

HEALTH IN OUR HANDS!

The Arkansas State University Wellness Program Newsletter
www.astate.edu/conhp



Depression Awareness and Suicide Prevention

Introduction

Each year, the Thursday of the first full week of October is National Depression Screening Day. This year, National Depression Screening Day is October 11th. The purpose of this day is to raise awareness about mental health. Unfortunately, most of us have been affected either directly or indirectly by depression or suicide. The commonality and potential effects make it pertinent to raise awareness of depression and suicide and to make resources readily available to the population. Spreading mental health awareness could save lives.

Depression

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) defines depression as “a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think, and how you act.” Symptoms must last at least two weeks and include the following:

- Feeling sad or having a depressed mood
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed
- Changes in appetite
 - Weight loss or gain unrelated to diet

- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Loss of energy or increased fatigue
- Increase in purposeless physical activity (such as pacing)
- Slowed movements and speech
- Feeling worthless or guilty
- Difficulty thinking, concentrating, or making decisions
- Thoughts of death or suicide
- With major depression, the depressed mood or lack of interest lasts most of two weeks or more
- In grief or sadness, self-esteem is usually maintained
 - With depression there are feelings of worthlessness and self-loathing

It is important to know that depression is treatable and requires medical help. It is also important to know that depression is common and if you are experiencing these things, you are not alone.

Sadness or Depression?

We have all experienced grief or sadness at one point in our lifetime. How do you know if what you are going through is sadness or depression? The APA lists some important differences:

- In grief or sadness, the feelings come in waves

The Facts

The APA lists the following statistics:

- Depression affects about 1 in 15 adults
- 1 in 6 people will experience depression some time in their life
- On average, depression first appears during the late teens to mid 20's
- Women are more likely than men to experience depression
- Between 80 and 90% of people with depression eventually respond well to treatment

Mental Health in Arkansas

At 621 deaths in 2017, suicide is the leading cause of violent death in Arkansas according to the Arkansas Department of Health. Additionally, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, statistics from 2014-2015 reveal that 98,000 adults (18 or older) had serious thoughts of suicide that year. That is about 4.4% of the state population. Clearly, we have a major issue that needs to be addressed. It is crucial to spread awareness, be aware of signs of depression, and make resources known and readily available to those who may be struggling with depression.

Veterans and Mental Health

Veterans have often experienced trauma either directly or indirectly and depression is a normal and common response. According to mentalhealthscreening.org,

- Veterans have a 50% higher rate of suicide than other civilians with similar demographic characteristics
- Only about half of veterans who need mental health services seek it out
 - Only about half of those receive adequate care
- The Veterans Crisis Line (listed under resources) reports more than 3.5 million callers, 413,000 chats, and 98,000 texts since it was established in 2007

The Beck PRIDE Center for America's Wounded Veterans is a resource on campus. They provide services for veterans including mental health services, social

services, and rehabilitation. Their contact information is as follows:

- By phone: (870) 972-2624
- In person: Check in at the Speech and Hearing Office, room 101, in the first floor of the Reynold's Center for Health Sciences
- Online: <https://www.astate.edu/a/b/beck-pride-center/services/>

General Resources

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
 - Or text "TALK" to 741-741
 - Or online at chat.suicidpreventionlifeline.org
- Veteran Crisis Line: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) ext. 1
 - Or text 838-255
 - Or online at veteranscrisisline.net

Support on Campus

The Counseling Center is located in room 2203 in the Reng Student Center. All ASU students are eligible to use these services at no cost.

- Walk-in hours are Monday-Thursday from 12:00 – 3:00 p.m. and Friday 9:00 am to noon.
- You can also call (870) 972-2318 to make an appointment.
 - If you are concerned for someone else you can also make an appointment to discuss helpful options

- Services include:
 - Personal counseling
 - Therapy Assisted Online (TAO) Treatment and Self-Help at <http://www.astate.edu/u/a/counseling-services/tao/>
 - Mental Health Screenings
 - Anonymous and the screening can be completed online

References

- <https://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA17-BAROUS-16/SMA17-BAROUS-16-AR.pdf>
- <https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/news/detail/suicide-the-leading-cause-of-violent-death-in-arkansas>
- <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/depression/what-is-depression>
- <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/about/what-is-vc/>
- <https://www.astate.edu/a/counseling-services/>
- <https://www.astate.edu/a/b/beck-pride-center/services/>

Other News:

**If you have any suggestions for newsletter topics, please contact Dean Susan Hanrahan at hanrahan@astate.edu.

The Arkansas State University Employee Wellness Newsletter is published monthly during the academic year by the College of Nursing and Health Professions. Health questions can be addressed to Dean Susan Hanrahan, Ph.D., ext. 3112 or hanrahan@astate.edu. Produced by Katie Sellers, graduate student in the College of Nursing and Health Professions, Physical Therapy Program.