

Local

— SPOTLIGHT ON MENTAL HEALTH —

Depression

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Most people suffer from periods of depression, sadness and lack of enjoyment in the things that had previously been enjoyable to them.

More often than not, these episodes pass and life resumes as normal. Life is not always happy, and most of us are aware that we won't always feel "on top of the world."

However, for some people, these periods begin to last longer and any efforts they might make to move on are ineffective. Eventually, they lose the impetus to try to overcome the negativity.

Friends and family are not always understanding, and the effort to explain what is going on emotionally, physically and mentally is overwhelming.

For the people who suffer from actual, medically diagnosable depression, the more they try to explain to others what they are feeling, the worse the experience gets.

Roxanne Dryden-Edwards, MD, writing for Medicine.Net explains:

"Depression is not a weakness but a serious mental illness with biological, psychological, and social aspects to its cause, symptoms, and treatment. A person cannot will it away. Untreated or undertreated, it can worsen or return."

Many sufferers will not consider telling their physician about the experiences and the changes that have been occurring in their outlook on life. While they will obtain medical help for physical problems, getting help for mental and emotional issues is still considered by many to be a sign of weakness.

Society tends to encourage people to "just get over it" and to "move on with your life." Acknowledging that one is suffering from a pervasive and overwhelming emotional and mental depression isn't encouraged.

Many physical illnesses can lead to depression as well, making the diagnosis even more challenging.

For those suffering from serious, long-term or permanent illnesses such as cancer, any of the autoimmune diseases or any disabling condition, depression frequently goes hand in hand with the loss of previous abilities. With depression comes the inability to find the daily energy to overcome each and every battle faced by victims of these illnesses.

As defined by the American Psychiatric Association, depression (Major Depressive Disorder) is "a common and serious medi-

cal illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act."

Depression affects an estimated one in 15 adults (6.7%) in any given year. One in six people (16.6%) will experience depression at some time in their life. Depression can strike at any time but, most often, first appears during the late teens to mid-20s. Women are more likely than men to experience depression. Some studies show that one in three women will experience a major depressive episode in their lifetime.

There are several factors which may play a part in depression:

Biochemistry: Differences in certain chemicals in the brain

Genetics: Depression can run in families

Personality: People with low self-esteem or who are generally pessimistic appear to be more likely to experience depression.

Environmental factors: Continuous exposure to violence, neglect, abuse or poverty may make some people more vulnerable to depression.

Depression diagnosed clinically as there is no laboratory test or X-ray for depression. It is, consequently, critical for a patient to see a health professional as soon as symptoms of depression in yourself, your friends, or family are noticed.

The first step in getting appropriate treatment for a depressive disorder is a complete physical and psychological evaluation to determine whether the person has a depressive disorder.

The following are myths about depression and its treatment.

"It is a weakness rather than an illness.

If the depression sufferer just tries hard enough, it will go away without treatment.

Highly intelligent or highly accomplished people do not get depressed. People with developmental disabilities do not get depressed.

People with depression are "crazy."

Children, teens, the elderly, or men do not get depressed.

The symptoms of depression are the same for everyone who gets the illness.

People who tell someone they are thinking about committing suicide are only trying to get attention and would never do it, especially if they have talked about it before."

Because depression can lead to self-harm including suicide, it is important to note that one of every 25 suicide attempts results in



Stock Photo.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Starting last month and ending in April, *The Baker County Press* is running a six-part series on the subject of mental health, two articles per month leading up to May. Written in installments by various reporters, the series will address both well-known and lesser known mental illnesses, their symptoms, how they affect individuals and families, and methods for treatment.

death.

The right exercise, diet, and activities can help patients recover from depression. Research over the years has shown that having a pet can help sufferers ease the symptoms of depression by a measurable degree.

Worldwide studies have proven the beneficial effects pets have on patients suffering from a wide variety of ailments, but the benefits for those suffering from depression are consistently high.

The medical and mental health advantages for pet owners who can spend time simply sitting quietly and stroking their pets has been consistently proven.

There are also medical and psychiatric interventions that are used with varying degrees of success.

These include medication, talk therapy, or a combination of the two. Increasingly, research suggests these treatments may normalize brain function associated with depression.

Psychotherapy is often the first form of treatment recommended for depression.

Psychotherapy helps depression by helping people understand the behaviors, emotions and ideas that contribute to their depression, regain a sense of control and pleasure in life, and learn coping techniques as well as problem solving skills.

Medications used to treat depression include Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRI) such as Zoloft, Celexa and the like. Antidepressants, including Welbutrin and Effexor are also utilized.

Anxiolytic medications such as Buspirone address the anxiety portion of depression.

Antipsychotic meds such as Abilify can reduce or improve the symptoms of depression.

Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) involves passing an electrical cur-

rent through the brain to produce controlled seizures. ECT is useful for patients with severe depression and for those who are suicidal. ECT is administered in a hospital setting under anesthesia. A common side effect is short-term memory loss.

As with many other physical and mental health issues, herbal treatments have been used to treat depression with varying degrees of success.

The Mayo Clinic lists a number of herbal and supplemental treatments that have been used by patients. Their caution is that these treatments may interfere with prescribed medications, causing unexpected results.

Research has suggested that cannabis may be a promising treatment option for a number of different physical and mental health conditions, from post-traumatic stress disorder to chronic pain.

Neuroscientists from the University of Buffalo's Research Institute on Addictions found that endocannabinoids — chemical compounds in the brain that activate the same receptors as THC, an active compound in marijuana — may be helpful in treating depression that results from chronic stress.

Perhaps the most important support we can offer family and friends who are suffering from depression is to acknowledge their distress and let them know that, whether or not we understand what it is they are going through, we support them and know their suffering is real.

Encouraging them to access available help, offering to accompany them to appointments, being willing to sit with them when they just need someone to "be there," all are ways to show we take them seriously and genuinely want to help.

Rescue

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The pond, which was cordoned off with a tightly strung barbed wire fence, was on the neighboring property. Once out of the pond, the boy's faint heartbeat was detected.

The St. Alphonsus Emergency Room was unusually busy for Baker City late that morning and afternoon, with Matty's Lifeflight going in and out, two ambulances out front, a full parking lot and a full waiting room of patients—all the beds were occupied from that point until early that evening.

Matty was briefly at the Baker City facility before being transported to St. Alphonsus in Boise, then on to St. Luke's Children's Hospital where an MRI was taken to determine the extent of the toddler's brain damage. Surprisingly, there was none.

"It's a miracle in a sense that there's no scientific or natural explanation—there had to be a divine intervention," Matthew told KTVB.

As of print, Matty has returned home to Baker City.

Arborist

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His dad eventually came to Baker, had all of his gear, and did tree work here and there. He began to expand, started to get more equipment, and worked in more locations, and his wife Lisa works the plant nursery, which is part of the business. The nursery offers trees, plants, flowers, vegetables, and other gift items.

"We consider ourselves a tree care company," said Constantine. "We're not just out there to cut down your tree and make a buck. Growing up, it was always stressed to me that the tree comes first. So, when a client says, 'Hey, I have this issue, this is what I want,' of course we work with the client, but we say, 'Here is an alternative to what you're asking,' because that is an improper practice of pruning or an improper way of taking care of your tree, and so we offer alternatives."

"The other thing we offer is, again, because trees are so important to every aspect of our lives, when we remove trees, if we come to your house and cut down a tree, because we have the nursery and we have trees to replace it with, we offer a discount tree replacement program. So, if you have an old dead tree at your house and you want it cut down, but you miss the tree and miss the shade, we'll write you a 20 percent discount to replace that tree because it is important that if we cut down a tree, there should be at least one tree going back in its place. It's sort of more, rather than saying you have to replace this tree, it's an encouragement."

Constantine explained that as he was growing up, his father was unable to find someone reliable or knowledgeable to take over parts of the business, and the tree business fell to the wayside because in the summer months, it is least important to his other businesses.

Constantine moved to Portland in 2015 for a year where he learned how to climb trees. He worked different tree services learning not only climbing trees but rigging and safe rigging practices.

"Our thing is safety," he said, "And so we don't want to damage anyone's house or anything like that. That was something that was highly stressed—proper rigging practices."

"So after I got a fair amount of learning in Portland under my belt, I moved home and my dad had all of the equipment just sort of sitting at the time because, again he didn't have the time to keep up on all the businesses, so when I moved home there was an opportunity for me to learn the rest of it which is going out and bidding on work, doing estimates, troubleshooting, hazard issues, potentially hazardous trees."

"And I'm still learning with his help. He's got 50 years' experience at it so through that I'm able to sort of rebuild what he had once started and hopefully expand what we now have into the outer line areas of Baker City."

"Right now, we don't leave town a whole lot. We go to Richland, but it's kind of exciting especially now with the certification."

Constantine explained that there are cities such as Portland, if someone were to apply for a bid for a corporation, a homeowner, or for the city, the city requires that the arborists be certified through the ISA in order to even put the bid in for the work.

Constantine explained that the certification has opened doors for them for work. He explained that in there is no requirement that he has come across that requires a certified arborist to put in a bid, but when the day comes, they will be ready for it.

Cemetery cleanup March 28-April 13

The City's maintenance contractor, Grass Master, will soon be doing spring cleanup and grounds maintenance work at the Mt. Hope Cemetery, including removal of deteriorated decorations, flowers, floral designs, thatching, edging, fertilizing, and weed spraying, weather permitting. This work is scheduled for March 28 through April 13. Please remove any decorative items, flowers, etc. prior. Please note that decorative items not removed from graves and headstones by that date will be collected by the contractor beginning on that date. Collected items, other than perishable or deteriorated items, will be stored until claimed or until November 1, 2017. Items conforming to the cemetery rules may be placed on or returned to the graves beginning on April 14, 2017. A copy of the Mt. Hope Cemetery Rules is available on the city's website, www.bakercity.com.

Pine Fest in Halfway named Oregon's Best Music Festival

If you love outdoor music festivals and you're looking for the best in Oregon, you'll find it right here in Baker County.

The Oregon Festival and Events Association recently named PineFest in Halfway Oregon their Best Music Festival in Oregon.

Always the Friday and

Saturday after Labor Day weekend, this two-day festival packs in some of the best musicians and bands from around the Northwest and as far away as New York into two exciting days of great music along the Hells Canyon Scenic Byway, making it the perfect way to celebrate

the end of summer and arrival of fall in the Walla Walla Mountains of Eastern Oregon.

Save the dates and make your reservation's early for this year's festivities:

Friday, September 8, 2017 4 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Saturday, September 9, 2017 2 p.m. to 10 p.m.

A variety of photographs from past festivals can be found at <http://basecamp-baker.com/wp/oregons-best-music-festival-pine-fest/> or on the Basecamp Baker Facebook page thanks to the photographic talents of Timothy Bishop, Basecamp Baker.