

# The Connection

## Inside this issue:

What is Depression?	1
Knowing the Symptoms	1
Why am I suffering from depression?	2
Tips on Dealing with Depression in College	2
Getting Involved on Campus	2
Asian Americans: Mental Health Issues in our Community	3
Treatment	3

## Interesting Facts:

~ Major depression is the leading cause of disability in the United States

~ Depression affects almost 10% of the population, or 19 million Americans, in a given year

~ During their lifetime, 10%-25% of women and 5%-12% of men will become clinically depressed.

Depression.com

## For more information, check out these websites:

-National Institute of Mental Health ([www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov))

-Depression.com

-Psychologyinfo.com/depression

-MentalHelp.net

- CampusBlues.com

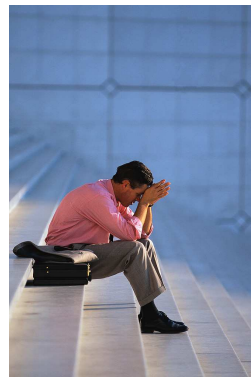
## Depression Hurts!

*Karrie was a college student and like many others, she was adjusting to life on campus. She had made many good friends during the first couple of weeks and was doing well in her classes. But lately, Karrie hasn't been feeling like herself. She has always been a real good student but recently her grades have fallen and she has had trouble concentrating on studying for her exams.*

*Karrie feels tired all the time and doesn't feel like hanging out with her friends anymore. Instead, she is staying in more than usual and doesn't have the motivation or energy anymore to do almost anything. Karrie just can't seem to pull herself together and may not realize it yet, but she is depressed.*

College can be a very exciting time for students and it can also bring many new challenges that can sometimes be too

stressful and can cause you to feel a little down. The normal stresses of life can cause anyone to feel a little sad sometimes but if these strong feelings persist for a long period of time, then it becomes a serious condition.



Clinical depression is a serious illness that isn't just a temporary feeling of sadness but is a condition that worsens over time and can affect a person's mind and body. Depression impacts all aspects of your life including eating, sleeping, school, work, and relationships. It can even affect the way you think about yourself and your perspective on life.

Sometimes it is hard to tell if someone is depressed and so it is important to recognize the symptoms early before the condition worsens. Seeking help is the first step in preventing depression from becoming worse. Depression is a treatable problem.

## Knowing the Symptoms:

- Persistent Sadness, anxiety, or "empty" feelings
- Decreased energy or fatigue
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities that were once enjoyed
- Insomnia, oversleeping, or waking much earlier than usual
- Loss of weight or appetite, or overeating and weight gain
- Feelings of hopelessness and pessimism
- Feelings of helplessness, guilt, and worthlessness
- Thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts
- Difficulty concentrating, making decisions, or remembering
- Restlessness, irritability or excessive crying

\* Symptoms are persistent, last for more than a few days, and get worse as time goes on. This is different than a bad day or a case of the "blues."



## What Causes Depression?

Depression is becoming more common in the college population. College is bringing new stresses such as increased academic demands, difficulty transitioning from home to college life, financial responsibilities, changes in society, and different types of peer pressure. Many students become overwhelmed with all the stress and are unable to handle all the new demands of college life. This internal struggle can ultimately lead to depression.

Depression is usually caused from a combination of psychological, biological, and genetic factors. These are some of the most common causes found in people with depression:

- **Family history.** Genetics play an important part in depression. It can run in families for generations. For students



who have a genetic predisposition to depression, symptoms may emerge for the first time in college.

- **Trauma and stress.** Things like financial problems, the breakup of a relationship, or the death of a loved one can bring on depression. You can become depressed after major changes in your life, like starting a new job, starting college, or living on your own.

- **Pessimistic personality.** People who have low self-esteem and a negative outlook are at higher risk of becoming depressed. These traits may actually be caused by low-level depression (called Dysthymia).

- **Other psychological disorders.** Anxiety disorders, eating disorders, schizophrenia, and substance abuse often appear along with depression.

Source: www.Depression.com

## Tips on Dealing with Depression in College

- **Plan your work and sleep schedules.** Too many students put off doing important class work until nighttime, work until late at night, and start every day feeling exhausted. Constant fatigue can be a critical trigger for depression. Seven or eight hours of sleep a night is important to your well-being.

- **Participate in an extracurricular activity.** By scheduling fun activities, there will be opportunities to meet people with your same interests and can also provide a nice change of environment from your normal class work.

- **Seek support from other people.** This may be a roommate or a friend from class. Friendships can help make a strange place

feel more friendly and comfortable. Sharing your emotions reduces isolation and helps you realize that you are not alone.

### “De-Stress and Relax” Group

Come join us to relax and de-stress from your day. We will teach you many different relaxation techniques and ways to lower your overall stress level.

Tuesdays, 1:30PM- 2:30PM for 6 weeks  
Starts February 19th at CMHS.

Call 486-4705 to sign up—space is limited.

- **Try relaxation methods.** These include meditation, deep breathing, warm baths, long walks, exercise – whatever you enjoy that lessens your feelings of stress and discomfort.

- **Reduce or eliminate the use of alcohol.** Alcohol is a depressant and can worsen your condition.

- **Be kind to yourself.** Focus on the more positive aspects of your life.

- **GO TO CMHS AND ASK FOR HELP!** Seeking help earlier can help prevent your condition from worsening.

Source: www.1.nmha.org

## Getting Involved on Campus....Go Huskies!!!

Life at college can be a very rewarding and fulfilling experience in one's life. UConn is a large university that offers tons of opportunities to become involved in new activities and make new friends. There are currently over 200 student organizations and community service opportunities on campus! Try participating in an intramural sport, writing for the Daily Campus, becoming active

in the student government, SUBOG, or visiting a cultural center! There is something for everyone here, and all it takes is for you to go out and find what interests you!

To find a list of all the organizations on campus, visit:  
<http://www.studentactivities.uconn.edu/>



## Asian Americans: Mental Health Issues Across Our Community

The Virginia Tech shootings last spring was a shocking and very sad occurrence and one that still very much affects the Asian American community. That one incident brought into national focus the issue of mental health within our community. Asian American psychology over the past twenty-five years has seen considerable growth not only in its research and theoretical focus but also in its demographic representation. Considering the generation and ethnic diversity of the Asian American community, the research has begun to show the diversity in the understanding of mental health issues across the community and the related treatment approaches. In 2002, a national study funded by the National Institute of Mental Health was the first to examine the rates of mental illness and treatment use of three major Asian American groups: Chinese, Filipino, and Vietnamese. Much more research is now available that focuses on prejudice and mental health, family matters, cultural stress, depression, and suicide.

Asian Americans are the fastest growing racial/ethnic group in the United States with Connecticut ranking as the 8<sup>th</sup> fastest growing population. A population of 10.2 million (2000 census), approximately 74% are foreign born. Language, culture, access to care, and understanding of services are all barriers that keep many community members from receiving help for their mental illness. The incidence of mental illness particularly among Southeast Asians, primarily due to war trauma, has been measured to be as high as 75%.

For Asian American college students the issue of the model minority stereotype is very real. Cloaked as “models” of academic and socioeconomic success and overcoming all barriers of racial discrimination, this image does more damage to those who need real help. Educational institutions must continuously remind themselves of the fallacies of the myth, review policies and services that affect this community, and provide appropriate training for faculty and staff to work with this growing population.

In an effort to help understand the mental health issues in the Asian American community and to assist students in need, the Asian American Cultural Center with the support from the Office of Multicultural and International Affairs and the Division of Students Affairs has formed an **Asian American Mental Health Working Group**. This group of faculty and staff from across campus will identify and study issues facing Asian American students on campus and work towards effectively addressing those issues. Dr. Aruna Jha, a researcher from the University of Illinois, Chicago whose work focuses on stress, depression and suicidal behavior in Asian American college students, and suicide prevention in immigrant communities will also work with this group. She will be on campus **March 25 & 26** and a number of workshops will be open to the University community. If you are interested in attending, please contact Angela Rola at the Asian American Cultural Center ([angela.rola@uconn.edu](mailto:angela.rola@uconn.edu) or (860) 486-0830).

*Special thanks to Angela Rola and the Asian American Cultural Center for their contribution.*

## What Types of Treatment are Available?

If you are experiencing symptoms of depression for a long period of time or feel that it is interfering with your daily routines, you should seek professional help. Consider going to **Counseling and Mental Health Services** on campus, that offers treatment for students.

Currently, there are many highly effective treatments that are available. Depression is mainly treated by psychotherapy. However, the type of treatment needed for a person depends on the severity of their condition and the specific symptoms they have experienced. In cases of severe depression, where people are in danger of harming



themselves, medication may be needed in addition to psychotherapy. Antidepressant medication can relieve symptoms of depression but there are possible side effects.

Psychotherapy is a very successful method of helping individuals who are suffering from depression. The treatment does require commitment but it can be very useful at resolving emotional problems and discovering the cause of depression. Joining a support group or a therapy session is usually very helpful. Talking with mental health professionals can help people understand their condition, find

ways of coping, and prevent future episodes of depression. Depression is treatable and most people who seek help experience full recovery.

At UCONN, students should make an appointment to come and talk with one of our mental health professionals at CMHS.





University of  
Connecticut

### **Counseling and Mental Health Services**

**Monday - Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm**

**Come to the CMHS Annex**

**(located behind SHS) or call 486-4705**

**After hours, weekends and holidays call  
860-486-4705, stay on the line and follow  
instructions.**

### **Mental Health Online Screenings**

On the CMHS website, we offer Mental Health Screenings that allow you to assess yourself regarding anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder. The screenings ask basic demographic information from you and you then answer a series of questions to determine whether or not you have any of the symptoms associated with the concerns above.

Go to [www.counseling.uconn.edu](http://www.counseling.uconn.edu) and click on our Self- Help Page to learn more about our screenings.

### **Depression Tribe**

DepressionTribe is an online community that brings together people with similar issues who are in need of support. They offer a safe community for individuals to communicate, share stories, and offer encouragement and friendship.

WebTribes also offers free social networking support communities for people struggling with anxiety, OCD, and addiction.

To learn more about WebTribes, visit our Self- Help Page on the CMHS website. [www.counseling.uconn.edu](http://www.counseling.uconn.edu)

**Coming up next Month:**

***Eating Disorders***



University of Connecticut Student Health Services

*Counseling &  
Mental Health  
Services*

**CMHS**

**Check us out Online!!!**

**[www.counseling.uconn.edu](http://www.counseling.uconn.edu)**

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of Counseling and Mental Health Services is to provide the highest quality clinical services to promote the emotional, relational, and academic potential of all students. We are committed to the core values of respect, responsiveness, innovation and quality to enhance the unique experience of each individual at the University of Connecticut.

### **Multicultural Statement**

We value and appreciate the uniqueness and diversity of all individuals. Our commitment is to create an environment where all people feel welcome. We recognize the right of human beings to be treated with dignity and respect. We are dedicated to enhancing cultural sensitivity and cultural competency in all of our work. This promotes our growth as individuals and as a community.