

# HSI Connection

Helping People • Changing Lives

## Depression — it can strike anyone, at any time

### The warning signs of suicide include:

- Talking or writing about suicide
- Talking about feeling hopeless, helpless, or worthless
- Preoccupation with death
- Suddenly happier, calmer
- Unusual visiting or calling people one cares about
- Making arrangements; setting one's affairs in order
- Giving things away
- Acquiring guns or stockpiling pills
- Previous suicide attempt

—From *Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (SAVE)*

- Eric, typically proud of his work, looks at the tasks before him and feels overwhelmed at the mere thought of trying to organize his workday.
- Maria is easily irritated by the cries of her newborn baby.
- Max, recently retired, has a hard time concentrating and is forgetful.
- Samantha, typically an easygoing teenager, becomes uncooperative and picks fights with family members.
- Bill can't quite put his finger on it, but lacks interest in certain activities that he once enjoyed.

While their symptoms are different, each one of these people suffers from depression, a serious medical illness that negatively impacts feelings, thoughts, and actions. Depression is common, affecting over 18 million (nearly one in ten) men and women of all ages, cultures, races, and income levels.

As in other illnesses, depression comes in different forms, with variations in the types and number of symptoms and how severe or long lasting they are. Two of the most common forms are major depression and chronic. Major depression is more disabling and interferes with the ability to work, study, sleep, eat, or enjoy pleasurable activities. It may occur only once, but more commonly occurs several times in a lifetime. A less severe type is chronic depression, with long-term symptoms that do not disable, but keep a person from functioning well or feeling good.

Depression is not the same as a passing blue mood, or a sign of personal weakness. People with a depressive illness cannot simply pull

themselves together and get better. Bruce Eisenmenger, Psychologist and HSI Director of Outpatient and SPMI Services says, "It is still relatively common for us to see people who think depression is a moral flaw or a problem that is within an individual's control to change on their own. The best way to debunk this myth is through educating people that depression is a medical condition that is just as physically based, common, and treatable as other medical conditions such as diabetes or asthma. This education should start with children and adolescents."

The symptoms of depression can develop slowly and might not even be noticed. Or, depression can hit a person suddenly after a difficult time. It is normal to grieve over difficult life passages, and typically the associated feelings pass on their own. However, when feelings of extreme sadness or despair last for at least two weeks and interfere with basic daily activities, they may be symptoms of depression.

Depression should be taken seriously. Minimally, it can rob people of pleasure from life and cause problems in relationships and school or job performance. Unfortunately, many people tolerate these problems and plod along in their lives without treatment. Left untreated, in its darkest form, depression can be life threatening. When people are in such despair they may consider suicide as a way to escape the pain. The good news is that depression is one of the most treatable mental health disorders, and help is readily available.

### What Causes Depression?

Sometimes depression is caused by physical factors alone. In other cases, depression occurs when life circumstances have taken their toll,

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## SYMPTOM CHECKLIST

### Depression Checklist

If you are concerned about depression in yourself or in someone else, look at the following symptom checklist. Not everyone who is depressed experiences every symptom. Severity of symptoms varies with individuals and also varies over time.

- ✓ Persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” mood
- ✓ Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism
- ✓ Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
- ✓ Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities that were once enjoyed
- ✓ Decreased energy, fatigue, being “slowed down”
- ✓ Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
- ✓ Insomnia, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping
- ✓ Appetite and/or weight loss or overeating and weight gain
- ✓ Thoughts of death or suicide; suicide attempts
- ✓ Restlessness, irritability
- ✓ Persistent physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment, such as headaches, digestive disorders, and chronic pain

If one or more symptoms are present and having a negative impact on everyday functioning, contact a physician or a mental health provider for an evaluation.

**\*Note: If thoughts of death or suicide are present, seek professional help immediately.**

—From *The National Institute of Mental Health*

and a person feels stuck and unable to see choices that can bring about positive change. Very often, a combination of both leads to depression.

Factors that can increase the risk of developing depression include: chemical deficiencies in the brain; family history of depression; hormonal changes; chronic or serious illness; significant transitions or major life stressors such as the death of a loved one or loss of employment; continuous exposure to violence, neglect, abuse, or poverty; alcohol or drug use, or low self-esteem, chronic pessimism, or being easily overwhelmed with life's challenges.

With so many possible causes of depression, it is important to work closely with a health care or mental health provider to get a careful evaluation and diagnosis. Giving complete and accurate information about symptoms and life experiences helps insure the right diagnosis and appropriate treatment.

### Co-occurring Conditions

Frequently, other conditions exist along with depression. “Anxiety disorders, most commonly panic disorder and obsessive compulsive disorder, often co-occur with depression. Many times, anxiety can be a pre-cursor to depression. It is especially important to talk to your doctor or psychiatrist about any anxiety symptoms you have, because it can impact medication decisions,” says Eisenmenger.

Another common co-existing condition with depression is substance abuse. It is estimated that around 50% of alcohol or drug abusers are also likely to have symptoms of mental health disorders. This combination is associated with a variety of adverse outcomes including higher rates of relapse, hospitalizations, suicide, violence, incarceration, homelessness, and serious illnesses such as HIV and Hepatitis.

Sandy Morelli, HSI Manager, Chemical Health says, “When substance abuse and mental health issues coexist, both disorders should be considered primary. Individuals seeking help for substance abuse often disclose symptoms of depression and/or anxiety, and tell us that they use substances in attempt to medicate these symptoms.

Instead, substance use typically makes the symptoms worse. It is not uncommon for individuals to report that they have been prescribed medication for their mental health diagnosis, but the benefits of the medication is interrupted when the individual either uses substances or stops taking the medication when using substances. Co-occurring disorders of substance abuse and depression or other mental health disorders will be best treated with an integrated individualized treatment plan. The use of substances will sometimes require detoxification and a stabilization period to clearly diagnose mental health symptoms, and assess treatment matches.”

### Is Depression Treatable?

Depression is absolutely treatable. Between 80% and 90% of people with depression respond well to treatment, and most will gain some relief from their symptoms. Unfortunately, many people don't seek treatment – **it is estimated that only one in three people with depression gets help.** Left untreated, depression can last for weeks, months, or years, and even cost a life.

There are many reasons people don't seek the help they need for depression. Some see it as a character weakness or flaw instead of the medical illness that it is. Some don't know about or understand the wide range of depression symptoms. Still others worry that the medications used to treat depression are addictive, or that they have terrible side effects – the truth is that antidepressants are not addictive, and while there may be side effects, they are usually very minimal.

Treatment for depression is more holistic than in the past. The most common treatment plan blends therapy, medication, and lifestyle changes that include exercise, good nutrition, and stress management. However, for some, antidepressant medications alone are the treatment of choice, and for others, therapy alone may be recommended to help deal with certain life situations or issues.

When antidepressants are prescribed, they are used to correct imbalances in the levels of chemicals in the brain. There are several excellent medications that offer good control

of symptoms with minimal side effects. Some may need to try a variety of antidepressants and dosages before finding the most effective medication or combination of medications. It is important to know that antidepressant medications don't work instantly. People may notice a change in their mood in the first few weeks, but it usually takes three to four weeks for the medication to have the full effect.

When therapy is recommended for depression, an approach called cognitive behavioral therapy is often used. In this type of therapy, people learn how to think about and view their problems differently to end patterns that can feed depression. Once people experience the benefits of therapy, they usually view it as worthwhile and something they look forward to.

It is important to seek treatment for depression to feel better and avoid needless suffering. It is also important in minimizing the occurrence and severity of future episodes – over half of the individuals with a major depressive episode can be expected to have a second, and the prognosis for subsequent episodes is better if the first was treated.

### **Suicide and Depression**

Approximately 30,000 people kill themselves in the United States each year. There is a direct link between depression and suicide. It is estimated that 90% of people who commit suicide have a mental health disorder, and up to 60% of people who commit suicide have major depression or bipolar disorder (another form of depression which has cycles of high and low moods). Clearly, treating depression and other mental health disorders is the best way to prevent most suicides.

The most vulnerable are the elderly – suicide rates are highest among people aged 65 years and older, with men in that age group having the highest rates of all. The elderly are most likely to experience significant losses such as death of a spouse, loss of a job, or deteriorating health, which can all lead to

depression. Often they are isolated so no one notices their symptoms, or depression is dismissed as a normal part of the aging process, which it is not. Another vulnerable group is adolescents. Suicide is the third leading cause of death for young people aged 15-24.

When depression is combined with substance abuse, the risk for self-harm goes up dramatically in children or adults. Morelli says, "The abuse of alcohol or drugs can contribute to the symptoms leading to suicidal thoughts.

A suicidal person urgently needs to seek professional help. If you know of someone who is talking about or showing signs of suicide, take it seriously and get them to a health care or mental health provider, or **call 911 if the person is in imminent danger or call HSI's 24-hour crisis counseling 651-777-4455.**

### **Where Do I Get Help?**

If you are concerned about depression in yourself or someone else, it is important that you seek help. People who are depressed often need those who care about them to lead the way. Discuss your concerns with a health care or mental health professional, and request a complete evaluation. HSI has a variety of mental health professionals who can assess and treat depression, and evaluate the risk of suicide.

HSI, a human service organization, is part of a statewide network of "community mental health centers," which is committed to providing affordable behavioral health services. HSI is a provider for Medical Assistance-Prepaid medical Assistance Programs (PMAP), Medicare, Minnesota Care, as well as a large number of commercial insurance plans. For further information or help with depression issues call 651-777-5222 for an appointment, or just to talk it over with a trained professional staff.

## ***National Depression Screening Day***

This **free, walk-in Depression Screening Day on October 9, from 4:00 – 6:00 PM at HSI Oakdale**, is part of a national effort to call attention to the prevalence of depression, educate people to its signs and symptoms, and connect those in need to treatment. The Depression Screening includes a film,

free brochures, an opportunity to take a short written screening test, and a brief and confidential conversation with a mental health professional. If you think that you or someone you love may have depression, you are invited to attend.

### **Important Information:**

The information that is provided in this newsletter is not to be used to diagnose individual cases. Each individual is unique, and only a professional health-care provider is qualified to diagnose illness and prescribe treatment.

## Children and Depression

Depression is common among children as well as adults. It is estimated that depression affects as many as 1 in every 33 children, and 1 in 8 adolescents. Children and adolescents also commit suicide. The majority of those who are suicidal have clinical depression alone or in conjunction with an anxiety disorder, attention deficit disorder, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia.

Unfortunately, depression is often left untreated in children. Caring parents and caregivers can fail to see the symptoms in children, because they can look very different than they do in adults, and children are less able to clearly articulate their feelings. For example, young children might show depression by pretending to be sick, refusing to go to school, clinging to a parent, or expressing worry that a parent may die. Older children might sulk, fail classes, get into trouble at school, be negative or irritable, or have anger outbursts. Often these behaviors are dismissed as part of "a typical teenage phase," when any of them could be symptoms of depression or other mental health problems such as anxiety or behavioral disorders.

"Listen carefully to children. Hopelessness is a very significant risk factor for suicide. When a child tells you that he or she feels terrible, don't jump in with statements like, "You shouldn't feel terrible. You have lots of friends and I love you." Instead, listen and acknowledge that you understand. After that, you may want to help the child see positives, generate solutions to problems, and discuss getting some help if needed," states Carol Rogers-Tanner, Psychologist and Supervisor of HSI Outpatient Services. "It is also important not to minimize drug use," Rogers-Tanner continues, "Often we hear parents say, "It's not so bad, I did it when I was a teen and it didn't hurt me." It is always illegal, and cause for concern and action when children or teenagers use alcohol or drugs. Also, street drugs are different now - often they have dangerous unknown substances cut into them, which pose yet another risk."

The most important thing you can do for a depressed child is to get them the appropriate help. School counselors or social workers, physicians, or mental health professionals are readily available to discuss your concerns. In some cases, individual or family therapy will be recommended or medications may be prescribed for a child. It is important as parents to be active and assertive in giving information and seeking input from those working with your child.

### Parents, teachers, caregivers, and anyone who cares about a child, should be aware of some key behaviors that may signal depression in children:

- ✓ Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- ✓ A sudden drop in school performance
- ✓ Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed
- ✓ Outbursts of shouting, complaining, unexplained irritability, or crying
- ✓ Thoughts of death or suicide
- ✓ Expressions of fear or anxiety
- ✓ Aggression, refusal to cooperate, antisocial behavior
- ✓ Use of alcohol or other drugs
- ✓ Constant complaints of aching arms, legs, or stomach with no apparent cause

—From *The American Psychiatric Association*

## HSI Locations

8200 Hadley Ave. S.  
Cottage Grove, MN  
55016  
(651) 458-4116

121 11th Ave. S.E.  
Forest Lake, MN  
55025  
(651) 251-5220

7066 Stillwater Blvd. N.  
Oakdale, MN 55128  
(651) 777-5222

375 East Orleans St.  
Stillwater, MN 55082  
(651) 430-2720

TDD: (651) 770-6834

[www.hsicares.org](http://www.hsicares.org)

**24 Hours Mental  
Health Crisis Line  
651-777-4455**

## HSI Opens Adult Day Program in Woodbury

HSI Circle of Friends, an adult day program for people age 55 and older, opened their second program site in the Woodbury Estates assisted living building. This licensed day program provides personal care, monitors health and medication plan, conducts activities and exercise, serves nutritious meals and snacks, and offers personal hygiene and foot care. It meets the needs of those experiencing memory loss, chronic illness, disability, depression, loneliness and persons in need of post-hospitalization

assistance. The program runs on weekdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (extended hours available upon request).

For caregivers, the program offers respite. Time is freed-up to run errands, keep appointments, work, visit friends or rest. Transportation may be available with HSI transporters. For more information or to arrange a visit of Circle of Friends call 651-275-5801.

*This new location was established by HSI in partnership with Edgewood Management and funded by a partial grant from the MN. Dept. of Human Services.*

## Adopt a Project

HSI is in need of gifts that are new or in good working condition that are important for our programs and services. Current needs are:

1 - 19" television and VCR	7 - office chairs
1 - large blood pressure cuff	3 - matching lobby chairs
CD player	Gift certificates to Wal-Mart or Cub for Circle of Friends programs
Camera and film	
Television cart (large) on wheels	Bank money deposit pouches (zippered)
Conference room chairs	Events Tickets for Peer Mentoring programs

Looking for opportunities to volunteer?  
There is a position to match most any interest. Call Celinda Doyle at 651-275-5813.

## Resources and Support

**HSI**  
7066 Stillwater Blvd N.  
Oakdale, MN 55128  
(651) 777-5222  
www.hsicare.org

**24- Hour Mental Health Crisis Line**  
651-777-4455

**Washington County Alliance for the Mentally Ill**  
P.O. Box 2066  
Stillwater, MN 55082  
651-439-3800

**Mental Health Association of Minnesota**  
2021 East Hennepin Avenue  
Suite 412  
Minneapolis, MN 55413  
612-331-6840  
1-800-862-1799

**National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)**  
www.nimh.nih.gov  
1-800-421-4211

**National Mental Health Association**  
www.nmha.org  
1-800-969-6642

**Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (SAVE)**  
www.save.org  
952-946-7998

**IN A SUICIDE EMERGENCY  
CALL 911 OR 1-800-SUICIDE  
(1-800-784-2433)**

## QUESTIONS?

Would you like more information on our services? Call . . . (651) 777-5222

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## From the CEO...

The impact of depression on health and productivity often goes overlooked. Data developed by a massive "global burden of disease" study conducted by the World Health

Organization and Harvard University reveal that major depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide among persons age five and older. For women in the U.S. as well as throughout the world, depression is the leading cause of lost years of healthy life including years lost due to premature death and disability.

In addition to personal tragedies, untreated depression is costly. This year one in ten adults will suffer from this often-misunderstood disorder. A Rand Corporation study found that patients with depressive symptoms spend more days in bed than those with diabetes, arthritis, back problems, lung problems, or gastrointestinal disorders.

Estimates of the total cost of depression to nation range from \$30-\$44 billion from lost work days, decreased productivity due to symptoms that sap energy, effect work habits, cause problems with concentration, memory, and decision making.

The good news is that in more than 80 percent of cases treatment is effective. It enables people with depression to return to satisfactory functioning lives and nearly everyone gets some relief. It is **not** a passing mood, it is **not** a personal weakness, it is a major – **but treatable** – illness. Treatment includes medication, short-term psychotherapy, or a combination of both. You can do something about depression. You can start by learning more about this common and serious illness. If you think you or a loved one may have depression, take action. Seek consultation from an employee assistance counselor or contact resources listed in this newsletter. Getting help will make a difference.

# HSI

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## HSI *Connection*

### FEATURE FOCUS

Depression affects nearly one in ten people of all ages, cultures, races, and income levels. Depression robs people of pleasure from life and cause problems in relationships and school or job performance.

Depression is one of the most treatable mental health disorders.

## HELPING YOUR COMMUNITY IN FUN WAYS

### *HSI 12th Annual Charity Golf Classic*

**Monday, July 28 11:30 a.m.**  
**Stillwater County Club**

Join us for a fun day of golf at the beautiful Stillwater Country Club, in historic Stillwater.

Lee Valsvik, local television and radio personality will serve as celebrity golfer and emcee of the banquet. Prizes will be awarded to the top teams. Event includes hole-in-one prizes, lunch, golf banquet, awards and many fabulous silent auction items. For sponsorship or golf information or to donate to the silent auction, please call (651) 251-5010.



### *10K Run for HSI*

**Saturday, August 16th- 8:30 am**

This USATF certified course begins and ends at Aggregate Industries' Larson Quarry located on Grey Cloud Island. Enjoy the natural beauty of the river, woods and wildlife as you run or walk this wonderful scenic course. All proceeds from this event will benefit the programs and services of HSI. "One of the reasons we selected HSI," says race director Patty Christensen of Aggregate Industries, "is that they are a charity that serves our most needy and all of Washington County." HSI annually serves more than 8,600 residents by providing multi-services for adults, adolescents, children and families who face daily struggles related to mental health, chemical dependency, domestic violence or sexual abuse. In addition, HSI provides services for the elderly and adults with special needs, which include nutritional services (Meals on Wheels and congregate dining) and door-through-door transportation. For more River Run information go to [www.raceberryjam.com](http://www.raceberryjam.com) or [www.active.com](http://www.active.com) or call Patty Christensen at (651) 683-8133.

**HSI's mission is to help people overcome and prevent life impairments by developing individual potential and promoting meaningful participation in family and community life.**