weather changes can affect us—but also how much we can do to prepare. Even small steps can make a big difference."

Final Reflection Prompt:

- "One small thing you will do before the next weather change?"

## Optional Closing (Grounding Exercise - 1 minute)

Guide a brief calming exercise:

- "Take a slow breath in... and out..."
- "Notice your body supported where you are..."

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## Leader Notes

- Watch for anxiety escalation—gently redirect toward empowerment
- Normalize all experiences (there is no “right” way to respond)
- Keep pacing slow and flexible
- Offer breaks if needed

## Optional Follow-Up Resources (if you provide them)

- Weather tracking apps
  - Vertige app - allows you to track symptoms and triggers, and tracks barometric pressure changes if you allow location tracking.
- VeDA educational materials-[vestibular.org](http://vestibular.org) (search for “environmental impacts”)
- Relaxation or mindfulness apps (search VeDA website for “relaxation”)
- Fall prevention tips (search VeDA website for “fall prevention”)