

depression

de-pres-sion (/dəˈpreʃ(ə)n/) noun: feelings of severe despondency and dejection.

CAUSES: Depression can be caused by a number of things. A few include family history, personality, a serious medical illness, drug and alcohol use, weather changes, and more. More often than not, mental disorders, like depression, are caused by a number of things, not just one.

SIGNS: Signs vary from person to person. Not everyone with depression will have the same *WARNING SIGNS* as another person with depression. Some common signs include less interest in activities, less energy, trouble concentrating, changes in sleep patterns, changes in appetite, and/or aches and pains.

75 students polled from HHS said they suffer from depression

anxiety

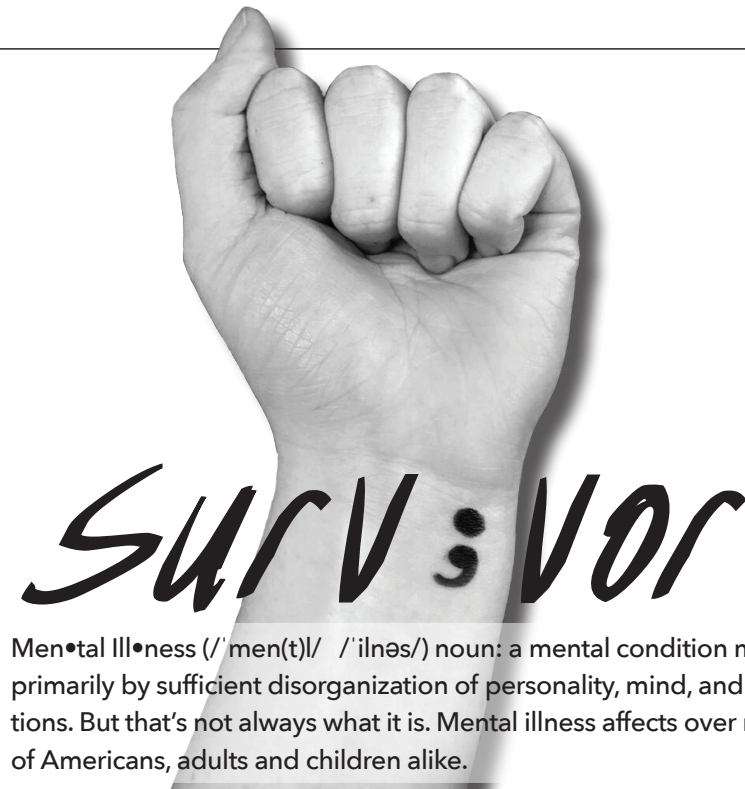
anx-i-ety (/æŋˈziːəti/) noun: a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome.

CAUSES: Anxiety has many causes, some of which could be other mental conditions like panic disorder, stress disorder, or a phobia disorder. It could also be caused from stress at work, school, or relationships. It could also be as simple as a side effect to a medication, but as intense as emotional trauma like a death of a loved one.

SIGNS: Some signs include, excessive worrying, feeling agitated, restlessness, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, irritability, tense muscles, trouble falling or staying asleep, etc. Still, all signs depend on the person.

94 students polled from HHS said they suffer from anxiety

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Men•tal Ill•ness (/ˈmen(t)l/ /ˈɪlnəs/) noun: a mental condition marked primarily by sufficient disorganization of personality, mind, and emotions. But that's not always what it is. Mental illness affects over millions of Americans, adults and children alike.

"I have had anxiety attacks since I was little. I take numerous medications for it. I also struggled with an eating disorder for three years. I still struggle."

- HHS senior

"I had a lot of traumatizing events play out in my early childhood, which left me with PTSD, and I have been to the mental hospital twice. It has affected me every day for the past seven years."

- HHS sophomore

"I always knew... As a little girl I never saw myself living to be 18, but here I am. I regret faking a smile when I was hurting. Please speak up."

- HHS senior

"I do everything I can to stay above the water. I'm a survivor, and I don't want to lose that title."

- HHS sophomore



I get by with a little help from my friends...

by sophomore Jetta Colsch

Mental health. It's something we hear about everywhere. It's in TV, it's in movies, and it's in schools. But the funny thing is, no one really truly understands what mental health is, or how it affects people's lives. In all honesty, not many people even try to understand it to its fullest capacity, claiming it that it's not an issue or that it doesn't affect them.

They are mistaken. People of all shapes, sizes, colors, ages, and genders can be affected by mental and emotional illnesses. According to Dr. Stan Kutcher, one in every five young people suffers from a mental illness of some kind. Think about that. Now, look around at your lunch table. How many people are sitting there? Ten, maybe?

We watch shows like 13 Reasons Why and see this girl, Hannah, who's killed herself. While it is just a show, it's hard to think that incidents like this are truly happening. But look back to your lunch table and think about that one in five.... It really hits home.

This is not just on our screens. It's a real problem, both nation-wide and world-wide, yet no one wants to acknowledge that it even exists at all. Only 4% of the overall healthcare budget is spent on mental health needs. Four. Percent. That number is ridiculous, especially when you look at the number of people suffering. In the U.S., 44 million adults alone, are suffering from some kind of mental illness. That number doesn't include children and teens.

Believe it or not, there's a 2.9 higher percentage of young people with mental illness than there is of adults- and that's just regarding diagnosed cases. Think about how many more cases we could count if we considered all of those who have been dismissed with: "it's just a phase", "it's not a big deal", or "they're just sad". It's not just a phase, it is a big deal, and they're more than just sad. To note, the problem is lack of parental, adult, and even fellow teen awareness.

Another problem is flippant, attention-seeking teens. So many teens these days say things like: "I'm so depressed.," "My life sucks so much.," and "I'm gonna kill myself". In all reality, the only thing they're looking for is attention. They wallow in a hole of self-pity, looking for someone to shower them with compliments. It makes a serious thing that people go through seem like a joke. These exaggerations make true victims feel like people are belittling something that's actually huge.

So what about the people who really are suffering? What about the people who need real help? What about me? Yes, me.

Somehow, it's those of us who need real help who are often brushed aside and told, "You'll be fine," as if we haven't been drowning for years. It's one of the reasons that people who are struggling often don't reach out: We're afraid- afraid to be dismissed at the wave of a hand, afraid to get made fun of for the way that we are, and afraid to be labeled as "that depressed kid".

I should know. When I was at the deepest, darkest, depths of my personal struggle, I resorted to things like self-harm. I thought that it was my fault I had depression, that it was my fault I had anxiety, and that it was my fault I couldn't fix it. I thought that I deserved it, and I thought that I was alone.

But you know what? I'm NOT alone and neither are you.

The people living with these disorders don't want to be told what to do, we just want to be listened to. So please listen. Listen to us talk about why we're upset, listen to us talk about the rough day we had yesterday, and listen to us talk about all of the things that we need to. Stop telling us whose fault it is, what to do about it, or how to fix it. Stop telling us who to be, and just tell us we're not alone. Because we're not alone. We never will be.

"No matter how happy someone looks, you never know what is really going on inside."

- HHS sophomore



photos courtesy of Bertrand Funeral Homes and the Roff family

A precious life, lost

by sophomore Jetta Colsch

To many, Nolan Roff seemed to be a normal student at Pleasantville High School where his father, Tom Roff graduated with Hudson English teacher Joletta Yoder.

But on Jan. 1, this sophomore who seemed to have it all took his own life.

"(Nolan) put on a happy face," said his father, "but inside, he was torn apart."

Nolan's parents noticed at age 14 something was different with their son. He started to become more withdrawn and began to talk about suicide. He was put on medication in a psychiatric hospital in October of last year.

Nolan, his parents, and his younger brother were a close-knit, supportive family beloved in their community.

Over 1,000 people attended Nolan's funeral. "The outpouring of love was amazing," said Roff.

"As parents, we have a giant hole in our life that probably will never be filled again," said Roff. "The tough part is having only one son now, and his big brother is gone."

"He had a great future in front of him," said Roff, who has since stated a tribute page (Nolan Roff Tribute, @RoffStrong-PvilleStrong) "for anyone to post photos, videos, poems, songs, to laugh, to cry, to remember, and to heal."



Did You Know? Iowa explores new mental health bills

by sophomore Jetta Colsch

This past February, Governor Kim Reynolds introduced Senate Bill Study 1197 and House Bill Study 206. These are to provide Iowa with the opportunity to create a new children's mental health system with better services for kids with mental illnesses.

Reynolds said that she is dedicated to improving the current children's mental health services. "It's a priority of mine," says Reynolds. "It's the right thing to do. We don't have a children's mental health system right now; we've been talking about it for decades...Now is the time to act."

The proposal was focused around creating a structure or government for the system.

The new bill suggests that a children's system similar to the current mental health service for adults should be orchestrated, funded by a combination of federal money and county property tax money.

Senator Jeff Edler was a part of the state board that wrote a more detailed proposal last fall. He said that the bill is just the beginning of an effort to create a fully-functioning mental health system for children. "This gives us the skeleton so we can create that system," said Edler.

These new bills are a wonderful thing for children suffering from mental illness, along with their families. Children are in dire need of assistance, and these bills will help begin that movement.

Cookie Cutter Caution

Not EVERYTHING you see on this page applies to everyone. And not everyone who is struggling with a mental illness will go through the same things or have the same symptoms. It is very important to remember that everyone is different. Information on this page should not be relied upon for the diagnosing and/or treating of a mental health condition. If you believe a friend, family member, ect. is struggling with a mental illness they should be approached calmly in a private environment, or if you believe it is serious enough you should inform a trusted adult because sometimes you cannot provide the help or services they need.

Cedar Valley Support

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The Cedar Falls School District participates in a program called the Transition Alliance Program (TAP). Eligible past or present students with physical or mental health conditions are given one-on-one counseling, helping them to transition between phases of life.

Students at Hoover Middle School in Waterloo formed the Mindfulness Club, a group that educates their classmates to help to raise awareness of mental health concerns. The members provide help and support for their fellow students as they go through their personal journeys together, creating bonds that the members will never forget.

illustration by freshman Jake Yoder