

Ithaca Health Alliance Newsletter

Depression and Seasonal Affective Disorder

by Matthew Q. Brooks

The Winter Blues

With its low temperatures, tax deadlines, and travel complications, winter is a time where everyone feels sad at some point. For some, however, winter brings sadness or moodiness which seems to last for the entire season and disrupt everyday life. This is a common occurrence which is said to be caused by lack of sunlight from shorter days and cloudier skies. All living things need sunlight to function, as it helps the body produce energy and nutrients, such as Vitamin D-3. Less sunlight in the winter means less energy and nutrients to use, which slows down the body and produces depression symptoms such as:

- Extreme sadness
- Anxiety
- Fatigue
- Feeling anti-social
- Loss of interest
- Difficulty concentrating

These symptoms and their seasonal cause are known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). SAD can affect everyone under the sun—pun intended—especially in the North. However, certain individuals are at a greater risk. People of African American descent have darker skin which acts as a natural ‘sunblock’ that is useful in constantly sunny

areas of the world. But, in places with longer winters where one needs to absorb a lot of sun, this can block necessary sunlight.

The Spring, Summer, and Fall Blues, Too

For some, though, the sadness and anxiety are present no matter the season, the symptoms interrupting their lives year-round. Sources like the Kaiser Family Foundation say causes for this depression go beyond bad weather:

- Abuse—Physical, sexual, or emotional abuse can cause depression later in life.
- Conflict/ Social/ Stress/ and/or Grief—Depression may result from conflicts, disputes, external stress, or loss.
- Genetics—It’s thought that depression is passed genetically.

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The Ithaca Health Alliance was founded in 1997. Our mission is to facilitate access to health care for all, with a focus on the needs of the un- and under-insured of New York State. Our programs include the Ithaca Free Clinic, Health Education and Outreach, and the Ithaca Health Fund. More than 80 percent of our work is completed through volunteer efforts. If you're interested in volunteering, or for more information, please call the Administrative Coordinator at 607-330-1253 or fill out an application at www.ithacahealth.org/ally.

Mailing Address: Ithaca Health Alliance,
P.O. Box 362, Ithaca, NY 14851

Street Address: 521 West Seneca Street, Ithaca,
NY (between Corn & Meadow Street)

Administrative Office Hours: Monday to
Friday, 10am–6pm

Ithaca Free Clinic

Need to see a doctor, but don't have health insurance? Can't afford holistic care? 100% free services, donations appreciated. You don't need to be a Tompkins County resident.

Medical Care:

Walk-in Clinic to see a Doctor or Nurse: Mon-
days 2–6 pm and Thursdays 4–8 pm
First come, first served (no appointments)

Quitting Tobacco Support: 2nd & 4th Thurs-
days walk-in between 5:30 & 6:30pm

Holistic & Specialty Services:

Call (607) 330-1254 to make an appointment
for: Acupuncture, Chiropractic, Counseling
(must see doctor first), Employment Physi-
cals, Energy Work, Herbal Medicine, Massage
Therapy, Nutrition Consultation, Occupational
Therapy, Women's Health.

Ithaca Health Fund: Call for more informa-
tion about need-based financial assistance and
advocacy.

*This newsletter is a production of the Ithaca Health
Alliance.*

SAD

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- **Addiction**—Nearly 30% of people with substance abuse problems also have depression.
- **Poor Nutrition**—Vitamin and mineral deficiencies can cause depression.
- **Brain Chemistry**—Imbalanced chemicals in the brain can affect our mood.
- **Medical**—Sometimes depression is the result of a medical problem, like diabetes, thyroid problems, or a head injury. This is why the Free Clinic has patients see a doctor before scheduling a counseling appointment.
- **Developmental**—Changes in hormones during puberty can cause depression. Also, the lack of meaningful relationships and companionships during this period can have an effect.
- **Lifestyle**—A conflicted lifestyle can be harmful to one's physical and mental health. It is easy to become overwhelmed and slip into negativity and bad habits.
- **Circadian Rhythm**—A malfunction in our bodies' internal clock, known as the circadian rhythm, due to getting too much or not enough sleep, can produce depression.
- **Toxic environment**—Where one works or lives, your food, and polluted air and water might have substances in them which can cause depression.

According to Mayo Clinic and the National Institute for Mental Health, men and women of all ages and backgrounds can be affected by depression. But, it can be different in its causes and signs:

For women, causes can be:

- Premenstrual Problems
- Pregnancy and Infertility
- Postpartum Depression
- Menopause
- Focusing On Negative Feelings/Body Image Issues

Signs more common in women:

- Feelings of guilt, hopelessness, and worthlessness
- Easy to talk about self-doubt and despair

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Free Clinic Services Helpful for Seasonal Affective Disorder and Depression

If you have no health insurance or cannot afford holistic care, consider these services.

Walk-in Mondays 2–6pm or Thursdays 4–8pm to see a doctor.

Call (607) 330-1254 to make an appointment for:

- Acupuncture
- Counseling (need to see a Doctor before scheduling an appointment with the Social Worker)
- Energy Work
- Herbal Medicine
- Nutrition Consultations
- Occupational Therapy

All services are free, donations are appreciated.

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For men, causes can be:

- Stress—Stressful situations may trigger depression
- Hormones—Low testosterone may cause many symptoms of depression

Signs more common in men:

- Irritability
- Insomnia
- Turning to Drugs/Alcohol
- Behaving Recklessly

For support with Seasonal Affective Disorder and Depression, consider these recommendations:

1. Light box therapy—available at the Ithaca Free Clinic.
2. Vitamin supplements including Vitamin D-3—consider making an appointment with a Free Clinic registered dietitian.
3. Counseling—consider having a conversation with a Free Clinic social worker (please see a doctor or prescribing provider on Monday or Thursday before scheduling an appointment).
4. Exercise—find an enjoyable workout and exercise 20–30 minutes a day.
5. Diet—avoid sugar, processed foods, caffeine, and alcohol.
6. Get 8–9 hours of sleep—going to bed at regular hours and getting 8 hours of sleep can rebalance your circadian rhythm.
7. Drink more water—if you don't supply your brain and body with enough, you're going to get dehydrated and may feel depressed.
8. Find enjoyable activities—some activities that could help manage depression are meditation and breathing exercises.❁

Matthew Brooks is a pre-medical student studying Anthropology, Biology, and Alternative Medicine at Ithaca College, and is a devotee to traditional healing methods.

Stress and Emotional Eating

By Julia Lapp

You've had a long, stressful day at work. You're tired and you didn't have time for a good lunch. Now you're home...and you're hungry. That bag of chips is looking pretty good. You take the bag, switch on the TV and tune out all of the events of the day. Before you know it, you've eaten the whole bag of chips and you really don't even remember it.

So, what's wrong with this scenario? If you're trying to eat more healthfully this is the perfect storm; stress, fatigue, hunger, and inattentive eating. This type of behavior can sabotage all well-intended efforts to eat more healthfully, lose weight or improve wellness.

Food satisfies emotional and social needs as well as physical, but when it is used as a substitution or avoidance measure for emotional expression it can lead to problem eating, referred to by some as "stuffing your emotions". This type of behavior also prevents people from dealing directly with life's vicissitudes that create stress or unhappiness in the first place, thereby perpetuating problems.

If the above scenario sounds at all familiar, or if you can answer "yes" to either of the following questions, you may consider taking stock of your emotional and mindless eating:

- Do you use food to cope with feelings of sadness, loneliness or to deal with stress in your life fairly often?
- Do you frequently multi-task while eating, like watching television, reading magazines, and find that you over-eat as a result?

A lot can be done to address these challenging behaviors.

1. Identify triggers for emotional or stress eating. There's a rule of thumb (the H.A.L.T principle) that has been adapted from Alcoholic's Anonymous, but is also useful for eating behaviors, never let yourself become too hungry, too angry, too lonely or too tired. This includes, not skipping meals and learning to eat in response to hunger and satiety cues. This is where mindful or attentive eating comes into play. When you eat, minimize distractions to allow you to focus on eating. Chew each bite attentively, eat slowly, and pay attention to how your body feels in terms of hunger and satiation.
2. Find ways to address emotional needs and stress directly, rather than using food to cope. Talk with a friend, do things that you enjoy when feeling unhappy, find companionship rather than turning to food. Nurture these skills.
3. There may not be a "quick fix" for emotional eating, but having awareness, engaging in some self-reflection, and developing skills to more effectively address your emotions are important steps. These steps help to put food back where it belongs in the human hierarchy of needs - something that primarily fulfills physical requirements - while emotional needs are primarily being met in other, more helpful ways.

Suggested readings:

Thich Nhat Hanh on Mindful Eating:

<http://www.chetday.com/mindfuleating.htm>

"Breaking Free From Emotional Eating" by Geneen Roth. ❖

Julia Lapp teaches nutrition at Ithaca College and is a regular contributor to the Health Alliance newsletter.



Bethany J. Schroeder Volunteer of the Quarter Finger Lakes Physical Therapy

Since the spring of 2012, the Ithaca Health Alliance has collaborated with the staff and therapists of Finger Lakes Physical Therapy. Established in 1998, FLPT is owned and managed by Kristine and Jeff Walker who provide services out of offices in both Ithaca and Freeville. The practice includes a group of highly trained therapists, each with their own areas of expertise, including sports rehabilitation, early intervention and preschool physical therapy, prena-

tal and postnatal therapy, diagnoses, treatment and management of neurological disorders, and pulmonary rehabilitation. Led by Kristine's own belief in combining therapy with sustainable, self-motivated exercises that encourage overall wellness, the team already provides services aimed at encouraging wellness for a wide range of individuals in Tompkins County including senior exercise classes and healing massage therapy sessions.

Since beginning their collaboration with the Ithaca Health Alliance, the therapists at FLPT have gone above and beyond to ensure that the patients they first meet through the clinic receive the best possible care. Therapists have not only taken on clients referred from the clinic for one session, but have encouraged follow-ups to provide more opportunities for continued strengthening and rehabilitation. Even in the relatively brief time they have partnered with the Ithaca Health Alliance, there is no question that the therapists and staff have become invaluable collaborators who clearly prioritize the health and wellness of many residents within this community. We are incredibly grateful for their care, wealth of knowledge, and tireless efforts to serve the clinic's patients.

Thank You Finger Lakes Physical Therapy! ❖

Join Us and Make a Difference!

Are you a healthcare provider and interested in donating your time and services?
The Ithaca Free Clinic is recruiting:

Chiropractors • Doctors • Massage Therapists • Nurses
Nurse Practitioners • Physician Assistants

We welcome individuals from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences.

Thanks to the Free Clinic FTCA Program we provide malpractice coverage for provider volunteers.

To apply, complete our online application www.ithacahealth.org/ally.

ITHACA FREE CLINIC

by Valarie FitzRandolph, Clinic Coordinator

This past year was a time of transition for the Ithaca Health Alliance. We said goodbye to our past Executive Director, Bethany Schroeder, who had been a powerful guiding force in the evolution of the organization these last several years. Later in the year we celebrated the organization's 15th Anniversary and welcomed our new Executive Director, Abbe Lyons.

The Ithaca Free Clinic ended the year having completed about 3000 patient visits. Of those visits 60% were for primary medical care and 40% were for holistic services. Patients who needed care beyond the scope of the clinic were referred to a variety of care providers for follow up. Thanks to those providers the clinic is able to extend services not directly available within the facility.

So often I hear from patients how they would have delayed seeking care if not for the clinic. They express how grateful they are to have a place like the Ithaca Free Clinic to come to. The clinic is a volunteer driven organization. If not for our volunteer's generous donations of time, and their continued commitment to give of themselves and back to the community the Ithaca Free Clinic would be unable to provide services for over 1300 patients each year. ❀

ITHACA HEALTH FUND

by Rob Brown, Administrative Coordinator

We have a \$10,000 fund-raising goal for the Ithaca Health Fund this year, and will give out the same amount in grants to help with healthcare expenses. Thanks to our incredible Health Allies who donated to the Fund, we're already half-way to our goal—but still have the other half to go! IHF is now open for applications, and can help pay bills for: Broken Bones, Emergency Stitches, Root Canals, Dental Extractions, Post-Exposure Rabies Inoculations, and Traditional Chinese Herbal Remedies (for serious chronic illnesses). Our board of directors intends to expand these categories over time as new financial

support for IHF grows. If you or someone you know could use help with these needs, contact the Health Alliance for more information.

Here's how applications work. We will help you apply for financial assistance programs from your service provider and connect you to people who can help you with public insurance if you qualify. After payments and credits from other third parties are applied, we'll use some of the same income information you collected for those other applications in our own grant application—and pay the service provider directly. We can tell you up front if your income would qualify you for a Health Fund grant, but we'll help you with other programs whether you do or not. ❀

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

by Andrea Levine, Outreach Coordinator

We appreciate all those involved with the winter community fundraising events! Special thanks to the organizers, hosts, and attendees including: Center for Transformative Action and donors at the Ithaca Alternative Gift Fair; Ithaca College Physical Therapy Club and 5k runners; Jabberwock, Dove and Jael, Lot 10, and performers at the Holiday Charity Raffle including Beet Juice, L. Rampage, Technicolor Trailer Park, and Black Mountain Groove Clan; and IHA Volunteer Maddi Apuzzo and Purity Ice Cream for the cupcakes. ❀

RECAP OF WINTER EVENTS

Beat the Winter Blues There's Hope Beyond Depression

On January 4th and January 11th, IHA offered two Health Education Programs for community members and patients to learn about Ithaca Free Clinic services that are helpful for Depression, plus an

introductory video about an independent class, the Depression Recovery Program. We heard about Free Clinic services including Acupuncture, Counseling, Energy Work, Herbal Medicine, Hypnosis, Medical Care, Nutrition Consultations and Occupational Therapy.

For Depression information and local services:
 Tompkins County Mental Health Association
 614 W State St, Ithaca, NY 14850
 (607) 273-9250 • www.mhaedu.org



Ithaca Health Alliance Executive Director **Abbe Lyons and Jens Wennberg**, a volunteer physician assistant at Ithaca Free Clinic, were featured January 17, 2013 on “Out of Bounds,” a public radio program that “features intimate 30 minute interviews with visionaries: people living, working and thinking outside the mainstream.” A direct link to this show is here: http://www.outofboundsradioshow.com/audio/oob_AbbeLyons.ram



Holistic Medicine & Social Change with **Dr. Angel Pichardo Almonte**, professor and medical doctor from the Dominican Republic and founder of the organization Justicia Global, was held on Thursday, March 28th at the Burt House Friends Center 227 Willard Way in Ithaca. There was a dinner followed by

Dr. Pichardo’s presentation in Spanish with English translation.

A practicing physician, Dr. Pichardo brings a holistic approach to health care, integrating nutrition, reiki, medicinal plants and Chinese medicine into his repertoire for healing. His clinic facilitates the formation of support groups and education circles for patients with similar health problems, which address social, cultural and economic factors that contribute to general health or illness in communities.

The event was co-sponsored by: CUSLAR (Committee on US-Latin American Relations), CULTURA! Ithaca, Latino Civic Association, Ithaca Health Alliance/Free Clinic, Ithaca Monthly Meeting Peace Witness Committee, Cornell University Global Health Program, and Cornell Engaged Learning + Research.



Gallery Night Reception for “Vivid Colors” by Andy Schwartz was held at IHA on April 5th as part of Ithaca’s First Friday Gallery Night. Andy is a Health Alliance Volunteer and Ithaca College alum who creates vibrant digital artwork from his own photographs, drawings, and paintings. His work is inspired by pop artists James Rosenquist and Beatriz Milhazes, Jackson Pollock, and superhero cartoons. We explored the works and enjoyed Andy’s birthday cake!

Many thanks to Andy for offering a generous raffle of one of his pieces which raised \$200 for the IHA! Congratulations to Kelly White, IHA Board Member and Fundraising Committee Member, who had the winning ticket! ➡➡

Thank you to Carman Brewster, Owner of Carman's Candles, who sold organic candles at the reception. Her candles are made from 100% natural soy, with organic essential oils & organically grown herbs and flowers. Carman uses recycled containers and buys her supplies from small businesses and farms.



Ithaca Mozart Project—Classic Roots at the Carriage House Café, 305 Stewart Avenue, presented an exciting classical music series featuring Mozart Sonatas for Violin and Fortepiano. On April 10th, the concert benefitted three Ithaca-area organizations: Ithaca Health Alliance, Foodnet Meals on Wheels, and Ithaca Public Education Initiative.

Select students from Ithaca College and Cornell University worked with artists Nicholas DiEugenio, Ariana Kim, and Mike Lee to present a collaborative concert featuring special instruments, bows, and strings replicating those of Mozart's sound world.



Vermont Reggae Festival 2013 donated a portion of the profit to the Ithaca Free Clinic! The festival was held June 14 and 15 at Carey Lake, 959 Penfield Road, Macedon, NY, and featured Neo Project, Gun Poets, Sophistafunk with DJ's True Risen & Solar Lion plus special fire spinning performance!

SUMMER PROGRAMS & EVENTS



Quitting Tobacco Support

The Ithaca Free Clinic is offering free support for individuals who are thinking about or trying to quit tobacco. Kathy Eliason, Registered Nurse and Tobacco Specialist, can work with you one-on-one or in a small group to:

- Determine the best way to manage cravings
- Minimize withdrawal symptoms
- Understand your personal smoking triggers
- Help with relapse prevention
- Provide continuous support

Walk-in (no appointment needed) between 5:30 and 6:30pm on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month. Come once, twice or every time!
June 13, June 27, July 11, July 25, August 8 & 22.

Partnership between the Ithaca Health Alliance/ Ithaca Free Clinic and Cayuga Center for Healthy Living of Cayuga Medical Center. ❖

Ask the Health Alliance

Have a health or resource question?

Interested in a certain health topic? Call the Health Alliance or email your questions to outreach@ithacahealth.org with subject line **Ask the Health Alliance**, and we'll answer your questions in the next newsletter. ❖



Candle Sale Benefits Free Clinic

Shine a light on a worthy cause! 50% of total product sales goes to the Ithaca Health Alliance for the Ithaca Free Clinic..

Choose your candle:

\$20—12 Votives with Fluted Holder

\$20—24 Universal Tealight Candles

\$15—Essential Jar Candle

Choose your fragrance:

Cherry Blossom, Citrus Peel & Sage, Cucumber Ginger Mint, Ebony Oud, Herbs de Provence, Iced Snowberries, Mulberry, Sea Breeze & Olive, Strawberry Rhubarb, or Vanilla Citron.

Call 607-330-1253 or email outreach@ithacahealth.org to place a candle order! ❖

JOURNEYS: Gallery Night Reception Friday, July 5 from 5-8 pm IHA, 521 West Seneca Street

For the past fifteen years, Sue Kilgore has concentrated on the use of watercolor for her paintings. Her subjects include a variety of scenes, people and still lifes. She enjoys the complexity of the fluid watercolor medium, and enthusiastically tackles each new effort as a promising challenge. Meet the artist at her reception which is part of Ithaca's First Friday



Gallery Night, a monthly walkable tour of 18 downtown Ithaca galleries and art houses. Get your map and guide at any gallery or on the web:

<http://gallerynightithaca.com> ❖

Are you a local artist?

Email art@ithacahealth.org if you're interested in hanging your work at the Ithaca Health Alliance in 2014.

Heart Healthy Free Food & Info July 12 from 4-8pm Congo Square Market Southside Community Center, 305 S. Plain Street

Talk about heart health and nutrition with education volunteer Melissa Mueller-Douglas and the heart and Chinese medicine with acupuncturist Anthony Fasio. Co-sponsored by the Ithaca Health Alliance, Cornell Cooperative Extension's Whole Community Project, Youth Farm Project, and Congo Square Market.

Congo Square is an actual place in New Orleans where

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FOOD, MUSIC, VENDORS & MORE

the land was first used by Houma Native Americans. Later, Congo Square became a gathering of African slaves, intertwining music, abolitionist organization, food, and dance to make a one-day a week festival. Slaves could once again be Africans, even if for just one afternoon a week. Native Americans, as well as Europeans often joined in the celebration.

Ithaca's Congo Square Market runs every Friday (June 7–Sept. 6). Our goals are to build a stronger, self-reliant local community, develop Southside's economic base, and encourage community & personal health. www.congosquareithaca.com, Jemila Sequeira (607) 272-2292. ❖

Talking Circles on Race & Racism

By Audrey J. Cooper and Melissa Mueller-Douglas

Background

The Multicultural Resource Center (MRC) brings together small groups of racially diverse participants who meet over a five-week period to discuss their personal experiences with racial identity, race issues, and racism. These Talking Circles on Race and Racism give participants the opportunity for self-reflection, and to share experiences and, possibly, influence each other's perspectives and attitudes.

MRC started the Talking Circles in 2007 as a way to engage people in open and honest dialogue in a safe space to begin the healing process of long-standing race-related tensions within the community. In its first three years, MRC held 25 circles with over 300 participants.

Who We Serve

The Talking Circles serve people with different racial identities who live in our area's urban, suburban and rural settings. Past participants include:

- Staff and faculty in the Ithaca City School District, Cornell, Ithaca College, and Wells College
- Local politicians (city/county level)
- Teachers, staff and board members from New Roots Charter School
- City of Ithaca staff, including the Ithaca Police Department
- Prison workers, social workers, youth workers
- Other community members of all ages, races and economic backgrounds.

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Thank you, Health Allies!

Park Foundation • J.M. McDonald Foundation • Legacy Foundation • CVS Caremark Community Grants Program
Aigen Financial • Tom and Maria Eisner Fund of the Community Foundation
Lane Family Fund of the Community Foundation • Women's Fund of the Community Foundation
United Way of Tompkins County Youth and Philanthropy Program • Social Service League • M & T Bank
Leonard Vacuum • Sustainable Tompkins • Cedar Bear Naturales • Donations in memory of Bethany Jo Schroeder
Donations from our volunteers • Hundreds of community donors

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Results

After completing the Talking Circle, some groups have formed alliances and are working together on anti-racism projects throughout the community.

All past participants are invited to join our discussion list serve. One notable result of the Talking Circles is the United Against Hate campaign, which grew out of a discussion on our listserv and was organized by Lynne Jackier, Talking Circle alumni.

We are currently developing several Round Two

Talking Circles for prior participants who would like to continue the conversation.

If you would like more information, or to sign up for a future session, please contact Chibo Shinagawa, Diversity & Inclusion Special Projects Coordinator at (607) 272-2292 ext. 191, or email lcs42@cornell.edu ❖


Audrey J. Cooper is the director of the Multicultural Resource Center. Melissa Mueller-Douglas is a chemical dependency counselor at the William George Agency for Children's Services. She is an Ithaca Health Alliance newsletter contributor, Education Committee member, and community advocate.


THE MULTICULTURAL RESOURCE CENTER
IS PROUD TO HOST A SERIES OF
TALKING CIRCLES ON RACE AND RACISM ©

**"Race is an issue this nation cannot afford to ignore right now."
—President Barack Obama.**

TALKING CIRCLES ON RACE AND RACISM ARE:

- Facilitated dialogues with a racially diverse group of people
 - Five week sessions meeting two hours each week
 - Held in downtown locations that are accessible to all
 - Free to attend
 - Refreshments and child care provided




Multicultural Resource Center
615 Willow Ave, Ithaca, NY 14850 607 272-2292 www.multicultural-resource.org

Institutional racism affects the health of our community and all who live here. Joining a Talking Circle on Race and Racism is one positive step you can take.



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PO Box 362
Ithaca, NY 14851

607-330-1253
Find us online at
www.ithacahealth.org



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Spring 2013

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