



The Thermometer Times

Published by The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of Riverside, California

VOL. 20 NO. 12 Out of darkness . . . December 2008

Dates to Remember

***** CARE & SHARE GROUPS

Clients and their guests are invited to come and participate. *Professional care providers very welcome.*
Riverside County Mental Health Administration Building
(see page 9 for address & map)

**Saturday 10:00 am -12 noon
December 6, 13, 20 & 27**

**Christmas Dinner
at Jo Ann's at noon
See page 6 for details**

Web Site for DBSA, Riverside:
<http://californiadbbsa.org>
E-mail for DBSA, Riverside:
dbbsaofriv1@aol.com
E-mail for DBSA,California:
dbbsaofca1@aol.com



Meetings start promptly at 10 am. Do yourself a good turn: Be on time...visit with friends before the meeting. If you come late, please enter quietly.

Directions to

Jo Ann Martin's Home

Exit 91 Frwy at Van Buren. Go south
4.2 miles on Van Buren to
Whispering Spur. Turn left.



2nd
driveway
on the right

16280 Whispering Spur
Riverside,CA 92504
951 / 780-3366

The Importance of Suicide Prevention

According to a new report by the World Health Organization, suicide continues to be one of the leading causes of death for more people worldwide than war and homicide combined. 1.5 million die annually from suicide and an estimated 20 times that amount in unsuccessful attempts occur; it seems the importance of prevention should take on a larger role. There is a movement under way by various Government agencies like the Substance Abuse Mental Health Service Agency (SAMHSA), the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the National Institute of Health (NIH) to educate people in the health care profession and others but more needs to be done to help.

Today there is a virtual epidemic of male suicide in the U.S., and more awareness and avenues for help are needed to stem the tide.

Suicide prevention is an umbrella term for the collective efforts of mental health practitioners and related professionals to reduce the incidence of suicide through proactive preventive measures.

Various suicide prevention strategies that have been used are:

- Promoting mental resilience through optimism and connectedness.
- Education about suicide, including risk factors, warning signs and the availability of help.
- Increasing the proficiency of health and welfare services at responding to people in need. This includes better training for health professionals and employing crisis counseling organizations.
- Reducing domestic violence and substance abuse are long-term strategies to reduce many mental health problems.
- Reducing access to convenient means of suicide (e.g. toxic substances, handguns).
- Reducing the quantity of dosages supplied in packages of non-prescription medicines e.g. aspirin.
- Interventions targeted at high-risk groups.
- Research. (see below)

Intervention

A psychosocial / psycho educational group therapeutic intervention for anyone who makes repeated suicide attempts is being developed which involves a combination of open discussion of the daily lived experiences of such individuals as well as teaching them new skills which can be used to "stay safe". The hoped for outcome of skill use, staying "safe", means avoiding making an attempt or engaging in behavior that is harmful to the person. Participants in this program are

Continued on Page 3 (Suicide Prevention)

a note from the Editor

We invite you to submit material for review and possible publication in the newsletter. Your articles allow us to get to know one another in greater depth and to learn of the many talents, interests and assets of our members.

Articles, poetry and/or drawings can be on anything pertaining to experiences you have to share regarding depression and/or bipolar disorder; what it is to live and cope with the disorder; how you learned of it, what helps, what doesn't. You may write on any other mental health issue or problem that you are passionate about. You can tell us about yourself and how you spend your time and what's important to you. You may want to write a report on a mental health event you attended or a mental health book you have read. We would appreciate that, too.

Drawings should be black and white, line or half-tone.

Your work may be submitted to JoAnn, Leroy or Lynne at DBSA Riverside meetings.

It may be mailed to: *The Thermometer Times*
% Jo Ann Martin
16280 Whispering Spur
Riverside, CA 92504

E-mail it to: JoAnnMartin1@aol.com

FAX to: 951/780-5758

Materials submitted may or may not be published, at the discretion of the editors, and may be edited for length.

Get your creative juices flowing and share your knowledge and experience with your DBSA friends through *The Thermometer Times*.

Thank you. Lynne Stewart

MOVIE NIGHT AT JO ANNS*

2nd and 4th Tuesday of November

6:30 PM

Tuesday, December 9th

“Fred Claus”

Hilarious and Heart warming! A story about Fred Claus, Santa's brother who is as different from Santa as he can be. He saves the day when Santa can't deliver

Christmas toys.

Tuesday, December 23rd
“The Kranks Christmas”

Adapted from the book “Skipping Christmas”. Another very amusing tale of a family who tries to ignore Christmas, but has a change of plans at the last minute.

Enjoy pizza and an additional movie of your choice!

*Directions to Jo Ann's home on page 1, bottom of column 1 of this Newsletter.

The Thermometer Times 16280 Whispering Spur Riverside, CA 92504 (951) 780-3366

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Please feel free to reprint any of our articles. However, please acknowledge our publication, date, and author or source. It will please the authors and recognize their efforts.

Riverside Suicide Crisis Help Line

Call (951) 686-HELP [686-4357] if you need to talk to someone. It is available 24 hours - 7 days a week.

National Suicide Prevention Hotline

Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) if you need to talk to someone in any of 109 crisis centers in 42 states. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline has just been launched by SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) as part of the National Suicide Prevention Initiative (NSPI). In addition, a new Web-site has been established at

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

SUICIDE PREVENTION *(Cont'd from page 1)*

taught skills which they can reasonably apply in their everyday lives, from “basic personal rights” to self-soothing, setting boundaries in interpersonal relationships, distraction tactics, problem-solving strategies, and the idea that distress felt in the moment, no matter how seemingly unendurable, is not permanent but an experience that will pass.

Basic Personal Rights

Many individuals who make recurrent suicide attempts come from backgrounds that were abusive or otherwise detrimental. Often individuals with such backgrounds have been given the message that they have no rights. Teaching basic personal rights, such as “I have the right to say no to a request” and “I have the right to make choices that take care of ME,” helps to promote a sense of self-efficacy among participants. This can help set the stage for teaching skills that require participants actively to choose to care for themselves. Though a flaw may arise, when they think that they have the right to choose the personal course of the life they want, including whether or not they should die, this approach is known as the right to die.

Self Soothing

Self-soothing, a skill that is taught in suicide prevention groups and also in Dialectical Behavior Therapy, involves using one of the five senses to provide some sort of stimulation that is calming to the individual. For example, many find a hot beverage such as tea or coffee to be comforting. Other self-soothing activities might include a warm or cool bath or shower, putting on favorite comfortable clothes, stroking a pet, burning incense, or listening to music. The goal of self-soothing is to lessen the person’s current level of distress by providing stimulation that feels positive.

Interpersonal Boundaries

Individuals who make recurrent suicide attempts often feel that they have very little control over their lives, or that their lives are controlled by other people rather than themselves. The goal of teaching boundary-setting skills is to make the participants aware that it is okay for them to have needs and wants and to go about getting these needs and wants met. Boundary-setting also encourages participants to be aware of when other people in their lives are asking for things the participant would rather not give/share, or acting in a way that makes the participant feel unsafe. Boundary-setting means choosing actively which things will be shared and which will not, when someone is welcome to visit and when not, and so on.

Distraction tactics

Another skill that this particular therapeutic intervention and DBT have in common is the use of distraction tactics. The goal of using a distraction is to survive the period of distress by doing things that take one’s mind off it. Distraction tactics can range from a quiet task like reading a favorite book, to an active task like going for a run. Distraction does not act to

lessen the emotional pain, but it can take the mind off it long enough for it to recede, which may prevent a suicide attempt that is made to escape seemingly unendurable pain.

Actively applying the above techniques is proven to help in the event of suicidal ideation and if learned can be a torch that lights the way to prevention of suicide.

Further understanding of prevention techniques can be found by visiting:

www.DBSAlliance.org www.save.org/
and www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/suicide-prevention/index.shtml

Sections of this article were reprinted from psychcentral.com/ and Wikipedia.

24 hour help can be found at

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-TALK or 211.

*Source: DBSA TAMPA BAY NEWSLETTER
July - August - September 2008*

The NMHA suggests several things to try to make this season a positive experience:

- 1. Stay in good health.** Eat right, get plenty of sleep and exercise regularly.
- 2. Keep realistic expectations.** Set realistic goals about your time, money, activities, and what you perceive to be a positive and enjoyable experience.
- 3. Know that it’s alright to feel down.**
- 4. Look toward the future.** Each season is different and can be enjoyed in a different way. Avoid comparing today with the past.
- 5. Give of yourself.** Try volunteering and helping others.
- 6. Be thankful.** Take a moment to appreciate what you have.
- 7. Enjoy free activities,** drive around to see decorations, go window shopping, or attend a free concert.

Source: Behavioral Health Services Update, Fall/Winter 2006



“NO MATTER HOW EARLY I START, IT’S ALWAYS AN INSANE RUSH AT THE END.”
Victoria Roberts

Treatment of Depression Reduces Risk of Heart Disease

July 16, 2008, MIAMI, FL—People suffering from major depression are all at increased risk for cardiovascular disease, but treating these people with medication can greatly reduce the risk, according to new findings by researchers at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine.

The researchers focused on what's known as the stress-homoconcentration, which is a blood chemistry work-up. The stress-hemoconcentration increases during psychological stress and is considered a risk factor for heart disease.

The study consisted of 146 outpatients with depression who were studied and compared to people without depression. Patients underwent an eight-week study in which they were given antidepressants.

People with depression who received antidepressants experienced an improvement in depression symptoms and had better stress-homocentration measurements, which researchers said could reduce their risk of cardiovascular disease.

The study, which was published in the journal *PLoS ONE*, was titled "Elevated stress-homoconcentration in major depression is normalized by antidepressant treatment:

Secondary analysis from a randomized, double-blind clinical trial and relevance to cardiovascular disease risk."

Source: *bp Magazine*,
Fall 2008

Stress May Trigger Inflammatory Skin Diseases

Washington, October 27: Researchers from University of Medicine Berlin and McMaster University in Canada have found that stress may activate immune cells in the skin, leading to inflammatory skin disease.

This cross-talk between stress perception, which involves the brain, and the skin is mediated through the brain-skin connection".

The immune cells in skin can over-react, resulting in inflammatory skin diseases like atopic dermatitis and psoriasis.

Study leader Dr. Petra Arck hypothesized that stress could exacerbate skin disease by increasing the number of immune cells in the skin.

The researcher said that the team exposed mice to sound stress, and found that the stress challenge resulted in higher numbers of mature white blood cells in the skin.

Moreover, blocking the function of two proteins that attract immune cells to the skin, LFA-1 and ICAM-1, prevented the stress-induced increase in white blood cells in the skin.

Based on their observations, the researchers came to the conclusion that stress activates immune cells, which in turn are central in initiating and perpetuating skin diseases.

The study appears in the November issue of *The American Journal of Pathology*.

Source: *Express India*
October 27, 2008

VERBAL CRITICISM IS LONG-LASTING

By Rick Nauert, Ph.D., Senior News Editor *Psych Central*
www.psychcentral.com

We all know the famous saying: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me," but is this proverb actually true? According to some researchers, words may pack a harder punch than we realize.

Psychologists Zhansheng Chen and Kipling D. Williams of Purdue University, Julie Fitness of Macquarie University, and Nicola C. Newton of the University of New South Wales found that the pain of physical events may fade with time, while the pain of social occurrences can be re-instantiated through memory retrievals.

The researchers set up four experiments to demonstrate this finding. In the first two experiments, participants reported the amount of pain they felt while trying to relive a physically or a socially painful experience. After writing detailed accounts of each experience, the participants reported how they felt.

The last two experiments were similar to the first two, except participants were asked to work on some cognitive tasks with different levels of difficulty after reliving a socially or physically painful event.

The results, published in the August 2008 issue of *Psychological Science*, a journal of the Association for Psychological Science, are clear.

Participants who had to recall a socially painful experience reported stronger feelings of pain and relived the experience more intensely than those who had to recall a physically painful event. Furthermore, participants who only had to recall a physically painful event performed better on the difficult mental tasks in comparison to those who had to relive a socially painful event.

A possible explanation for these results could be the evolution of the human brain, specifically in an area called the cerebral cortex, which is responsible for complex thinking, perception and language processing.

"The evolution of the cerebral cortex certainly improved the ability of human beings to create and adapt; to function in and with groups, communities, and culture; and to respond to pain associated with social interactions," the authors wrote.

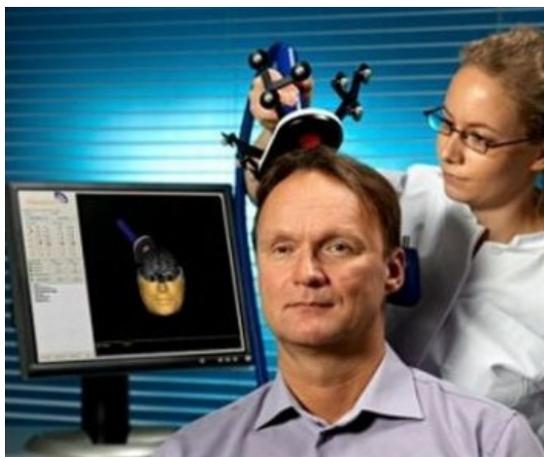
"However, the cerebral cortex may also have had an unintended effect of allowing humans to relive, re-experience, and suffer from social pain."

Source: *Life in Balance*
November 2008

As I think back over the years, I have been guided by four principles for decision making. First, the only certainty is that there is no certainty. Second, every decision, as a consequence, is a matter of weighing probabilities. Third, despite uncertainty we must decide and we must act. And lastly, we need to judge decisions not only on the results, but on how they are made.

ROBERT RUBIN
Economist and policy advisor

Magnetic Device Gets OK to Treat Depression



BY LAURAN NEERGAARD
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The government has approved the first noninvasive brain stimulator to treat depression — a device that beams magnetic pulses through the skull.

If it sounds like science-fiction, well, those woodpecker-like pulses trigger small electrical charges that spark brain cells to fire. Yet it doesn't cause the risks of surgically implanted electrodes or the treatment of last resort, shock therapy.

Called transcranial magnetic stimulation or TMS, this gentler approach isn't for everyone. The Food and Drug Administration approved Neuronetics Inc.'s NeuroStar therapy specifically for patients who had no relief from their first antidepressant, offering them a different option than trying pill after pill.

"We're opening up a whole new area of medicine," says Dr. Mark George of the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, who helped pioneer use of TMS in depression.

The FDA cleared the prescription-only NeuroStar based on data that found patients did modestly better when treated with TMS than when they unknowingly received a sham treatment that mimicked the magnet. It was a study fraught with statistical questions that concerned the agency's own scientific advisers.

For a more clear answer, the National Institutes of Health has an independent study under way now that tracks 260 patients and may have initial results as early as next year.

Quantifying the benefit is key, considering the price tag. TMS is expected to cost \$6,000 to \$10,000, depending on how many treatments a patient needs, says Dr. Philip Janicak of Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, who helped lead the NeuroStar study.

*Source: Riverside Press-Enterprise
October 21, 2008*

Blueberries Enhance Learning Ability and Memory

Blueberries and other berries are powerhouses for young nogginns. They're among the best sources of anthocyanins and flavanols — chemicals that have been shown to increase connections between brain cells, enhancing learning ability and memory. Blueberries also are rich in antioxidants.

Numerous studies on omega-3s have shown that these essential fatty acids help fuel brain power and may be effective in reducing the risk of attention-deficit disorder and dyslexia. Omega-3 fats are especially abundant in salmon, sardines, fortified eggs, ground flax seeds, and walnuts.

Folic acid, a.k.a. folate, is a B vitamin that helps keep your memory sharp by lowering levels of homocysteine, a substance that can damage blood vessels and impede blood flow to the brain. Serve up an Ivy League-inspiring bowl of hearty soup brimming with lentils, beans, and broccoli, and you've hit the folic-acid trifecta.

Joy Bauer is a registered dietitian and the author of several best-selling books, including "Joy Bauer's Food Cure?" and "Cooking With Joy."

*Source: PARADE
August 24, 2008*



You are invited to
Join your DBSA friends.
Come to Jo Ann Martin's for

Christmas Dinner



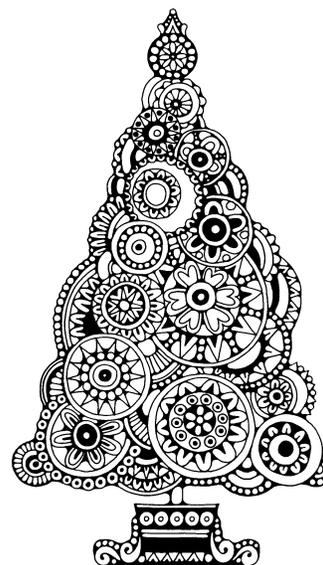
*Prime Rib and
all the trimmings
will be served.*

*Thursday, December 25
12:00 Noon*

Directions to Jo Ann Martin's Home

Exit 91 Frwy at Van Buren. Go south
4.2 miles on Van Buren to Whispering
Spur. Turn left, 2nd driveway on the right.

16280 Whispering Spur
Riverside, CA 92504
951/780-3366



Holiday Food Baskets

Every year we collect various non-perishable food items and place them in colorful baskets to distribute to people who could use some extra food close to the holiday. Listed below are a few ideas:

1. Shelf-life jello, pudding, fruitpacks, canned fruit, vegetables, soup, meat, spaghetti, cranberry sauce, and small juice cans.
4. Cake mixes, macaroni, rice, noodle meals, scalloped and mashed potatoes, and stuffing mix. Also peanut butter, small boxes of cereal, crackers, cookies, and cake.
6. Holiday napkins, small decorations, a small child's toy, or holiday candles

If you would like to receive a basket (limited number), contact us at: **951/ 780-3366** Bring items 5 days before the event.