

People returning to work may battle post-holiday blues

Yang Guang, a 31-year-old game developer, took his bride to the Maldives and Hong Kong for a monthlong honeymoon four years ago. When he returned, Yang hardly remembered how to build his 3D characters.

"I was thrilled at first. Almost a month doing no job at all," Yang recalled. "But going back to work from that, I found myself completely lost. It took me a month to pull myself together."

Experts in modern society have developed a term for what Yang went through — "post-holiday syndrome". It describes the little blues and, in some cases, depressions one tends to feel after spending a period of time away from work. Some get anxious, some find it hard to concentrate, others just cannot fall asleep.

People all over the world seem to have problems dealing with such downs. They start to search for articles like "how to cope with post-holiday syndrome" after major holidays like Christmas, New Year, and in China, the Spring Festival.

Zuo Lin, a Beijing-based psychotherapist specializing in treating depression with group therapy, said there is no easy cure.

"For some, the cause can be simple. For others, it might have a more profound root," Zuo said, adding that the Spring Festival may remind people of past trauma and sometimes make it worse. In her 40s, Zuo was forced by her parents-in-law to give birth to a second baby.

"But I don't want it. I have my plans for my work. It might not qualify as a career, but I still treasure it," Zuo said. She had to talk to her professional peers to get these negative feelings off her chest.

Yuan Shengchen, 25, was bored sitting at his desk on Friday, the first business day after the weeklong Spring Festival, during which he drove around Beijing's suburbs.

Working for a State-owned publishing house headquartered in the capital, Yuan's job is fairly detail-oriented and attention-consuming—he has to remember all 88 editors' individual requirements and convey them precisely to four printing houses, and make sure the latter turn over the work on time.

Yuan said a vacation, even a short one, can greatly blur his memory.

"I never have any 'mornings' on vacation. My days always start after noon," Yuan said. Yet on a workday, like this Friday, he had to get out of bed before 6 am. His office is in Chaoyangmen, close to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while he lives in Shangdi, the very northern part of the city.

Yuan basically did nothing that day, as his contacts at the printing houses were still on vacation. He was lingering in the office, sat for a while, then stood up for a quick walk.

“The first day is always slow. I’m counting down to five o’clock.”