

Depression - a hidden cause of teens' mood, behavior problems

This is the first in a series of four articles related to teenage depression. A longer, more comprehensive version of this series, including some ideas for primary prevention, is available by e-mail (bridgecomm@aol.com), as a public service.

The series was reviewed by J.P. Leluzzi, D.O., Director of Consultation and Pediatric Hospice in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neuroscience of Wayne State University, and by Helene Mills, Ed.D. former principal at Seaholm High School, Birmingham and currently assistant professor in the Education Leadership Department at Oakland University, Rochester.

Sam is described as one of the 20 percent of adolescents who feel "emotionally empty" and will have a long series of problems, including depression. Sam hates school. If he can rouse himself in time for morning classes, he attends until noon and skips out for the day. He would rather hang around with his friends, because they like to listen to music and at times smoke pot. He seems not to care about homework, but his mother does and is always on his "back." He sneaks in the house late after moon has gone to bed so he can avoid another fight. It seems like Sam's mom is always furious these days, either because the school called about his cutting

classes or because she noticed money missing from her wallet. Dr. Gail B. Sharp, Director of Adolescent Medicine for Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, says Sam is clinically depressed. He is not showing normal teen behavior. While Dr. Sharp states that adolescence is not a period of upheaval, stress and emotional turmoil, professionals clarify further by indicating that the intensity of the emotions shown and the mood manifested, determines whether the behavior is normal or shows signs of depression.

Sorting out the signs of clinical depression, as opposed to the normal mood swings of adolescence, is hard. Often times, adults see the signs of depression as a phase teens are to go through. Some people mistakenly believe that dealing with depression is a matter of character or will, something a person could "snap out of" if they "just wanted to." Depression is a family illness. Depression is a community illness.

Many teens see depression as a weakness and therefore something to hide. Most teens will have trouble, especially if they are depressed, connecting their emotional state to their behavior. Therefore, a change to poor school performance is often the first indicator of a more serious problem such as depression. In general, teens are better at saying how they feel if they feel secure to those they talk. Adults are better observers of teen's behavior rather than eliciting the teen's feelings.

Secondary school principals know that 80 percent of the teens are not typically involved

in rebelliousness, irritability, anger and high-risk behavior. School is the teen's profession. In the other 20 percent of teens, however, if this type of behavior is allowed to continue, serious consequences for the adolescent, his family, and his community can result. If unchecked by their caregivers, these include addiction to alcohol and other drugs, pregnancy, school violence, poor grades and dropping out of school. These behaviors frequently reflect the teen's response to depression or contribute to it and must not be dismissed or overlooked.

Principals and assistant principals who are in charge of attendance and discipline should have a clear understanding of depression disorders so that they can refer students appropriately. A reduction in punitive measures will occur once that understanding occurs. Additionally, all teachers of adolescents need to be aware of the signs of depression. In-service training is a very desirable methodology. Future articles provide information and resources to develop the in-service training.

Birmingham resident Alice McCarthy, Ph.D., is a nationally known parent educator, writer and editor. Her Healthy Teens may be ordered for \$9.20 including shipping & handling and tax by calling (248) 946-1020, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday - Friday. She is the mother of five children and grandmother to eight young children. To leave a message for McCarthy, from a touch-tone phone, call (313) 953-2047, mailbox 1894, or write her at The Eccentric, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009.

WEDDINGS AND ENGAGEMENTS



Bull-Scott
Sandra Scott became the bride of William Bull during a June 2 ceremony at Lake Tahoe, Calif. The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Scott of Troy. She is a graduate of Oakland University and employed by Investaid, Birmingham. The groom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Bull of Oakwood, Ontario. He is a graduate of Queens University, Kingston, Ontario and is employed by Chrysler Corp., Auburn Hills. A reception was held at the Marriott Hotel, Troy, on July 25. Mr. and Mrs. Bull are making their home in Rochester Hills.

On submitting announcements

Local engagement, wedding, anniversary and birth announcements run in the Thursday and Sunday editions of The Observer & Eccentric. Residents of the Birmingham-Bloomfield, West Bloomfield and Southfield areas should send their announcement, with or without photograph, to: Altn Brides, The Eccentric, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009. Residents of the Troy and Rochester areas should send information to The Eccentric, 1814 S. Rochester Road, Rochester Hills 48307. Residents of the Farmington area should send information to the Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington 48335. For a recorded message, call (248) 901-4730 for The Eccentric and (313) 953-2065 for The Observer.

Wing-Frasier

Michelo Louise Frasier and Douglas Charles Wing were married Oct. 18. The bride is the daughter of Myron and Ann Frasier of Southfield. She is a graduate of Southfield High School and The University of Michigan. She finished her bar exam in California, and is employed by the San Francisco law firm of Jackson, Tufts, Cole and Black, LLP. The groom is the son of Charles and Fong Wing of El Cerrito, Calif. He is a graduate of El Cerrito High School, University of California at Berkeley



and the State of California Police Academy. He is a detective with the University of California Police Department. The newlyweds will honeymoon in Hawaii this fall, and they are making their home in Walnut Creek, Calif.

BIRTHS



Annemarie Patricia Trotta

Len and Cindy Trotta of Beverly Hills announce the birth of their daughter, Annemarie Patricia, on June 1 at Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak. Annemarie has a brother, Lenny and grandparents, Len and Barb Trotta of Beverly Hills and John Cholewa of Indianapolis, Ind.



Hranchook-Ladouceur

Dr. and Mrs. Michael Hranchook of Bloomfield Hills announce the engagement of their daughter, Marie Elizabeth, to Scott Norman Ladouceur, son of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Noviss of Ontario, Canada. The bride-to-be is a graduate of Lahser High School and Oakland Community College. She is employed at Rice Aid Pharmacy. Her fiancé is a graduate of Groves High School. He is employed as a commercial roofer. A September wedding is planned at Holy Name Church.

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