

Christadelphian Caring Network of Canada

Spring 2009

Our Care Line is now open for calls. Caring brothers and sisters are ready for your all. Our toll-free support line is 866-823-1039



Depression and Anxiety

Mental Illness strikes one out of every five Canadians & 90% of these cases involve Depression and Anxiety Disorders. With these kinds of statistics we can be sure that many in our community and in our own families are struggling. In spite of their prevalence the illnesses do not seem to be well understood. As a result, those suffering may not be well supported. There is a wealth of information available and some very helpful websites have been listed on the last page under "Resources". Most of the information used in this bulletin comes from these websites. One of the first steps in supporting those suffering is to "get to know" the disease. Medical intervention may often be required and it is helpful to be able to identify and articulate the changes that are noticed. This bulletin could be a first step in getting to know Depression and Anxiety.

Diary of Depression...

November 12th - It's difficult to get going today. Actually, over the past 2 weeks it's become more difficult to get out of bed each morning. It seems overwhelming. I just don't have the energy to move. Getting dressed is such a chore too; the mental energy required to choose what to wear. When I do finally get up I have to remind myself to eat; the desire doesn't come naturally. Thankfully the kids are old enough to fend for themselves. The phone rang several times today but I just let it go into voice mail. Usually I enjoy having a chat during the day but I'm not interested in connecting with people right now. Life seems gray and colourless.

November 13th - I exploded at the kids today. They were squabbling and carrying on, but I didn't have the patience to put up

with it. I then spent the morning feeling guilty about it. I was supposed to be on refreshments for Sister's Class this morning but I totally forgot about it and then when I remembered I didn't know what to do next. I felt almost paralyzed with indecision. I feel totally useless; I can't do anything right! I don't even feel connected to my family. It's almost like I'm just observing them through a window, observing but not interacting.

November 15 - I seem to have an overwhelming sense of dread, like something terrible is about to happen. I don't know what it is but it seems to loom over me like some big black storm cloud. And I keep obsessing about what a failure I am. I can't even feed my own children. Then there's my spouse. He and I haven't had a

decent conversation in ages because I'm just not interested in anything. I can't imagine carrying on like this. People want to help and tell me things like read your Bible. I know I should but I can't concentrate for longer than a few minutes. I can't even think of what to pray for. I wish I had someone to do that for me.

... and Anxiety

February 21 - I had a lousy sleep last night and today I feel totally keyed up - like something awful is about to happen. I feel scared and I am constantly worrying about what it could be. The least little noise makes me jump. I'm snapping at everyone and have no patience. I can't concentrate, I walk around a bit but that doesn't help. Something is wrong, something is very wrong. But what???

Why is light given to those in misery, and life to the bitter of soul, to those who long for death that does not come, who search for it more than for hidden treasure, who are filled with gladness and rejoice when they reach the grave? Why is life given to a man whose way is hidden, whom God has hedged in? For sighing comes to me instead of food; my groans pour out like water. What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has." Job 3:20-26 NIV

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A man's spirit sustains him in sickness, but a crushed spirit who can bear? *Prov 18:14*

Two things I ask of you; deny them not to me before I die: Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full and deny you and say, "Who is the LORD?" or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God. (Pro 30:7-9 ESV)

February 23 - I woke up in the middle of a panic attack last night. I thought for sure I was having a heart attack. I was sweating and my heart was pounding and racing. I then began to hyperventilate and the

and the muscles in my neck and chest were so tense they hurt. I thought I was going to pass out but I was afraid that if I passed out, I'd never come to again. My husband took me to emergency. They

monitored my heart and gave me a muscle relaxant and that horrible feeling slowly started to subside. They told me to be sure I went to see my family doctor. It was a very scary feeling.

Symptoms of Depression

- Changes in appetite and weight
- Sleep problems – sleeping too much or too little
- Lost of interest in work, hobbies, people; loss of feeling for family members and friends.
- Feelings of uselessness, hopelessness, excessive guilt
- Preoccupation with failure or inadequacy and a loss of self-esteem; obsessive thoughts that are difficult to "turn off"
- Agitation or loss of energy; feeling so restless you cannot keep still, or too tired and weak to do anything.
- Slowed thinking,
- forgetfulness, trouble concentrating and making decisions
- Decreased sexual drive
- Tendency to cry easily, or having the urge to cry, but are unable to do so.
- Thoughts of death or suicide
- Persistent sad, anxious or empty mood.

Symptoms of Anxiety

- Restlessness
- Feeling of being keyed up or on edge
- Feeling a lump in your throat
- Difficulty concentrating
- Fatigue
- Irritability
- Impatience
- Being easily distracted
- Muscle tension
- Trouble falling or staying asleep
- Excessive sweating
- Shortness of breath
- Stomachache
- Diarrhea
- Headache

What can we as family and loved ones do to help?

It is not easy to deal with a loved one who is depressed or anxious. You may feel helpless, sad, frightened and concerned by their behaviour. You may sometimes be on the verge of telling them to "just get on with it", or to "snap out of it", or "read your bible", "count your blessings" and "have more faith". While the later are critical to our spiritual welfare, a person suffering from acute depression or anxiety will probably not be able to do these things. The following are some things you can do to help. Many are taken from the booklet by Sis Margaret Howarth listed on page 4 under Resources..

Pray for the person suffering/pray with them

Determine whether their doctor is involved. If not, help with arrangements, transportation/childcare.

Sit with the person and be there for them. Accept them.

Be encouraging and speak gently and positively about recovery.

Be patient – it can take months for some change to take place.

Gently encourage the person to get moving, take a car ride or walk.

Help with meal preparation, accompany them grocery shopping,

Learn as much as you can about the illness.

Coping With the Stress of Financial and Economic Turmoil



The last few months have seen a rapid decline in the economic health of the world economy triggered by the sub-prime mortgage meltdown in the United States. Almost no country has been left unaffected as the world's financial system has been stretched almost to the point of collapse. Only massive government intervention has prevented the whole Western financial system from seizing up. This has been accompanied by plunging stock markets and a marked decline in economic activity prompting massive layoffs, job losses, and plant closures, particularly in North America. Many have lost their homes or their jobs or both. Many have seen their retirement savings decline by over 30% (as of the end of October) with no end in sight. Many pension fund managers are bewildered as to how they will fund shortfalls to provide benefits for their retired employees. At the same time, personal debt levels are at historic highs and savings levels at historic lows. Truly the sea and waves are roaring. Some brethren are directly affected by the above

developments and many more are simply fearful about what the future holds.

Practical Considerations

When we face a period of economic uncertainty, most financial counselors recommend a similar course of action: reduce your debts to a minimum and increase your savings. This prudent recommendation is given to help us minimize the risk of being unable to meet our financial obligations if our income is sharply curtailed because of job loss or other calamity. Likewise, the recommendation to try to increase our level of personal savings is again to provide a financial cushion should economic hardship become a reality.

This does not imply a lack of trust in God. God expects us to act prudently. A case in point is in the time of Nehemiah when enemies were sabotaging the reconstruction of the walls of Jerusalem. We read in Nehemiah 4:7-9

But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs and the Ammonites and the Ashdodites heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem was going forward and that the breaches were beginning to be closed, they were very angry. And they all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it. And

we prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night."

Note the dual activities in which Nehemiah engaged the returning exiles. Firstly, they "prayed to our God", and secondly they "set a guard". This is the same order we should consider when we are faced with trials of an economic nature. First, we should pray to God, and then we should undertake prudent measures that will help to minimize the negative impact of our situation.

In What Form Might's God's Help and Guidance Come to Us?

The blunt reality is that God's help is unlikely to come in a form that involves an easy solution that will quickly make things right. There may be no return to our former level of prosperity and there may be no quick fix to restore us to a state of financial stability, never mind financial security. This may not be God's will for us. If we lose our job in a manufacturing plant, it may mean retraining for another job that pays considerably less and involves less satisfying work. If we have accumulated massive debts that we cannot pay, it may mean we have to greatly reduce our level of expenditures and give up things we used to regard as entitlements or necessities. Can we accept such sacrifices as a part of the help that God may be sending our way?

What Can the Caring Network Do to Assist?

The Caring Network is probably the second line of defense after the local ecclesia when there is a case of immediate financial need. The Caring Network itself has no resources to provide financial assistance. This is not its mandate. What it can provide is information and moral support to help an individual or family get through a financial crisis. This may involve providing information for the family or individual to access short-term financial help in a given area through community or government programs, or through Christadelphian organizations such as the WCF or the Fairhaven Foundation. In addition, the Caring Network, through several of its volunteer helpers can explain the benefits of seeking out a financial counselor. The Caring Network also has a number of volunteers who can sit down with an individual to review his or her financial situation by preparing a personal budget and statement of personal assets, debts, and equity that reflects the current situation (restricted to S. Ontario). Once this is done, it is often possible to propose an alternate plan for dealing with the financial crisis in an orderly and realistic manner. This may require some hard choices and may also involve



Caring Network Resources

- toll free support line is 866-823-1039

Christadelphian Resources

- *Coping With Stress, A Christadelphian Care Group Publication*

- *Coping With Depression, by Margaret Howarth*

The above publications are available on the Caring Network website

Other Resources

- <http://www.camh.net/>
2 informative pamphlets from the CAMH follow:
http://www.camh.net/About_Addiction_Mental_Health/Mental_Health_Information/Anxiety_Disorders/anxiety_mhb.pdf

http://www.camh.net/About_Addiction_Mental_Health/Mental_Health_Information/Depressive_Illness/depressive_illness_infoguide.pdf

- <http://www.toronto.cmha.ca/index.asp>
- <http://www.kidsmentalhealth.ca/>
- www.apa.org
- <http://www.crufad.com/site2007/clinicianinfo/clinicianfreemanuals.html>

- *The Anxiety and Phobia Workbook 4th Ed, by Edmund Bourne*

- <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/mental-health/MH99999>

Postal Script

An Appeal

The Caring Network has been blessed each year with sufficient funds to meet its needs through the generous donations made by those in our community. These donations help defray the cost of operating the Care Line, the Annual Seminar, Insurance and the printing of the bulletin. We would welcome any donations and with our charitable status you would receive a tax receipt. **Please send your donation to Bro Robert Chisholm, 2206 Donald Road, Burlington, ON L7N 3R9**

What's Coming Up?

The Canadian Christadelphian Caring Network Annual General Meeting and Seminar

Topic: Conflict Resolution – A Biblical Approach
When: Saturday May 2, '09, God Willing. Starting at 9:30am and ending at 3:30
Where: Mountain Grove Chapel, Burlington
Action: Register at seminar@caringnetwork.ca, or Sis. Jennifer Lawrence at 519 822-8500

Coping With the Stress of Financial and Economic Turmoil continued

meeting with bank and credit card companies to try to consolidate debts and develop a realistic plan for repayment. These are the same things a community financial counseling service would typically provide. Sometimes the Caring Network volunteers may do an initial assessment and then recommend that the individual go to a community counseling service which may be more attuned to the local network of banks, credit card companies, etc.

Ecclesias May Need to Become More Involved

If the current downturn becomes more severe or longer term, then many more Christadelphian families may be affected. It will then be necessary for local ecclesias, and more specifically, the members in those ecclesias, to become involved in helping struggling families cope. We cannot simply be dispensers of information or advice. James wrote in his letter,

If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. Jas 2:15-17

If the economic gloom deepens, the Caring Network will explore how to

make local ecclesias more aware in general terms of the urgency of the need and suggest specific ways in which ecclesias and their members can respond.

Conclusion

Ultimately, we live in hope of our Master's soon return to set up the Kingdom of God on earth and we recognize that we have here "no continuing city". The Kingdom Age will usher in the "new heavens and new earth", a time when people will not lose their homes, their jobs, or their wealth. Isaiah wrote, *They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. Isa 65:21-22*

But this is still future, and until then, Jesus told us to "occupy until I come". Let each of us therefore do what we can to help and be sensitive to the needs of those associated with our various ecclesias who are experiencing financial hardship and stress.
By Bro. Richard Farrar

Please direct comments, suggestions, or useful resources to Sis Jennifer Daniel, 250 656.2396; 8583 Sansum Pk Dr., North Saanich, BC V8L 4V7
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