



The Thermometer Times

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

VOL. 22 NO. 3 *Out of darkness . . . March 2010*

Dates to Remember

Saturday 10:00 am - 12 noon

March 6, 13, 20 & 28

CARE & SHARE GROUPS

Clients, guests and professionals are invited to come and participate.
Riverside County Mental Health Administration Building
(see page 9 for address & map)

Web Site for DBSA, Riverside:
<http://californiadbsa.org>
E-mail for DBSA, Riverside:
dbsaofriv1@aol.com
E-mail for DBSA, California:
dbsaofca1@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

About Mood Disorders

Marked by changes in mood, depression and bipolar disorder (also known as manic depression) are both highly treatable, medical illnesses. Unfortunately, many people don't get the help they need because of the misunderstanding surrounding the illnesses or the fear associated with stigma. The following are brief descriptions of depression and bipolar disorder. For more in-depth information go to: <http://www.dbsalliance.org>.

Depression: Pt's Not Just In Your Head

Everyone, at various times in life, feels sad or blue. It's normal to feel sad on occasion. Sometimes, sadness is a result of things that happen in your life: for example, you move to a different city and leave friends behind...you lose your job...or a loved one dies. But what's the difference between "normal" feelings of sadness and the feelings caused by depression?

- How intense the mood is: Depression is more intense than a simple "bad mood."
- How long the mood lasts: A bad mood is usually gone in a few days, but depression lasts two weeks or longer.
- How much it interferes with your life: A bad mood doesn't keep you from going to work or school or spending time with friends. Depression can keep you from doing these things and may even make it difficult to get out of bed.

While it's normal for people to experience ups and downs during their lives, those living with depression experience specific symptoms daily for two weeks or more, making it difficult to function at work, at school or in relationships.

Depression is a treatable illness marked by changes in mood, thought and behavior. It affects people of all ages, races, ethnic groups and social classes. Although it can occur at any age, the illness often surfaces between the ages of 25 and 44. The "lifetime prevalence" of depression is 24 percent for women and 15 percent for men. This means that, at some point in their lives, 24 percent of women and 15 percent of men will experience an episode of major depression.

Bipolar Disorder: More Than a Mood Swing

Bipolar disorder (also known as manic depression) is a treatable illness marked by extreme changes in mood, thought, energy and behavior. It is called bipolar disorder because a person's mood can alternate between the "poles" of mania (high, elevated mood) and depression (low, depressed mood). These changes in mood ("mood swings") can last for hours, days, weeks or even months. These highs and lows are frequently seasonal. Many people with bipolar disorder report feeling symptoms of depression more often in the winter and symptoms of mania more often in the spring.

Bipolar disorder affects nearly six (6) million adult Americans and an equal number of men and women. It tends to run in families and is found among all

Continued on Page 3 (Mood Disorders)

a note from the Editors

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 your personal experiences with depression and/or bipolar disorder; what it is to live and cope with 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: joanmartin1@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.
The Editors

MOVIE NIGHT AT JO ANNS*

2nd and 4th Tuesday of March

6:30 PM

Tuesday, March 9

Tootsie

Dustin Hoffman and Jessica Lange star in this laugh-out-loud comedy as Michael Dorsey (Dustin) plays the role of a lifetime. Don't miss this hilarious show.

Tuesday, March 23
Revolutionary Road

Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet depict a passionate young couple who decide to risk everything to pursue their dreams. Can they do it without breaking apart?

Enjoy pizza and friends!

*See page one, left lower corner for directions to Jo Ann's home.

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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

MOOD DISORDERS (Continued from page 1)

ances, ethnic groups and social classes. Like depression and other serious illnesses, bipolar disorder can also adversely affect spouses, significant others, family members, friends and coworkers. It usually begins in late adolescence (often appearing as depression during the teen years), although it can start in early childhood or as late as the 40s and 50s.

Mood Disorders are Treatable

The majority of people with mood disorders are able to find treatments that work. Talk therapy, medication or a combination of both help individuals feel better and change situations in their lives that may be contributing to their illnesses (substance use, harmful relationships, etc.).

To learn more about: Depression
Bipolar disorder
Anxiety (a condition that often coexists with a mood disorder) see future issues of [The Thermometer Times](#).

Source: *Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance: About Mood Disorders*
February 2010

StayHealthy

by Dr. Ranit Mishori

Can Diet Affect Depression?

Research keeps providing new reasons to eat a healthy diet. Now a study in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* reports that people who regularly consume fish, fruit, and vegetables reduce their chances of suffering from depression.

Scientists at London's University College looked at the diets of nearly 3500 British civil servants, then assessed the individuals for symptoms of depression five years later. The researchers noted the "protective effect" of a whole-food diet. Conversely, they said, a diet of processed meats, sweetened desserts, fried foods, refined cereals, and high-fat daily products "seems to be deleterious for depression."

The study pointed to an association between diet and depression—which doesn't mean that a bad diet *causes* depression. Still, the results are intriguing. What might actually be providing the protection for mental health? The researchers raised several possibilities: Perhaps it is the antioxidants in fruits and vegetables, thought to protect cells from damage; the folic acid in leafy greens, which affects brain tissue; or the omega-3 fatty acids in fish, present in certain brain membranes. Or, they speculated, the benefits may be cumulative.

Source: *Parade Magazine*
Jan. 31, 2010

ANNIE'S MAILBOX

Dear Annie: After reading letters from readers who are depressed, I wanted to say that sometimes depression can be caused or exacerbated by vitamin D and calcium deficiencies. When my doctor told me both those levels were low, my husband and I decided to take supplements. After a year, I am pleased to say we are more energetic and have a better outlook on life. My husband has been occasionally plagued by depression, but it seems he is affected less often these days. We're also careful to spend some time outdoors and exercise, as it really helps moodiness.

The final thing I've discovered is that oatmeal is a natural spirit lifter. On days when I'm low, a bowl of hot oatmeal with maple syrup and butter is better than pancakes. Sometimes a series of small lifts can make a big difference. Happy To Be Back

Dear Happy: Thanks for the solid advice. And everyone should ask their physician about vitamin D levels, because deficiencies are not uncommon.

Source: *The Press-Enterprise*
January 8, 2010

Victimization of People with Mental Illness

By Rick Nauert, Ph.D. April 2009

Contrary to common stereotypes, individuals with major mental disorders are more likely to become victims of violent crimes when they are experiencing an increase in symptoms than they are to commit crime.

Brent Teasdale, an assistant professor of criminal justice at Georgia State University found that patients experiencing delusions, hallucinations and worsening symptoms generally are most likely to become victims of violence.

In addition, individuals with mental disorders are particularly vulnerable for victimization during times of homelessness and when suffering from alcohol abuse.

"They actually have higher rates of victimization than they have of violence commission, which I think is counter to the stereotypes that highly symptomatic, obviously delusional, visibly mentally disordered people are dangerous, unpredictable and violent," Teasdale said.

"There's no one size fits all approach to these delusions, but the odds of victimization are multiplied almost by a factor of two when a person experiences these delusions."

Source: *Life In Balance*
February / March 2010

"There is no pleasure in having nothing to do; the fun is in having lots to do and not doing it."

~ Mary Wilson Little, Writer ~

Make Happiness Happen!

By Robert Masello

The moment of truth had come. I had stood in the post-office line for 25 minutes waiting for the lone clerk, and by now I had built up a pretty good head of steam.

But when my turn finally came, instead of making my impatience felt with a brusque tone or comment, I piled my boxes of books on the counter, took a deep breath and a good, long look at the weary, harried clerk, and said very solicitously, “Hello, how’re you doing? These just need to go book rate.”

I could almost hear her breathe a sigh of relief. After we commiserated about how hard it is to find time to read these days (and found common ground in our enthusiasm for Stephen King), I took my receipt, said “Have a good day,” and turned to go. Being nice hadn’t only improved the clerk’s day, it made me feel pretty good too. The next guy in line barged past me, dumping his mail on the counter and barking orders like a drill sergeant—alarmingly like the old me.

The last year or two has been rough for nearly all of us. “In times like these,” says Tal Ben-Shahar, a Harvard-educated lecturer and the author of *Happier* and *The Pursuit of Perfect*, “people inevitably experience fear, frustration, and anxiety.” But while there’s not a lot we can single-handedly do about the economy, war in the Middle East, or health care, there is something we can do to make our lives more rewarding—and even happier. Cheap, easy, and environmentally friendly, it might be called a “positive-attitude adjustment.”

“Recent findings prove the brain is more flexible than we used to think,” Ben-Shahar notes. “With practice, we can change our habits and even our natural disposition.”

Although I’m still in the experimental stage, I’m pleased to report that the prospects are good.

Since his advice had worked so well at the post office, I tried another of Ben-Shahar’s tips. “Seek out ‘positive distractors,’” he says. “Figure out what is fun for you, whether it’s watching movies or listening to music or going to a ball game—and then make sure you do it.”

That made me think. My wife, Laurie, and I get into ruts—it’s not so hard after 23 years of marriage—where we seldom try something new to charge things up. So, a couple of weeks ago, I got tickets for an open-air chamber-music concert and we headed out to Pasadena.

Only an hour from our home, it was like taking a mini-vacation—without the cost of airfares, hotel rooms, and dog sitters. For one sunny afternoon, listening to the music, I stopped fretting about work and bills and enjoyed the simple pleasures of the day.

Nor did I glance, all afternoon, at my cell-phone—which also contributed to my feeling of well-being, according to Ben-Shahar. “We’ve all been trained to maximize every minute of our day,” he says. “But people who are able to focus on just one thing—even for one or two hours a day—are not only happier at their work, they’re also more productive and creative.

Less can be more.”

Studies done at the University of Utah, for example, reveal that drivers who talk on their cell-phones—hands-free or not—are as impaired as if they were driving drunk. Truckers who text, according to research at the VirginiaTechTransportation Institute, are 23 times more likely to have an accident or narrowly miss causing one. Our minds, it turns out, can’t be in two places at one time any more than our bodies can.

By regularly leaving all my electronic devices off for a few hours, I’ve cut down on my stress levels and discovered uninterrupted time for other things that used to give me pleasure—like reading a long, complex book or taking a leisurely walk with a friend.

Finally Ben-Shahar says, “The No.1 predictor for general well-being is not money or prestige but the time we spend with those who are near and dear to us. Enjoying close and intimate relationships with those we care about and who care about us is an absolute prerequisite to happiness. But it’s precisely these relationships that suffer most in our hectic modern life.”

If I had to list the happiest times in my life, the one thing they’d all have in common would be good friends. (Try it yourself—I bet you’ll come to the same conclusion.) So isn’t it odd that when times are rough, a lot of us act like porcupines, pulling ourselves into prickly, self-defensive balls? The smart move would be to do just the opposite—open ourselves up to new experiences, new people and most important, old friends.

To test that theory, my wife and I threw a modest dinner party inviting some friends over who always make us feel good. We’d thought of waiting until we got the carpeting replaced and the stuffing put back in the leather chair. But you know what? Those things are just things—they can wait. When our friends came, we laughed, we commiserated, we even complained. But we were all in a better mood at the end of the night.

All these experiences taught me something important. Taking action to develop a more positive attitude itself improved my mood. Ben-Shahar agrees. “I doth believe that things always happen for the best,” he admits. “But I do believe that it’s possible to make the best of things that happen.”

How to Get Happy

- **Act happy**—even if you aren’t (yet). It will cheer you and everyone around you.
- **Seek out positive distractions.** Think about what always gives you pleasure and do it. Don’t wait for the activity to come to you—buy the tickets, call your friend, get on a bike.
- **Do one thing at a time**—at least for one or two hours a day. Multitasking can make you feel tense. Focusing on one activity is calming and allows you to

Continued on page 5 (Happy)

Sleep Problems May Up Suicide Risk, study finds

By Michael Kahn, London, Reuters
April 2009

People who suffer chronic sleep problems are more likely to think about suicide or actually try to kill themselves, researchers say.

The more types of sleep disturbances a person had — such as waking up too early, difficulty falling asleep or lying awake at night — upped the odds of suicidal thoughts, planning a suicide, or attempting it, researchers told a conference.

“People with two or more sleep symptoms were 2.6 times more likely to report a suicide attempt than those without any insomnia complaints,” Marcin Wojnar, a researcher at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and the Medical University of Poland, who led the study, said in a statement.

“This has implications for public health as the presence of sleep problems should alert doctors to assess such patients for a heightened risk of suicide even if they don’t have a psychiatric condition.”

According to the World Health Organization, some 877,000 people worldwide kill themselves each year. For every suicide death, anywhere from 10 to 40 attempts are made, the U.N. agency estimates.

Scientists have linked sleep disturbances to increased suicidal risk in people with psychiatric disorders and in adolescents but it is unclear whether the association also exists in the general population, the researchers said.

In the study presented at the World Psychiatric Association International Congress in Florence, Italy, Wojnar and colleagues looked at the relationship between sleep problems and suicidal behaviors among 5,692 U.S. men and women.

About a third of the volunteers reported at least one type of sleep disturbance over the preceding year, which included either difficulty falling asleep, trouble staying asleep or waking at least two hours earlier than desired.

After adjusting for factors such as substance abuse and depression as well as for the influence of age, gender, marital and financial status, the researchers found the most consistent suicide link with waking up early.

People who reported that problem were twice as likely to have had suicidal thoughts or planned a suicide and were nearly three times more likely to have tried to kill themselves.

The researchers do not know exactly why, but said lack of sleep may affect cognitive function and lead to poorer judgment and increased hopelessness. A malfunction involving the brain chemical serotonin may also play a role, Wojnar added.

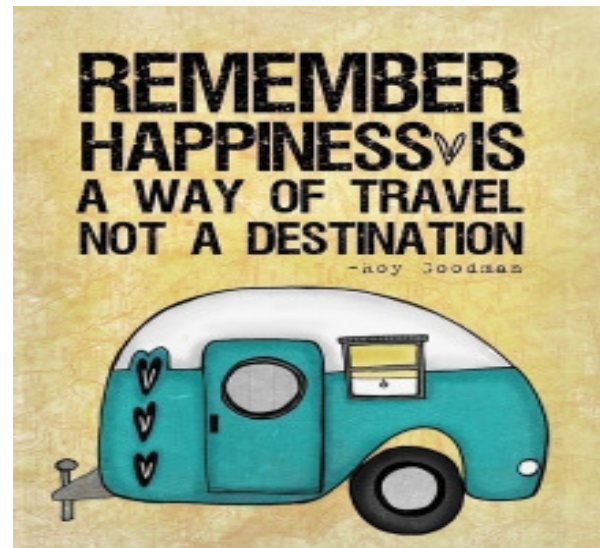
“Our findings also raise the possibility that addressing sleep problems could reduce the risk of suicidal behaviors,” Wojnar said.

Source: *Life In Balance*
February/March 2010

10 ways to maintain happiness

Mardi Horowitz’s 10 ways to maintain happiness from “A Course in Happiness” (Jeremy P. Tarcher (Penguin, \$23.95):

1. Seek safe and satisfying sensations.
2. Enjoy group memberships.
3. Maintain an attitude to embrace diversity.
4. Seek calm solitude.
5. Appreciate your achievements.
6. Appreciate the achievements of others.
7. Increase your mastery of activities.
8. Nurture your soul and spirit
9. Consider how you can help others.
10. Appreciate the flow of generations.



(HAPPY) Continued from page 4

enjoy the experience fully

- **Spend more time with friends and loved ones.**

Enjoying close relationships is the No. 1 predictor of happiness.

- **Take action.** Passivity tends to make you feel worse. Choosing to change, even with a very small step, is itself a mood-enhancer.

Source: *Parade Magazine*
January 17, 2010

Few aware of cards that cut drug costs

PRESCRIPTIONS: Some Inland cities, including Riverside, offer the CVS Caremark discounts.

BY LORA HINES

THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Few Riverside residents know about a discount prescription drug program that has been available to everyone for little more than a year.

Accessing it is as easy as making a trip to a city library, community center or utility payment office. There's no charge to get into the program.

Riverside is one of six Inland cities included in the CVS Caremark prescription discount card program through membership in the National League of Cities. The league is a Washington D.C.-based lobbying organization that represents municipalities nationwide.

All residents of cities enrolled in the program can participate, regardless of age, income or health care coverage. Riverside residents can pick up discount cards at about 25 places throughout the city and use them at an estimated 100 pharmacies to pay for prescriptions not covered by insurance.

Other participating cities include Canyon Lake, Grand Terrace and Murrieta. The cards, emblazoned with city seals, are immediately ready for use.

Marc Shapiro, league program director for enterprise programs, said his organization began offering the discount prescription drug cards more than a year ago to help cities provide options for needy residents. The program saves people an average of 20 percent off retail prescription drugs prices, he said. Almost all commercial pharmacies accept them, Shapiro said.

"It was designed for residents who are most in need," he said. "It's for people who are uninsured and people with prescriptions that are not covered by insurance."

But anyone who wants a card can get one as long as they live in a participating city. So far, about 325 cities nationwide have joined, Shapiro said. The program saved people an estimated \$1.3 million through December 2009, he said.

Veterinary drugs filled at pharmacies also can be covered, Shapiro said.

He said he expects the program will become more popular as health plans scale back on the number of prescriptions they cover, especially on "lifestyle drugs," such as Rogaine and some weight loss drugs.

"It's the kind of program where everyone benefits," Shapiro said. "Especially residents who are really struggling with daily decisions about whether to pay bills or fill prescriptions."

Eric Ustation, assistant to Riverside Mayor Ron Loveridge, said Riverside residents in 2009 filled 501 pre-scriptions using the program. They saved about \$11,000.

"Anyone who wants a card can pick one up," Ustation said. "We're trying to get as many people as possible to use it."

Clerks at the city's utility payment centers started handing out the cards to residents a few months ago to encourage people to use them, he said.

"That's really what it's about, getting people to learn about it," Ustation said.

Reach Lora Hines at 951-368-9444 or Lhines@PE.com

The Riverside Press-Enterprise

February 8, 2010

