

Depression saps motivation to be happy

In an effort to inform and assist the community at large, Smoke Signals has kindly agreed to publish a monthly article addressing various mental health issues written by a member of the Behavioral Health Department at Health & Wellness. We welcome letters, e-mails and questions from people with mental health-related questions.

By Tom Bender

Tribal Mental Health Counselor

Depression is this month's topic. There are different kinds of depression, from chronic, low-level depression that can last sometimes for years to more intense depression that comes and goes over shorter periods of time.

No matter the type, depression shares many of the same symptoms, including poor appetite/overeating, sleeping too much/too little, low energy, lack of motivation, poor concentration, irritability, low self-worth, substance abuse, isolation and suicidal thinking.

It's very important to separate depression from normal grief. Feeling upset over the loss of a relative, relationship, pet or an illness is not only normal but important to experience. To be human is to feel the pain

of loss. If we try to avoid our grief by pushing it down or self-medicating, we repress our feelings and that may affect us down the road.

The nature of depression is that it saps our motivation to be happy. Thus, often the first activities we put down when depressed are the very things that give us pleasure — exercise, spiritual pursuits, hobbies, family events and friends.

In the counseling room, I have often heard people say they feel like they should be able to handle their depression on their own, that asking for help is a sign of weakness. But if one has been feeling miserable for years, then clearly this isn't working.

Sometimes feeling better means we try to listen to our "wise minds" rather than letting the depression be our guide. Exercise and continuing



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Mental Health Counselor Tom Bender

with pleasurable activities are both extremely important in coping with depression. If the little voice inside says, "I'd really like to go for a walk, but I have to finish watching this infomercial," this may be a sign that depression is driving the bus.

If you are a Tribal member and wonder if you're living with depres-

sion, please contact the Behavioral Health Department at 503-879-2026. We offer free mental health assessments and counseling services for members of all Tribes, as well as substance abuse counseling for qualified individuals. We also offer free psychiatric services for Grand Ronde members only. ■

Bus schedule focuses on shifts at casino

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percent to \$37.50 after the 15th of the month. The Grand Ronde 2X Express passes also are good on all bus routes in Salem.

Purchases of monthly passes must be made with check or exact change at the Governance Center.

In addition, Tribal and casino employees can set up an automatic payroll deduction on a pre-tax basis to buy monthly passes through their respective Human Resources departments.

Transit District Director of Finance Pat Mercier estimates that an average commuter driving 65 miles daily and averaging 20 mpg with gas at \$2 per gallon will save more than \$1,000 annually, plus the wear and tear on their vehicle.

"The savings goes up with the cost of fuel," Mercier said. "There is also the intangible benefit of having the time to read, relax, etc., while someone else does the driving.

Grand Ronde-Salem bus rules

- Do not eat on the bus.
- Drinks are allowed in a hard-sided, spill-resistant covered container.
- No smoking.
- Use cell phones quietly and only as needed.
- Use headphones with electronic devices.
- Have exact change if you're paying cash. Drivers do not carry change.
- Offer your seat to a senior citizen or person with disabilities.

"Also, from a 'green' perspective, if we meet ridership projections, by making this service possible the Tribe is helping to take hundreds of cars daily off one of the busiest highways in the state, and will be eliminating the pollution equivalent to over 3 million vehicle miles per year."

Most of the operating costs for the

new transit option will be covered by federal Tribal Transit and state Special Transportation funds with fares and the state's Business Energy Tax Credit program covering the rest of the expense.

The schedule focuses on shift changes at Grand Ronde's largest employer, Spirit Mountain Casino, but anyone can ride the buses, which are equipped with wheelchair lifts to serve elderly and disabled riders.

Buses leave the Salem-Keizer Transit Mall at 5:20, 6:30 and 7:48 a.m. and 1:30, 3:15, 4:15, 8, 8:55 and 10:30 p.m. Buses depart Spirit Mountain Casino at 6:30, 7:40 and 9:10 a.m. and 2:45, 4:25, 5:45, 9:10, 10:05 and 11:50 p.m.

Schedules for the 2X Grand Ronde Express and other Salem routes are available at the Tribal Governance Center and at the casino's Information/Coat Check station located inside the main doors.

The only stop between Salem and Grand Ronde is near the Rickreall Park & Ride.

To entice people to try the new service, the Salem Area Mass Transit District offered free rides between Jan. 26-30.

Free shuttle rides to and from the Governance Center and Spirit Mountain Casino will be provided to community members and employees to access the casino bus connection.

For more information on the Salem-to-Grand Ronde service, check the Web site www.cherriots.org.

The new Salem-to-Grand Ronde transit connection is the second recent major transportation development in the area. In 2008, the Tribe worked with the Yamhill County Transit Area to extend its McMinnville to Willamina bus service out to Grand Ronde.

That service offers area residents and employees seven round trips daily, Monday through Friday, linking the Tribal Governance Center and Grand Ronde Station to Willamina, Sheridan and McMinnville.

For more information on that service, visit www.yctransitarea.org. ■

Weekdays (No service on Saturday, Sunday or holidays)

1	2	3	4	4	5	6	6	7
Depart Glen Creek Transit Station	Salem-Keizer Transit Mall	Rickreall Park & Ride	Arrive Spirit Mountain	Depart Spirit Mountain	Rickreall Park & Ride	Arrive Glen Creek Transit Station	Depart Glen Creek Transit Station	Salem-Keizer Transit Mall
5:10a	5:20a	5:40a	6:15a	6:30a	7:05a	7:25a	7:35a	7:48a
6:20a	6:30a	6:50a	7:25a	7:40a	8:15a	8:35a	8:35a	8:50a
7:35a	7:48a	8:10a	8:55a	9:10a	9:45a	10:05a	10:05a	10:15a
1:15p	1:30p	1:50p	2:25p	2:45p	3:20p	3:45p	4:00p	4:15p
3:00p	3:15p	3:35p	4:10p	4:25p	5:00p	5:25p	5:25p	5:40p
4:00p	4:15p	4:40p	5:30p	5:45p	6:20p	6:40p	6:40p	6:50p
7:50p	8:00p	8:20p	8:55p	9:10p	9:45p	10:05p	10:05p	10:15p
8:45p	8:55p	9:15p	9:50p	10:05p	10:35p	10:55p	10:55p	11:05p
10:05p	10:30p	10:50p	11:35p	11:50p	12:20a	12:40a	12:40a	12:50a