

'Going crazy' isn't what it used to be

Seventies produce fewer troubled students

By CAROLINE PETRICH
Of the Emerald

Believe it or not, students today are more stable than they used to be.

That's the opinion of Wilford Brooksby, a psychiatrist at the University Student Health Center.

"We don't see as many seriously disturbed students as we used to some years ago," Brooksby says. "Maybe the times allow them to feel more secure than they did back then."

In past years, two or three students a week were admitted to the infirmary for serious psychiatric problems; now the infirmary rarely admits students, Brooksby says.

"Students are a great deal like they used to be years ago," he says. "During the '60s, I saw a great change towards anti-authoritarianism and political activism. Now students have gone a full cycle and are pretty much oriented to applying themselves to school."

Not that students have stopped worrying — they just worry about different things. In the '50s, a graduate may have been concerned about the Korean War. Today, a graduating senior might bite his or her nails

'We don't see as many seriously disturbed students as we used to some years ago.'

about the energy crisis or the plight of the American economy.

And students are concerned about homesickness, a heart-break, poor grades or an empty wallet.

"We'll see a fairly high percentage of students who have an adjustment reaction to college," Brooksby says. "Students start to feel tense or anxious because they are having difficulty coping with the new lifestyle."

"Students wonder whether or not there's going to be a job for them. They also wonder whether or not the value of the dollar will get them through college. There are a lot of things that cause conflict," he adds.

Brooksby says that in today's society, great emphasis is put



Graphic by Tom Ettel

on being productive and successful at the same time.

"There is a kind of expectation that one has to be number one," Brooksby says. "See how quickly a coach is burned in effigy if he fails to field a winning team. Students wonder whether or not they're going to do things fast enough, or do things well enough. These expectations definitely put pressures on students."

Students' reactions to pressures vary. Sometimes when the pressure gets to be too much, some just give up.

"And that's not healthy," Brooksby says.

Others take on more activities or responsibilities which do nothing to relieve pressure.

Brooksby advises students to take one day at a time and try to do no more than they can.

"Students should learn to know how much is enough," Brooksby says. "Life isn't simple; it wasn't cut out to be easy."

If things get to be too much, students should not hesitate to seek assistance, Brooksby says.

"If people do start running into difficulty, they should put their pride aside and immediately go for assistance," he says. "This way the problem can be solved while it is still small."

Professional advice can help them open their eyes to their limitations as well as show how to stop demanding too much of themselves.

The University's Crisis Center and Counseling Center work along with Brooksby and his colleague, Dr. Paul Bassford, to provide a solid program for helping students with emotional frustrations.

When the Crisis Center

receives a call, the person calling is usually concerned about someone else.

"If a student spots another in need of help, they should, in a gentle but honest way, tell them to get help," Brooksby says. "Be sure to document the problem with examples. One has to be direct, honest and factual in dealing with emotionally troubled people."

Students come to the clinic through referrals from the Counseling Center or on a physician's or a friend's suggestion. Because so many students do come in to make appointments, the treatment must be limited.

"We have to give acute, brief, intensive-type treatment," Brooksby says. "We don't have enough time or staff to carry students long-term."

A common fallacy says a person has to be crazy to see a psychiatrist. Brooksby discredits this by pointing out that only three-tenths of one percent

of a psychiatrist's patients are psychotic or crazy.

"We'll see 800 to 900 students in a year," Brooksby says. "According to statistics, one out of every 1,000 students will have a mental breakdown. This means at Oregon, we'll expect to see 16 to 17 of these breakdowns in the course of a year."

The most common mental illness, according to Brooksby, is schizophrenia. A schizophrenic has a split personality and loses touch with reality. Such a person also suffers from auditory or visual hallucinations and paranoid delusions.

Schizophrenia, brought on by great amounts of stress, can be connected to genetic background. Brooksby cites studies which show that if one parent is a schizophrenic, there is a 10 to 14 percent chance the children will be affected. If both parents have schizophrenic tendencies, there is a 40 percent chance their children will inherit those tendencies.

Manic depression is another common mental illness. To treat the disease, Brooksby and Bassford will often prescribe anti-depressant drugs, some of which can be abused.

"If a student starts to get high (on medication), then we'll use lithium carbonate, which is a special chemical that relieves the depression," Brooksby says.

He praises the anti-depressant drugs for their non-addicting qualities. "As soon as the illness is relieved, a patient no longer feels the need to take them."

"We do have to watch in dealing with students," Brooksby says. "Because most of them are young, we don't

allow them to become dependent upon the newer, what we call psycho-sedative or tranquilizing, drugs."

If a student has a serious mental illness, the University's medical leave policy grants a leave of absence to students who have become a danger to themselves or to the people around them.

"An actual procedure to separate a student (from school) occurs very seldom, because usually (before that point) a student will realize they need help," Brooksby says.

Suicide, the second most common cause of death among college students, is a rarity at the University, Brooksby says. More commonly it occurs on large college campuses in large cities. Brooksby says that at the University of California at Berkeley, it's not uncommon to hear of 10 to 12 suicides in a school year.

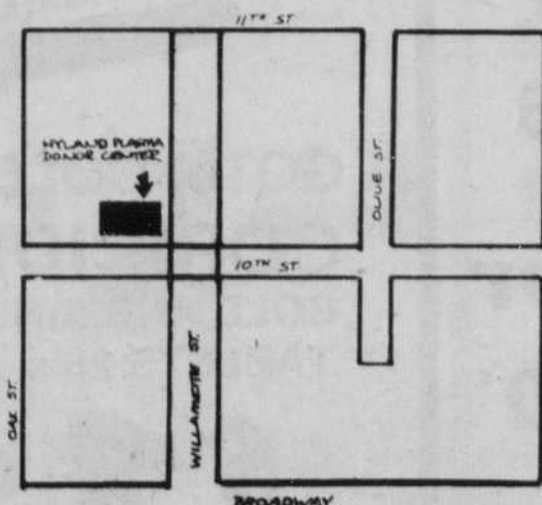
The University of Oregon has not seen that many suicides in the last 20 years, Brooksby says, adding that those students who were successful in killing themselves weren't under any psychiatric treatment or counseling — they had not sought any help at all.

Brooksby attributes the University's low suicide rate to the size of Eugene. At bigger schools, in bigger cities, there's a faster pace and more competition among students, making life much more intense, he says.

"Roughly 20 percent of all students will have enough emotional difficulties at some point in going through college that they will need some kind of psychiatric assistance," Brooksby says.

Could you use an extra \$100.00 a month this term?

There are lots of ways for a student to earn extra money. But most employers require regular hours. And even if your class schedule happens to fit your employer's need, midterms and finals often don't. If you're healthy and reliable, in two to four hours a week, being paid on the spot, you can earn up to \$100.00 cash a month! Easily... on a flexible schedule to accommodate you. Become a blood/plasma donor. Once or twice a week, visit the nearby Hyland Donor Center. Donating plasma is simple and safe. In fact, the donation process, called "plasmapheresis," removes from blood the only element it needs — the plasma. Other whole blood elements, the red cells, are returned to you. Want to know more? Need that cash now? Call or visit:



**HYLAND PLASMA
DONOR CENTER**
1001 WILLAMETTE ST.
TELEPHONE: 683-3953

**Organize
a Plasma Donor Program**
In your club or group and receive
up to \$100.00 a month for each
member plus bonuses.

WINTER TERM SEARCH PROPOSALS DEADLINE IS NOV. 21.

Beyond this date course proposals will be accepted, but there will be some publicity restrictions.

Call 686-4377, or stop by Suite 1 EMU for more details.