



Health/Education

The Doctor's Corner

Resolve Your Challenges in a Healing Manner

Dear John,
I am a 17-year old girl. Lately, life hasn't been treating me kindly. My problem is that I'm scared to death that I may lose seven friends who are suicidal. We all met on the Internet. Three of them have been in the hospital before because of attempts to take their own life.

You see I'm suicidal too. It scares me. All my Internet friends know this. It seems that the only ones who don't know are my parents. I've dropped hints, but I'm scared to death of telling them. If I even dare write something sad, they dismiss it as "morbid" and refuse to read it. What should I do?

Teen Angel in Chicago

Dear Angel,
Thanks for writing. I'm sure this a difficult time for you right now. It appears that you are very confused. The first step I feel you should make is to explain the problem to your parents.

If this is not working, tell your counselor at school, and they will provide you with family counseling.

The American Association of Suicidology has an online directory at www.suicidology.org for suicide crisis centers to direct you to counseling alternatives so that you can confront and resolve your challenges in a constructive and healing manner. There is also a directory for hotlines in your area. The National Hope Line

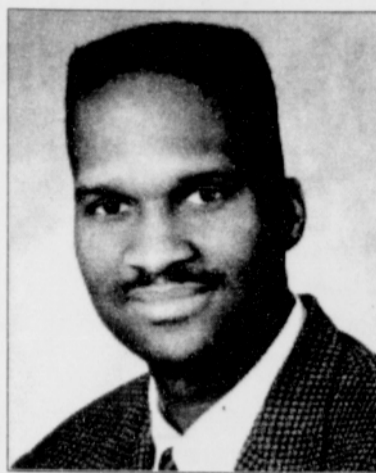
Network runs one such hotline. Their number is (800) SUICIDE (800-784-2433).

It's available 24 hours a day. Please call it immediately and tell them exactly what you are experiencing, both with your online conversations and with your own thoughts of suicide.

Remember when you are confused, this is an opportunity to learn about yourself, and find new ways to deal with your challenges.

Angel, you are an outstanding person who is loved by your parents, friends, and so many others. This is also a healing time, so enjoy the process of getting to know who you are, and find the life that awaits you.

See ya at the top!



By John Oda, Ph.D.
for The Portland Observer

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Oda Research International provides corporate training, workshops and seminars, also personal and professional coaching. For consultations call 503-471-2954.

Clinics Serve Woman With No Insurance

Neighborhood Health Clinics have started offering services in the Multnomah County health buildings at 3653 S.E. Powell and at Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and NE Killingsworth. These new clinics will serve women who have no insurance and are not eligible for the Oregon Health Plan, providing them with gynecological and breast exams, mammograms and education. In the future, the clinics will also offer acupuncture, naturopathy and mental health services.

"The women's clinic responds to a community need to better serve women 40 years and older, particularly women of color," says Heidi Steeves, NHC medical program manager. The new clinics are expected to serve hundreds of women each year, those who are among the working poor and cannot afford health insurance or whose jobs do not offer insurance coverage. The clinic will be open from 6 to 9 p.m. every Wednesday, alternating between the

Northeast and Southeast sites. More and more people every year have been seeking services at NHC's walk-in clinics. In the fiscal year of July 1998 to July 1999, NHC served 6,300 patients. During the following fiscal year, a record-breaking 9,980 patients were served. And during the current fiscal year, just halfway through, NHC already has seen more than 6,000 patients. "We're going off the charts," says Steeves.

The women's clinics were made possible through a \$10,000 grant from Providence Health System, the City of Portland and many individuals.

Neighborhood Health Clinics, Inc. was formed by the 1987 merger of Health Help (1976) and Neighborcare (1984). NHC is a not-for-profit community health agency whose clinics and counseling programs are staffed entirely by volunteer health care and social service professionals. Over 650 health care professionals donate their valuable time to meet the health care needs of our community.

Women Urged to Heed Benefits of Folic Acid

Taking a daily multivitamin with folic acid can reduce risk of birth defects.

Taking a daily multivitamin with folic acid before becoming pregnant helps ensure a healthy baby, yet only about one-third of women of childbearing age followed this advice, according to a study done by public health officials at the Oregon Department of Human Services.

"You can't buy better insurance for 3 cents a day," says Martin Wasserman, M.D., administrator at the Health Division. "We estimate that between 40 and 50 pregnancies are affected by neural tube defects every year in Oregon. That number could be reduced by about half if all women of childbearing age were taking a daily multivitamin with folic acid." Neural tube defects are serious birth defects of the baby's brain or

spine that occur just three to four weeks after conception. For this reason, it is important that women take multivitamins with folic acid prior to becoming pregnant and for the first month after conception.

The Health Division study showed that 79 percent of women having a baby had heard of folic acid, yet only 30 percent were taking a multivitamin containing folic acid.

In 1999, the Greater Oregon Chapter of the March of Dimes joined the Health Division in conducting a public awareness campaign about the benefits of folic acid. "We still have much work ahead of us," says Joanne Rogovoy, program services director at the March of Dimes. "A recent Gallup poll in Oregon supports these

survey findings. It showed that 71 percent of women of childbearing age have heard of folic acid, yet only 35 percent are taking a vitamin containing folic acid." Gypsy Schrepel of Portland knows first-hand the importance of taking folic acid before pregnancy. Before becoming pregnant with her first child, Gypsy took all of the right precautions, but she didn't know about folic acid, and her physician hadn't discussed it with her. Her daughter Genevieve, now 4-1/2 years old, was born with a mild case of spina bifida, a defect of the spinal column, and the very type of birth defect that folic acid helps prevent.

Prior to her second pregnancy, Gypsy again took all of the right pre-

cautions but this time included a daily folic acid supplement. Her son Ellory, now age 2, was born healthy.

"We know that more women take folic acid if their physician encourages them to do so," Rogovoy adds. "For that reason, we're also educating health providers." The Oregon Gallup poll showed that only 28 percent of women of childbearing age learned about folic acid from their physician. More information on folic acid and the current public awareness campaign is available online at the Web sites for The National Center for Disease Control and Prevention and The March of Dimes. The CD Summary is also available in PDF format online.

Guns Changing Hands on Portland Streets

STORY CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

tion also helps us identify frequent gun traffickers."

Portland traced 2,085 guns that were recovered in relation to 2,210 crimes between November 1998 and December 2000, Anderson said. Most were carried in drug offenses, gang assaults and burglaries.

About 55 percent of the recovered crime guns were taken from adults, 25 or older. Thirty-four percent were taken from young adults ages 18 to 24.

Juveniles were connected to 11 percent of the crime guns, a figure slightly higher than the 9 percent recovered from juveniles nationally.

Mayor Vera Katz requested the Crime Gun Trace Report, compiled for the first time by the Portland Police Bureau's Youth Gun Anti-Violence Task Force and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

Katz set up the gun task force

in 1998 to curtail youth violence after four youths were shot to death in Portland in the summer of 1997.

According to the report: Nearly 94 percent of crime guns changed hands at least once — either through legal sales, illegal "straw-gun" purchases, or thefts — before they were used in a crime.

Sixty-two percent of the 2,085 Portland crime guns traced since 1998 were bought initially in the state — 31 percent of those were purchased in Multnomah County. The other 38 percent were bought in California, Idaho and Washington.

The most frequently recovered crime guns in Portland are Smith & Wesson .38-caliber revolvers; Bryco Arms .380-caliber pistols; Ruger .357-caliber revolvers; and Smith & Wesson .357-caliber revolvers; and North China Industries 7.62 mm rifles that can penetrate a police officer's protective vest.

Smith Supports National AIDS Policy Office

In a letter to President Bush, Sen. Gordon Smith, R-Ore. supported the administration's decision to retain the Office of National AIDS Policy at the White House and urged President Bush to continue to keep the battle against HIV/AIDS a high priority of the Administration. Globally, 36 million people are living with HIV and 22-

two million have already died from the disease. HIV and AIDS are decimating populations in certain regions of the world. Last year, Smith introduced the Global AIDS Prevention Act authorizing funding for fighting AIDS worldwide. He plans to introduce a broader bill in the 107th Congress. "In my home state of Oregon, almost 5,000 cases of

AIDS have been reported since the early 1980s," Smith said. "Our nation's response to this epidemic must be comprehensive. At home, we must make efforts to stop new infections from occurring, provide vital care and treatment to those already living with HIV and AIDS, continue our invest-

ment in researching a cure and recognize the global impact of the world's most infectious disease." Smith pledged to work with President Bush to help strengthen this office and to provide adequate funds to end the two-decade long AIDS epidemic in America.

Multiracial Babies Boom in Oregon

Oregonians are having an increasing number of multiracial babies, state health statistics show.

One out of seven babies born in Oregon in 1999 was of more than one race or had one parent who was Hispanic and one who was not, according to state birth records studied by The Oregonian. In addition, multiracial children were more common than single-race children when a parent was Asian, American Indian or black.

Multiracial people make up 8 percent of the U.S. population, but more detailed information about the state's multiracial make-up will be released Monday, when the U.S. Census reports on people who indicated more than one racial identity on their census form.

Even so, people of color are more likely to marry someone of another race when they live in predominantly white states such as Oregon, said Sharon M. Lee, a professor of sociology at Portland State University.

"That's always the rule: If a minority community is very tiny, just by chance they will be more likely to marry someone else from a different group," she said. For example, in 1990, fewer than one in 10 Oregon babies were multiracial.

By 1999, one of every seven babies were multiracial. Two-thirds of those babies were part white, but there were also black-Filipinos, Asian-American Indians and Hispanic-blacks. Of all ba-

bies born in Oregon in 1999 with at least one black parent, about 60 percent were multiracial.

Chisao Hata, a third-generation Japanese American who lives in Portland, has three children who are part Japanese, part black. "You're Afro-Asian, which is part of Africa and part of Asia, so you're half the world. It's a position of strength," Hata told her youngest daughter, 10-year-old Kalina Tamiko Hata Watts. But Hata said many Asian Americans are worried multiracial children will lose connection with Asian culture and language — a concern she doesn't share.

Meanwhile, the state's American Indians are having more multiracial children because of migration to urban areas and government relocation of tribes. About 75 percent of babies born to an American Indian parent in 1999 also had a white or black parent.

Brent Merrill, a tribal spokesman for the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde in Oregon, said the federal government's termination of the tribe and dispersing of members in 1954 led to greatly increased intermarriage.

Merrill said while the Grand Ronde don't discourage intermarriage, the tribe has a "blood quantum," a minimum amount of tribal ancestry required for tribal membership.

"Whether their children will be tribal members is a legitimate concern, but it's a personal choice," he said.

Good mood lighting.

Dimmers are another way to save energy.

And it's important that we all find as many ways as we can to reduce our energy use. By working together, we've been able to make a difference and keep the power flowing. But the cold weather's not over yet. We still need to be thoughtful about how and when we use electricity.

Installing dimmers in areas where they make sense, like the dining room and bedroom, will help lower energy use. The amount you dim equals your energy saved. For example, dimming lights by 15 percent cuts energy consumption by 15 percent.

Here are some other tips that can save you energy and money on lighting:

- Turn off extra lights, especially between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. And get in the habit of switching off the light every time you leave the room for more than a few minutes.
- Put compact fluorescent bulbs in light fixtures that are used more than three hours a day. These bulbs use one-quarter the energy and last 10 times longer than regular lightbulbs.
- Use low-wattage bulbs when you can. Bright lights are often not needed in hallways and closets.
- Clean lightbulbs and fixtures. Dust can reduce light output by as much as 10 percent!
- Install motion sensors or timers to automatically turn lights on and off. Motion sensor lighting is great for outdoors and in your workshop or laundry room. Timers are the right choice if you'd like an indoor light switched on and off at specific times.
- When working at a desk or workbench, use task lighting. Other lights in the room can then be turned off or dimmed.



Let's all do our part. Wait 'til late to use electricity. Call us at 1-800-222-4335, and ask for a copy of our Bright Ideas booklet for more energy-saving tips.

