

Teen depression needs attention

Mental illness in adolescents is a topic that should be discussed more often amongst everyone to find a solution to this monumental problem.

By: Alex Coleman @Its_YoPalAI

“It’s all in your head.” “Just get over it.” “You have nothing to be sad about.” Popularly thought of as nothing more than a symptom of teen angst and raging hormones, these phrases are common responses to the issue of adolescent depression. In the last year, this topic has spread like wildfire. Amongst youth there are countless posts about self harm, eating disorders, and depression itself. We are in an age of romanticizing these issues. Social media gives the opportunity to share pictures and poems, and offers the opportunity to morph these issues into something we think of as beautiful. As if an image of a teenager with cut wrists, or a video suicide note could be thought of as alluring.

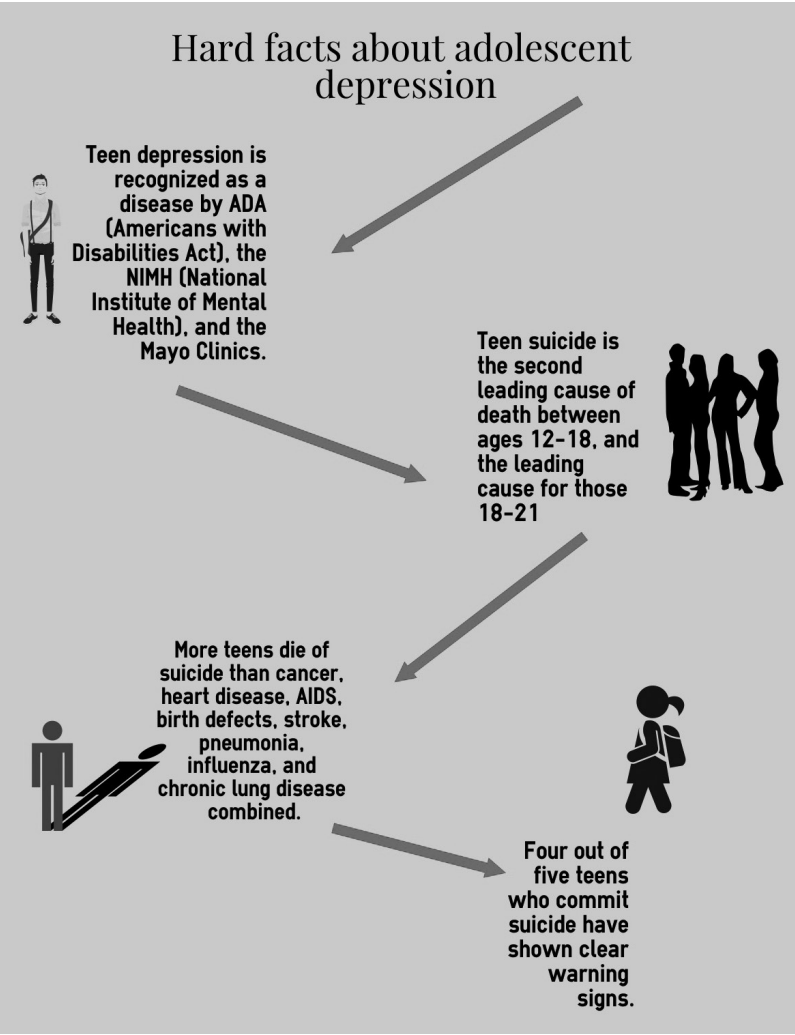
The idea of a tortured genius is what leads many to believe depression is nothing more than an artistic phase. While it has been proven that many artists, singers, and performers who experience bouts of depression release very emotionally raw products, this does not make depression something light. The Mayo Clinic describes teen depression as ‘a serious medical problem that causes a persistent feeling of sadness or loss of interest’. The article goes on to explain how teen depression affects the mind, body, and functions of a minor in ways that can be harmful in their later years.

Many adults believe that depression is an emotion. That the emptiness felt by someone suffering with the illness is nothing more than something they concocted as an over-dramatic reaction to stress. Depression is not an emotion, it is not a side effect of too much homework or a poor home life, it is a serious mental illness. It is recognized as such by the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), the NIMH (National Institute of Mental Health), and the Mayo Clinic. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, teen suicide is the second leading cause of death between ages 12-18. More teens die of suicide

than cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia, influenza, and chronic lung disease combined. Four out of five teens who commit suicide have shown clear warning signs. Still think teen depression is something we don’t need to worry about?

Many people do not lack the capacity to grip this concept, but they do not understand how to latch onto such a big issue. What can we possibly do about statistics like this? There’s a fine line between romanticizing the idea of depression and validating a teen’s feelings, and as a society we need to learn the difference. If someone were to be scrolling through their feed on Twitter, and they happen upon a post that strikes them as worrisome, the first step is to tell someone, like an adult, parent, teacher, or counselor. It sounds a bit terrifying, but sometimes speaking out is the best thing to do. Also, encouraging the depressed person to speak up on their own is key. No one can help someone unless they themselves want the help, this is the first step.

Not only that, but we need to talk about the issue in general. Education about the topic would be immensely beneficial. Proper knowledge on the problem and how to handle it would leave bystanders with the information they need, rather than gathering ideas from cries-for-help online. Once we understand that teen depression is a major problem and start treating it as such, the suicide rates will fall and the amount of teens who are depressed will diminish. With today’s technology and advances in medicine, there’s limit-



Depression in teens and young adults is a serious issue that needs to be recognized by more professionals, and everyone in general. Here are a couple of facts from the Center of Disease Control and Prevention.

less ways to cure someone of this illness. But until society begins to recognize teen depression as something more than a side effect of insecurity and being a kid, people will continue to die. It’s our turn to change the world for the better. It’s time to step up to the plate. What are we going to do about it?

Have yourself a creepy Christmas

By: Sophia Kabance
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It’s that time of year again when the pumpkins are left rotting on doorsteps, the fridge is stacked with thanksgiving leftovers and children are creating their Christmas lists. Most would think that after October 31st people have packed away the haunting decor and saved the tricks for next year. What people might not pick up on is the creepiness that drags into the Christmas holiday.

We all have this picture ingrained in our mind of this big bearded, rosy checked, plump old man, and no, I am not talking about somebody’s grandpa. I’m referring to character Santa Claus. We all grow up to learn that this man spends year round working to meet the expectations of each one of their wish lists, come Christmas time. What little kid wouldn’t worship at the feet of any human being that gives them the newest action figure or Barbie doll they’ve been reluctantly passing by every time their parents drag them along to get groceries? But who’s to say that this man’s identity has been misinterpreted or lost through generations of being passed down? Who’s to say he isn’t the ripped, tattoo covered owner of that white van that drives by the elementary school excessively?

Teachers and family members lecture their kids never to talk to strangers, but they have no idea who they’ve involuntarily given permission to crawl down their chimney and win their child’s affection over with candy and presents. Better sleep with one eye open because it’d be too easy to lure a child in when a man’s got reindeer, enough candy to satisfy any sugar crazed toddler, and

the Toys-R-Us store in the back of his sleigh. But “he knows when you’re sleeping and he knows when you’re awake,” so I guess one is never safe. Next Christmas eve, take advantage of the fireplace and invest in a security system.

If the annual visit from this anonymous man has some people paranoid, try having one of his scout elves, known as The Elf on the Shelf, camp out at your house the whole month of December. Once one is adopted by a family it receives Christmas magic which allows him to fly back to the North Pole each night to keep Santa’s naughty and nice list up to date. The elf improves the behaviors of the children of the house because it’s “constantly watching and keeping track of their actions”. Each morning the elf returns to the family it belongs to in a different position.

This tradition could either provide entertainment as an incentive to get up in mornings, or haunt families by its invasion of privacy. At all other times of the year we are against government surveillance and civil rights violations but when Thanksgiving ends, out comes the elf whose sole purpose is to spy on you and report back to Santa. We are also teaching our children to tattle by approving and allowing the elf to keep a close watch, wait for you to mess up and tell on you. Nobody wants to raise “that kid” that reports every single wrong doing of others.

Either embrace these mysterious traditions by allowing the holiday of Halloween to extend out into the holiday season, or avoid them at all costs. Either way, find some way to celebrate this holiday.

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