

DEPRESSION

Young people can hide their suffering

Author's note: The topic of depression and mental illness is serious and deserves respectful consideration of people who suffer from these conditions. This column touches briefly on a few aspects of this disease.

Tom Cruise once received my respect and admiration, that is, until he voiced his opinions about depression and other mental illnesses. There is truth to the fact that exercise and vitamins help people to feel better when they find themselves down in the dumps. Endorphins do release themselves into the bloodstream during exercise. This makes people feel better, providing a natural high. However, depression and mental illness are real. Both chemical and experiential circumstances contribute to the onset of each. These conditions do not discriminate, and are often hereditary.

Teenagers often describe their moodiness or state of mind being a result of depression. Feeling dark and gloomy to the point of thinking the world takes a stance against you is par for the course of teen experiences. The inability to find comfort in who you are, what you believe, and where your life is headed is justifiable cause for feeling sad, anxious, and unsure.

Some people enjoy misery and do not have the slightest clue of how to be happy. These individuals are not necessarily depressed, but better described as pessimists. Other people who feel scared and frightened by not being able to pinpoint the source of their frustration or sadness are

potentially depressed. Then there are those who have awareness of their situation, but choose not to confront it, due to fear or denial. Lastly, depression has the ability to overcome a person's well being to the point where getting out of bed each morning becomes a challenge.

Depression and certain mental illnesses can disguise themselves. A young person surrounded by friends, living in a stable

home, and appearing "happy" might suffer inside from their true feelings. Adults often seem to believe that students fitting the above description are "OK" and do not require worry or concern. Many people refuse to accept the fact that their kilter is off, resulting in the continuation of a downward spiral of confidence and self-esteem.

In today's society, it is totally acceptable to have issues that require medical or therapeutic attention. Depending on the cir-

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ON THE CHALKBOARD



cumstances of the student facing depression, various forms of treatment are available. Therapy, whether it is with a psychologist, psychiatrist or counselor is a good

place to start. From there, the severity of the situation can be determined, followed with a plan of action to help the patient feel better.

Students feel depressed for numerous reasons. Concern over body image, school, family rela-

and total neglect of their physical being might occur. Thoughts of suicide potentially enter the mind, but with proper intervention, can be prevented and worked through.

Sometimes depression is temporary and has the ability of being cured. Other times, people live with this disease for the rest of their life. Medication, therapy, and various treatments make it possible for those who suffer from depression and other illnesses to live happy and productive lives.

Dealing with depression is challenging. Support, love and understanding from family and friends makes it just a little bit easier.

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tionships, social situations and individual self-worth are common causes for sadness, anger, or anxiousness. Confiding in friends, writing in a journal, or finding an outlet such as exercising or music are both familiar and healthy ways of dealing with difficult issues.

Unfortunately, some students experience pain that is too much to endure. They might start hurting themselves in attempt to alleviate their mental state of mind. Cutting, drug and alcohol abuse,

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