

SAD dampens the mood

BY LUIS CORREA
ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR

In the depths of winter, with daylight slipping away before evening and temperatures barely hitting the freezing mark. The cold season can bring much more than gale force winds and snow. For some Clackamas Community College students, it can trigger feelings of hopelessness and depression.

The psychological condition known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is characterized as a major depression that arrives in the fall or winter and lifts in the spring or summer, but can still linger.

Even though it is less common to see the dreary weather have the opposite effect on people, in both cases, symptoms may start out mild and become more severe as the season progresses. Symptoms include feelings of depression, worthlessness, low energy, fatigue and lack of interest in usually enjoyable activities. Due to the lack of sunlight that provides vitamin D.

"One in four students experiences depression in college," said Stephanie Schaefer a counselor at CCC. "It will usually be a significant depression where students have thought about suicide, not necessarily to act on it but the idea had crossed their mind. So, it's a pretty serious problem in our school and you can bet that at least 25 percent of our student body have experienced this."

SAD is one of the leading cause of depression this season, but there are

still many students who suffer from depression throughout the year. At CCC, statistics show that there has been 747 scheduled counseling appointments in the 2017-2018 academic year: 58.2 percent of students are coming in for personal counseling, 11.1 percent for career counseling and 9.5 percent for academic counseling. Considering that the counseling department allows walk-ins, these statistics barely scratch the surface of the actual number of students suffering from depression.

"It's all just gloomy," said Brianna Knipe, a CCC student who has experienced SAD. "I used to get tired in the day more often and I would do worse in school; my grades would get lower. I just felt like I wanted to drop out."

Many other factors that affects seasonal depression, said Debra Penkin, an instructor at Warner Pacific University with years of experience as a social worker. "When working with clients that had SAD, there was always an emotional experience, whether that be abuse, family issues, or even discrimination that triggered their depression when isolated in their homes during the fall and winter season."

CCC provides many resources to fight depression. Partnering with ULifeline, an organization that helps support students mental health on campus, where students can fill out an evaluation on their

website for themselves or a friend, and the site gives tips to fight whatever the experience may be. The website also provides many resources such as the suicide prevention hotline and listings of the many local organizations that can help with treatment. And of course CCC has the counseling department open, free of charge, to anybody looking to find a way out of SAD.

CCC counseling can also put students on the path to a long-term and more permanent solution, like ongoing therapy.

Guidance counseling is available from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday and can be reached on campus, by email (counseling@clackamas.edu), or by phone at 503-594-3176. Students can go to myClackamas and under "Student Resources" you will find "CCC Counselor Appointment Requests" to set up an appointment.

NATIONAL
SUICIDE
PREVENTION

LIFELINE™

1-800-273-TALK

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

The suicide hotline provides assistance for those in crisis.

More Information:

Counseling at Harmony Campus
noon - 5 p.m.

<http://www.clackamas.edu/campus-life/student-services/counseling>

ULifeline: <http://www.ulifeline.org/clackamas>

photo by Sam Weston



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— Stephanie Schaefer

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