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727.394.8222.

Newsletter

Message From Bonnie

Much has happened in the last eight months ...

The most obvious is our organization's new logo and a change to our newsletter format.

We've also been working on a major redesign of our Web site. This project should be completed within the next couple of months.

March brought U.S. House passage of the *Joshua Omgig Veterans Suicide Prevention Act*.

Marlene Jehs and I traveled to Tallahassee in April for the Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition Day at

the Capitol.

There was the extremely exciting news on May 22 that Governor Crist signed the bill creating the State-wide Office of Suicide Prevention.

On the road again in July, Marlene and I attended the SPAN USA annual conference in Washington, D.C.

Also in July we held our annual Evening of Remembrance.

At the end of August, Marlene and I will head to Tallahassee for the first Florida Office of Suicide Prevention task force



meeting. Then, I will be attending the Florida Suicide Prevention Symposium in November.

There's much more I have to tell you that will have to wait until our next newsletter.

Statewide Office Of Suicide Prevention

Five years of advocacy work paid off on May 22 when Governor Crist signed the bill creating a Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention, effective July 1, 2007.

The law provides \$150,000

for one year, for two employees to coordinate suicide prevention efforts statewide.

Erin MacInnes and Bill Janes were subsequently appointed by Crist to fill these positions.

Bonnie McClelland is pleased with Crist's choices and feels that MacInnes is the perfect person to head the office.

Armchair Advocacy: Your Voice Counts

Being an armchair advocate for suicide prevention can't get any easier!



SPAN USA (www.spanusa.org) provides a convenient and easy means to take action.

Their Legislative and Media Action Center allows you to:

- Identify top issues of interest to you and to SPAN USA.
- Find your elected officials and key government decision makers.
- Wage a successful campaign by e-mail and fax with one click.
- Keep current on bills and votes.
- Speak out to your local press.

You can also sign up for their Action E-List and get notified by e-mail when your involvement can make a critical difference.

Every voice counts!

Please help by being an armchair advocate and taking immediate action.

Brief Summary of SPAN USA Current Alerts

Stop Senior Suicide Act

Would help prevent suicide among older adults by:

- Forming a federal Interagency Geriatric Mental Health Planning Council.
- Providing grants to plan and implement elderly suicide early intervention and prevention strategies.
- Ensuring guidance, training and technical assistance to grantees.
- Adjusting the Medicare coinsurance percentage rate for outpatient mental health services.

Melanie Blocker Stokes Postpartum Depression Research and Care Act

Will prioritize postpartum depression and psychosis by:

- Expanding research on the mental illness.
- Establishing grants for the operation and coordination of cost-effective delivery systems of essential services to afflicted individuals and their families.

Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act of 2007

This mental health parity bill will allow more people in need of mental health and addiction recovery services to obtain equitable insurance coverage for their conditions.

Joshua Omvig Veterans Suicide Prevention Act

Directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to:

- Implement a comprehensive program designed to reduce the incidence of suicide among veterans.
- Make available 24-hour mental health care for veterans.
- Develop an outreach and education program for veterans and their families.

Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act Reauthorization

The GLSMA created a program which enhances suicide prevention efforts on a state, tribal, local and campus level.

This bill would reauthorize (fund) the programs authorized under the original law for another five years.

Medicare Mental Health Modernization Act of 2007

Will provide better access to mental health benefits for the elderly and individuals with disabilities who rely upon Medicare for health care.



SPAN USA Lifekeeper Memory Quilts displayed at the 2007 Evening of Remembrance. 2007 (l) and 2006 (r)

Evening Of Remembrance

Our 6th Annual Evening of Remembrance was held on July 14, 2007. The weather was beautiful and we had a grand turnout of about 40 wonderful participants. There were even several people who came from across the state.

We took this opportunity to debut our second SPAN USA Lifekeeper Memory Quilt. Thanks goes out to the combined efforts of

Bonnie McClelland, Marlene Jehs, Betty Welker and everyone who submitted a picture of their loved one.

Visit our Web site for more event pictures.

Anti-bullying Bill Stalled In Senate

For two years Debbie Johnston of Cape Coral has pushed Florida legislators for anti-bullying legislation. And, for the second straight year the *Jeffrey Johnston Stand Up For All Students Act* has passed the House, but failed to pass the Senate.

The bill is named for Johnston's son who died by suicide at age 15 after being haunted by Internet postings from a classmate accusing him of being gay and a stalker.

The bill would prohibit the bullying of students and employees at school, at

school events and online. Also, it would require each school district to adopt a bullying and harassment policy.

This greatly needed bill will surely be re-introduced next year.

We'll keep you posted.

"Those that bully at one time were bullied. It's time to stop the cycle."

– Rep. Doug Holder (R) Sarasota



Can you "find Bonnie" among the walkers and press gathered in front of the Florida Capitol?

Walk And Rally In Tally

The 5th Annual Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition Day at the Florida Capitol was held on April 25, 2007.

Advocates, survivors, grassroots organizations and state agencies joined for a one mile walk and rally to bring suicide to the

forefront as a public issue.

The event was attended by Bonnie McClelland and Marlene Jehs.

To view additional photographs, go to: www.thebethfoundation.com/trwalk.html



*Lifekeeper Memory Quilts
on display in 2005.*

SPAN USA Conference

SPAN USA's 12th Annual National Suicide Prevention Awareness and Training Event was held in Washington, D.C., July 18-21, 2007.

Survivors, grassroots suicide prevention advocates, clinicians, community leaders and researchers remembered those lost to

suicide, received training on suicide prevention, postvention and advocacy topics, and visited members of Congress to educate them about suicide and suicide prevention.

SPAN USA Lifekeeper Memory Quilts were also displayed for public viewing.

Bonnie McClelland and Marlene Jehs attended and displayed our three quilts.

This year, Bonnie had the privilege of being a conference speaker. She talked about the five-year journey to getting the Florida Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention bill passed.

Upcoming Events

Manatee Glens 5th Annual "Walk for Life"

September 15, 2007

Sutton Park, Palmetto, FL

Walkers will enjoy a scenic 5k route over the Manatee River into downtown Bradenton and back.

There will be plenty of food, fun and entertainment for both student and adult walkers.

Your participation helps support suicide awareness, prevention and crisis treatment services.

For more information and to register online, go to:

www.manateeglens.kintera.org/faf/home/default.asp?ievent=233228

2007 Florida Suicide Prevention Symposium

November 6-7, 2007

Embassy Suites-USF, Tampa, FL

Presented by: Florida Office of Drug Control and Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention

The conference theme, Partnerships for Saving Lives, celebrates the collaborations between various organizations and individuals who work to prevent suicide.

This year's focus will acknowledge the strengths of existing partnerships as well as opportunities to forge new relationships as we work to reduce suicide and provide support to those affected by suicide. The conference will feature innovative workshops, plenary sessions, and a new opportunity for poster presentations that will inspire our work and take us to a new understanding of the problem of suicide.

They invite collaborative efforts from individuals and organizations such as suicide prevention planners, survivors, universities, crisis centers, clinicians, prevention specialists, coalitions, faith-based organizations, psychologists, and many others. This is an opportunity for all to share their perspectives and experiences in suicide prevention and learn about the latest research and best practices.

For more information and to register online, visit

www.PreventionInFlorida.org

Depression In Teenagers: Now What Can We Do?

By Douglas Cowan, Psy.D.

No doubt you have seen the recent news headlines about a federal panel that recommended to the FDA that anti-depressant medications carry the strongest possible warning label for use in children and teenagers. This recommendation to the FDA shook the medical community, especially those who work with depressed young people. The biggest problem from the treatment community's point of view was not the recommendation for the warning label, but the way that the media portrayed the panel's recommendation.

The panel reported that 2% to 4% of children and teens who were given anti-depressants for the treatment of depression became suicidal, that is they had suicidal thoughts, or made suicidal attempts of one kind or another. None of the 4,000 children and teens studied committed suicide.

What the media did not report well is the fact that 15% of children and teens with depression who receive no treatment will commit suicide. These 15% will not just think about it, but will actually kill themselves.

So what are we to do? If the media had their way it seems that no teens with depression would receive anti-depressants. As a result the suicide rate for those who could be using the medication would rise from nearly zero percent to about fifteen percent. But at least we wouldn't have to be concerned about evil medications.

Look, I understand that there actually are young people, even adults, who have become suicidal only after beginning treatment with an anti-depressant. Some have in fact gone on to take their own lives. This is absolutely tragic. But so is the fact that

untreated depression is potentially a fatal disease. Fifteen out of one hundred young people with depression take their own lives. They should be allowed to receive a treatment that will lower the suicide rate dramatically, and without any stigma attached to it by the media.

Recently we had a patient brought to our counseling center named John (not his real name). John was rebellious, angry, withdrawn, and in trouble often, and yet he was diagnosed and treated for depression.

When we think of someone who is depressed, we usually picture a sad, tearful, lonesome person. But teenagers with depression don't look like adults with depression. Current studies show that there are about as many teenagers who are depressed as there are adults that are depressed. However, depression is exhibited far differently by teenagers than by adults. Teenagers do not commonly display gloom, self-depreciation, or talk about feeling hopeless like adults do.

Teenagers with Major Depression are described in diagnostic manuals as often becoming negative and antisocial. Feelings of wanting to leave home, or of not being understood and approved of increase. The teen often changes, and becomes more restless, grouchy, or aggressive. A reluctance to cooperate in family ventures, and withdrawal from social activities, with retreat to one's room are frequent. School difficulties are likely as concentration is affected. Sometimes there is inattention to personal appearance and increased emotionality. Often there is an increased sensitivity to rejection in love relationships as well.

Teenage boys will often become aggressive, agitated, and get into trouble at home, at school, or with the law. Teenage girls will sometimes become preoccupied with themes of death or dying, and become decreasingly concerned about how they look. Suicidal thoughts are common. Some studies suggest that 500,000 teens attempt suicide each year, and 5000 are successful. Increased use of alcohol or other drugs is common, along with other forms of "self-destructive behaviors." Poor self-esteem is common with teenagers, but especially with those who are depressed.

Parents are often confused and frustrated when their teens begin to act like this. Sometimes parents become stern disciplinarians, or even put the teen down, which only serves to increase feelings of guilt and depression. Other times, parents feel helpless, and stand by waiting for adulthood to arrive. Of course neither course is the right one to take. If you know of a teen whose behaviors have changed to look like what has been described above, let the parents know that there is help available, and encourage the family to seek help from a professional. With proper diagnosis and treatment a depressed teen, or adult, can be greatly helped.

If someone close to you is suffering from depression, first please understand that depression is a very emotionally painful condition. For some people with depression it turns into a "terminal illness" due to suicide. Please take the situation seriously.

1. Get a medical evaluation. Symptoms of depression can be the result of a wide assortment of illnesses, including thyroid prob-

▶▶ See Depression in Teenagers, page 6

Depression in Teenagers, from page 3

- lems, viral infections, and other factors.
2. Deprex is an amino acid and homeopathic medicine for the treatment of depression that we have seen work well with our patients. It may be worth trying as long as the situation is "stable" and there is no suicidal thinking on the part of the depressed person.
 3. Medications such as Prozac can be very helpful for more difficult cases. Consult your doctor. These medications are often prescribed by Family Practice Doctors, but in most cases ought to be monitored by Psychiatrists.
 4. Increase intake of protein somewhat. Use a protein powder supplement, just like a weight lifter.
 5. Exercise daily. Just get out and walk for about 15 minutes.
 6. Seek out counseling from someone who is good at treating depression. This can do a world of good for you. However, always use great wisdom and common sense when choosing a therapist. Some are good, and some are not, so choose wisely.

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Douglas Cowan, Psy.D., is a family therapist who has been working with ADHD children and their families since 1986. He is the clinical director of the ADHD Information Library's family of seven web sites, including <http://www.newideas.net>, helping over 350,000 parents and teachers learn more about ADHD each year. Dr. Cowan also serves on the Medical Advisory Board of VAXA International of Tampa, FL., is President of the Board of Directors for KAXL 88.3 FM in central California, and is President of NewIdeas.net Incorporated.

Article Source:

http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Douglas_Cowan_Psy.D.

"...depression is a very emotionally painful condition. For some people with depression it turns into a 'terminal illness' due to suicide."

Closing Thoughts

Responsibility

Author Unknown

I have a responsibility to those I love...
to be loving, patient, considerate, and kind;
to be loyal, respectful, and honest;
to be appreciative, encouraging, and comforting;
to share myself and care for myself.

To be the best possible "Me."

BUT

I am not responsible for them...
not for their achievements, successes, or triumphs;
not for their joy, gratification, or fulfillment;
not for their defeats, failures, or disappointments;
not for their thoughts, choices, or mistakes.

And not for their suicide.

For had I been responsible this death would not have occurred.



"What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others."

— Pericles

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We're on the web!

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Suncoast Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program is a chapter of Yellow Ribbon International Suicide Prevention Program®, an outreach program of Light for Life Foundation International.

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“Suicide is a Permanent Solution to a Temporary Problem”

The Suncoast Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program is a nonprofit organization, founded in 2002 to support suicide prevention and intervention in the State of Florida, through education and awareness. While our initial focus was on teen suicide, we have since expanded our attention to include all age groups.

We are actively involved in: the development and implementation of community suicide prevention initiatives; advocating for suicide prevention legislation on a local, state and national level; providing Gatekeeper Training, a free mental health first-aid course, to our local communities; sponsoring local memorial events; and distributing “Ask4Help” cards, the simplest way to reach out to someone.

This organization is dedicated to the memory of Timothy McClelland, Nick Yaros, Brandon Pingleton and all other loved ones who have died by suicide.



www.FloridaSuicidePrevention.org



Yellow Ribbon International
Suicide Prevention Program®

www.YellowRibbon.org



www.SpanUSA.org



www.hopeline.com



www.SuicidePreventionLifeline.org



www.211.org



www.youthline.us

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