

Depression

Continued from Page 4

Thompson, who has been a counseling psychologist at the Counseling Center for 22 years, says freshmen generally come in for therapy in somewhat smaller proportions than do sophomores, juniors and seniors. "I think it just takes a while before they feel comfortable coming in to the Counseling Center or before they want to admit that they're not making it on their own," he says.

Thompson and the staff of psychologists at the Counseling Center help their depressed patients to find out what kinds of things are related to their depression. Sometimes all the patients need to do is to voice their problems to someone else, and in so doing, clarify the problem for themselves. "Then they feel better and start making changes," Thompson says.

When talking it out is not enough for people to overcome the depression, Thompson may choose to establish a contract with the patients, making them follow daily routines. "It's like if you take a bath every day. But then you feel too depressed to take a bath, and because you didn't take a bath, you feel even more depressed. On the other hand, if you continue to take your bath every day, somehow your priorities are bath first, depression second. So that helps you keep control of your depression. What you need to build into people's existence if they don't have it is some kind

of normalizing routine which they follow almost religiously."

Ron May, the director of the Counseling Center, says the center is experiencing a transition in treatment methods.

"Traditionally, we have been oriented more toward therapy. In the future, we're going to focus a bit more on education," May says.

In these experts' opinions, perhaps the most important message for the depressed person is that depression is a treatable disorder, so he or she should continue to pursue treatment and not give up hope.

And though freshmen in the throes of adjusting to a new

lifestyle may often feel isolated, they should know that they are not alone or even experiencing something out of the ordinary.

"It's being called sort of the 'common cold' of emotional problems. It's not an unusual problem," Lewinsohn says. "Becoming depressed is something that most people experience and most people are able to overcome. And that's important. Most of the depressions don't last for very long, so it might be reassuring for the person to know that time heals all wounds, more or less. They're not going to feel like this forever."



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