

COMMUNITY LIFE

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Page B1

Dealing with bouts of depression

■ Millions of Americans, both young and old, suffer the effects of depression, some without even realizing it.

BY MARY RODRIQUE
STAFF WRITER



The shorter daylight hours of November and December, with accompanying cold, sloppy weather and gloom, can lead some folks to feelings of sadness, even depression.

Seasonal depression is but one of many variations of the malady. An estimated 17 million adult Americans suffer from depression during a one year period, according to the National Institute of Mental Health.

And it's not just adults who suffer from it. In one Farmington middle school, two students are currently hospitalized for depression and many others are on medication, according to a teacher.

Dr. Paul Kaye, a clinical psychologist who treats people with depression, spoke recently to a group of senior citizens at the Farmington Hills Activities Center on ways to recognize and cope with depression.

"This weather doesn't help me any, but I'm dealing with a lot of other issues, too," said Beth, who works through her feelings of sadness by writing down her problems.

"I've worked with kids, adolescents and adults," said Kaye, who is on staff at Wayne State University and the University of Detroit in addition to the Northland clinics in Southfield and Rochester.

"Depression can be a lifetime experience," he said. "Or it could last several months to several years. It's serious when it interferes with life."

Kaye explained that sadness is a



STAFF PHOTO BY SHARON LAMOREL

Discussing Depression: Dr. Paul Kaye, psychologist, talks to seniors at the Farmington Hills activities center recently about the many faces of depression. Many people suffer its effects.

natural emotional reaction to disappointment or loss. To never feel sad would not be human, he added.

Some of the events triggering sadness for senior citizens in particular include the death of a spouse or close friend, retirement, failing health, or friends moving away to Florida, he said.

"These unpleasant, painful feelings are unavoidable. When people get sad it leads to a course of action whereby they develop a strategy of problem solving skills," Kaye said.

He cited Freud's essay on melancholia to illustrate the typical order of mourning.

"In the first stage, you think about the lost person, you are preoccupied with what they meant to you. You are keeping that person alive in your thoughts."

"When my mother died, I was arm wrestling with reality. I was sad that I would never see her again. I never shared my family with her. I wanted to hold onto her."

"At some point, my thoughts

began to shift. Sadness was replaced by memories of positive experiences with her. At the second stage, we take a philosophical view, relocating the person to heaven or whatever your world view."

"In the third stage, once we've shifted our view, we can begin to move on, reinvest that energy into a new event or relationship."

Kaye says that for many parents who have lost a child prematurely due to illness or an accident, they

See DEPRESSION, B2



STEPHANIE & JAMIE OLEN

Volunteer work sets example for our children

Volunteers wanted. These two words make most of us flinch. Who has time to finish their own "to do" list, let alone take on more responsibility?

I became president of the Farmington Hills Community Women by default. Most of the "regulars" had taken their turn. Rank does have its privileges, though. I got a big wooden gavel and a battered brown brief case to carry around. More importantly, my seven year old daughter, Jamie, is impressed. I don't think she realizes that I didn't exactly have to campaign for the position. Although the title hasn't brought any lucrative endorsements, the work is rewarding.

The Farmington Hills Community Women is a volunteer group with about 20 members. Although small in number, we have supported many important projects. Among others, these include the Farmington Emergency Fund, Botsford pediatric department, Gilda's Place, and the Haven shelter for battered women. The play structure at the Farmington Hills library was also funded by our group.

One of the many spinoffs of this volunteer work is its effect on our children. Kids learn by example, and we have seen ours take on charitable projects of their own.

Last summer, Jamie and her buddy, Kate Pawlukiewicz, donated the entire proceeds from

See VOLUNTEERS, B2

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