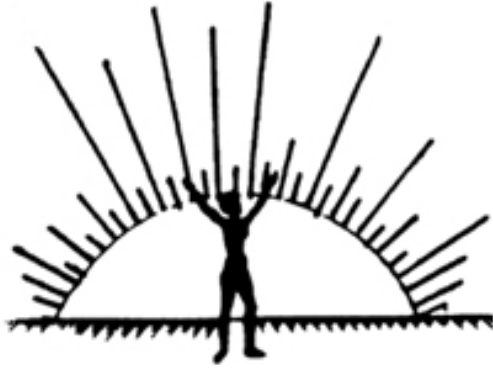


NOTE: DUE TO THE UNFORTUNATE FACT THAT STIGMA EXISTS, THE ONLINE VERSION OF THIS NEWSLETTER HAS BEEN REDACTED TO REMOVE THE LAST NAMES OF MEMBERS



The Compass

A Publication of New Directions Delaware, Inc.

A support group for PEOPLE with DEPRESSION or BIPOLAR DISORDER...and for THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS

Volume 7 Number 3

Winter 2007

NEW DIRECTIONS CELEBRATES ITS 16TH ANNIVERSARY AT ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY

On Monday evening, November 26th, participants in the New Directions Delaware support group shared their stories of successfully dealing with depression and bipolar disorder. These successes have been achieved despite sometimes overwhelming personal problems and public stigma.

Also, for the sixteenth consecutive year, New Directions presented awards to professionals who have assisted the group in achieving its goals.

Professional and public awards were as follows:

Professional of the Year: Ranga Ram, M.D. has been a speaker at both our monthly public meetings and our subscription 12-week Depression and Bipolar Seminar. Prior to being named as Medical Director for MeadowWood Behavioral Health System, he was Medical Director at Connections, CSP where he provided care to people in need of mental health treatment who are among the most damaged and needy in our Community. Dr. Ram is Board Certified in both Psychiatry and Addictions and he consistently provides a knowledgeable and professional approach to his work.

Organization of the Year: Delaware Psychological Association has been supportive of New Directions in providing speakers from its speakers bureau for

our educational meetings and by including our meeting announcements in many of its mailings to members. By providing continuing education programs for professionals DPA is instrumental in assuring that Delawareans seeking psychological help are receiving the most current and up to date treatments available.

Media Person of the Year: Lee Williams, *News Journal*, whose front page investigative reporting regarding the Delaware Psychiatric Center has done more to elevate public and governmental awareness of the enormous barriers suffered by persons with mental illness in Delaware than anything we have seen in many years. We expect that the long-term result of this series will be an improvement in the treatment of the mentally ill, and a reduction in stigma.

In addition to the above awards, New Directions recognized the growth and contributions of its members. Outstanding participants in New Directions received the following awards: Outstanding Member, Miles H. Bart Chapter Leadership, Charlie Morgan Facilitator Award, Special Member Recognition, Members Displaying Greatest Growth, Most Supportive Family, and Unsung Heroes.

The Compass is supported by a charitable contribution from

AstraZeneca 

Holiday Depression and Stress

Editors Note: This Fall Semester four students in the University of Delaware's English 415 class were assigned to update some of New Directions' Info Guides. This article is an excerpt from one of their papers. We thank the following students: Andy Chen, Charlie Kim, Dan DiMarino, and Andrew Tomaino and their professor, Rebecca B. Worley.

The holidays are supposed to be a time full of joy, good cheer and optimistic hopes for a new year, but many people experience seasonal "blues." The holiday season is a time full of parties and family gatherings, but for many people, it is also a time of self-evaluation, loneliness, reflection on past "failures" and anxiety about an uncertain future.

Although many people become depressed during the holiday season, even more respond to the excessive stress and anxiety once the holidays have passed. This post-holiday let down after January can be the result of emotional disappointment experienced during the preceding months as well as the physical reactions caused by excess fatigue and stress.

Factors That Can Cause Holiday Depression and Stress

- Increased stress and fatigue
- Unrealistic expectations
- Over commercialization; the increased demand of shopping for holiday gifts (Materialism)
- Increased family reunions and guest visits

Tips on Coping with Holiday "Blues"

- Keep holiday season manageable by not trying to make the holiday "the best ever"
- Be realistic about what you can do and cannot do. Do not spend too much time preparing for just one day (Christmas).
- Don't be disappointed if your holidays

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The Compass

The Newsletter of NEW DIRECTIONS DELAWARE, INC., (an affiliated chapter of DBSA).

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INTENSE MINDS Through the Eyes of Young People with Bipolar Disorder

By Tracy Anglada

Reviewed by Jane R

Tracy Anglada's book *Intense Minds* paints a vivid, often poignant picture of Bipolar Disorder as experienced by many different children and, in the process, brings to life the sterile lists of symptoms found in physicians' handbooks (Pgs. 7-8).

A broad smile spread across my son's face. His eyes shone brightly and he turned to me to share his good news. What was the cause of excitement for my 6-year-old son? We were at a meeting, and the speaker was describing the horrible plight of the Biblical man Job.

"Job was so sick, he wanted to die," said the speaker.

What was my son's good news in response to that statement? Two simple words: "Like me!" He had finally found someone he could relate to, someone else who wanted to die. It was comforting for him to know he was not alone. It was no comfort to me. As a par-

ent, those were the worst words I could have heard.

What could a child be experiencing that makes death seem to be a welcome relief? In the case above, it was the depressive phase of BPD.

Tracy Anglada was motivated to learn about BPD when her son was diagnosed with the illness. She interviewed many children with BiPolar and adults who had it as children though it may not have been diagnosed when they were young. She organized the information that they provided her into four sections:

- ◆ the experience of depression
- ◆ the experience of mania
- ◆ the experience of shifting between moods and of mixed states
- ◆ the experience of struggling to cope and to interact with the world

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are not what you like them to be. Each holiday season is different and can be enjoyed in its own way.

- Try volunteering some time to help others. It is an old remedy but it can help.
- Enjoy holiday activities that are free such as driving around to look at Christmas decorations or go window shopping without buying anything.
- Don't drink too much. Excessive drinking will only make you more depressed.
- Spend time with people who are supportive and care about you. Make new friends if you are alone during these special times. Contact someone you may have lost touch with.

- Spend some time for yourself; don't spend all your time providing activities for your family and friends.

Recent studies have shown that there are also environmental factors that can contribute to feelings of depression around the holidays. Some people suffer from seasonal affective disorder (SAD), which can result from fewer hours of sunlight as the days grow shorter during the winter months. Studies have shown that exposure to early morning sunlight is effective in relieving seasonal depression. Patients have also responded to phototherapy as a form of relief. Phototherapy has practical applications for antidepressant treatment since it can be performed in the workplace as well as at home.

It's Not Just PMS

By Jennifer S

As any woman on this planet can attest to, that time “of month” – her menstrual cycle – is one of bloating, cramps, and just over all blah. It’s probably the only time we wish we weren’t women, and believe me I’m no stranger to the joys or pitfalls, whichever your take on it is, to that time of month. It’s commonly referred to as PMS, pre-menstrual syndrome, and for the makers of Midol, Advil and Motrin, it also means big bucks as they’ve marketed to that specific problem.

However, in recent years, I’ve also found that it can trigger bouts of psychosis – in a big way. What used to be a time just curled up with agonizing cramps gave way to agitation, restlessness, and even passive suicidal thoughts. How do I know this? Because I started to track when I would feel that way, and it was always around that time of month. One month it was so bad I made an emergency doctor’s appointment. I couldn’t get in with my regular doctor and instead saw the nurse practitioner, who prescribed an often-used medication to subside the psychosis symptoms. I was to take it at the first sign it was coming on. She also said symptoms of psychosis was becoming more and more as-

sociated with PMS.

I took the prescription slip and held onto it, deciding to wait until I could see my regular doctor. While he agreed with the diagnosis, he didn’t necessarily agree with her solution, especially since I was already on a nice little cocktail of pills. He said I could double the dose of one of my medications around that time of month.

Needless to say that sounded much better to me, but instead I just bear through it until it passes. I curl up on my couch, wrap my arms around me, and say repeated prayers until I fall asleep. Knowing what it is helps me to mentally get it under control... ‘Ok, it’s that time of month,’ so that I don’t act out on any impulses or engage in any behaviors that could cause me more trouble. It also helps to know that once it runs its course...that’s it. It doesn’t necessarily signal a depressive episode is coming on.

My whole point of sharing this is that I’m sure I’m not the only woman who experiences this during her menstrual cycle and to let people know that it’s not just PMS, there could be a whole other thing at play. If you do experience these symptoms, talk to your doctor and see what the best recourse for you is. Believe me, you don’t have to suffer.

Two ways you can help New Directions when you go online

New Direction has established partnerships that pay us commissions when customers buy items through the New Directions web site (www.newdirectionsdelaware.org). These partnerships are presented as links in the lower right corner of our home page.

CARECLICKS is an online mall with over 1000 retail companies you already buy from, such as Brookstone, CompUSA, eBay, Sears, Sharper Image, Wal-Mart, etc. Use the link on our web site to create your own CARECLICKS page, then, before you order anything on line, check if the merchant is a participant. When you do New Directions receives a commission that **DOES NOT ADD TO YOUR COST**. In 2006 we received \$331.25 from CARECLICKS!

AMAZON.COM is familiar to most people. You can purchase all kinds of items, not just books and DVDs. Click on the link to Amazon.com from our web site, and Amazon will pay New Directions a commission of between 2% and 7.5% of your purchase. This commission **DOES NOT ADD TO YOUR COST**. In 2006 we received \$415.60 from Amazon.com!

(Continued from page 3)

Then she added a fifth section:

◆ How the adults in the child's life can help by providing support for the child.

In the first four sections, Anglada uses many quotes from the interviewees themselves. The first section includes a discussion of the pain, anger, irritability, fatigue, and hopelessness that the children feel; the second section includes discussion on swirling thoughts, hallucinations, sleeplessness, and recklessness; the third section includes discussion of nightmares that can haunt children with BPD and also describes the difficulties the child has in getting to know themselves due to the constantly changing moods. In addition, this section lists some of the other disorders that can be found with BPD, which could complicate the child's treatment. The list includes, among others, autism, Tourettes syndrome, obsessive compulsive disorder, and anxiety disorder.

The fourth section describes the difficulties that the child has in making friends and in getting along with teachers.

In these four sections, Anglada describes the symptoms of BPD so well that even those who do not suffer from the condition can understand how the world appears to people who do. Sometimes Anglada provides her own insightful descriptions; sometimes she uses the consumer's own words. About the altered reality that can occur during mania, Anglada writes (p. 58):

In addition to increasing mental and physical energy, mania alters the thinking patterns and perceptions of young people. Reality is skewed and false beliefs take over. This feels normal to the child, as if it truly is reasonable and real. All of us respond to our environment based on our reality. If you are a common person experiencing life in a common way, you will act differently from the Presi-

dent of the United States. But what if you are a common person whose altered reality tells you that you are the President? Your actions now become out of context, as you act in a way that seems appropriate to your reality which is, in fact very far from actual reality. To the casual observer it may seem a farce. To the child, it is real.

As an example, Anglada quotes "Grace," an adult who had BPD as a child (p. 59):

"I really thought I was a princess, and my parents had me hidden away until I was of the age of 18! This stayed with me from about 4 years until pre-teen. I felt that all of the people around me were really my bodyguards. I was above everyone else, and I was feeling awfully good. ..."

This sort of thing is reminiscent of the difficulties encountered by the prince and the pauper in Mark Twain's book. While the comedy of errors that ensued in Twain's book made for light, amusing reading, the altered reality experienced by children with BPD can lead to dangerous behavior, as the following example demonstrates (p. 59):

"I also believed that I could control my body's response to temperature to the point that I put my hand into boiling water once, believing that I would not be hurt." Tasha

Two of the interviewees related stories of the shockingly inadequate or inappropriate responses of family members to their childhood suicide attempts. Rory, who at age 14 took a bottle of pills and went to sleep on the sofa, writes (p.33):

"... Sometime later my sister came in. She kicked me and made some remark about me being a lazy ass. Completely drugged, I fell off the couch onto the floor. I couldn't move. ... I started to vomit up blue.

My sister said, 'What the hell is wrong

(Continued on page 7)

Other Area Support Groups

NAMI Connection - Weekly support for people living in recovery with mental illness!

Dover

THURSDAYS, 5:30 – 7:00 pm

**NAMI-DE Office
884 Walker Road, Suite B
Call 302-744-9356**

Lewes

SUNDAYS, 12:00 NOON – 1:30 PM

**Conley's United Methodist Church
22150 Robinsonville Road
Call 302-226-3334**

Selbyville

TUESDAYS, 7:00 – 8:30 PM

**Fenwick Baptist Church
Route 54, Lighthouse Road
Call (302) 436-2156**

Georgetown

TUESDAYS, 7:30 – 9:00

**Easter Seals Building
22317 DuPont Blvd. (Rt. 113)
Call 302-945-9589 or 436-9537**

Rehoboth Beach

THURSDAYS, 7:30 – 9:00 PM

**NAMI-DE Rehoboth Office
706 Rehoboth Avenue
Call 302-226-3334**

Wilmington

FRIDAYS, 3:30 – 5:00

**Trinity Episcopal Church
1108 N Adams St. (corner
of Pennsylvania & Adams)
Call 302-427-0787**

Mental Health Association in Delaware

Please call to register. 302-654-6833 in New Castle County
Or in Kent or Sussex 800-287-6423

Depression	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
	<p>NEWARK 7:00—9:00 pm</p> <p>DOVER 7:00-8:30 pm</p> <p>MILLSBORO (FOR SENIORS) 1:00-2:00 PM</p>	<p>WILMINGTON 10:00am-12:00pm</p> <p>BELVEDERE (FOR PEOPLE OF COLOR) 3RD TUESDAY 6:30-7:30 pm</p> <p>CLAYMONT 12:00-1:30 pm</p> <p>LEWES 7:00-8:30</p>	<p>MILFORD 1:00-2:30 pm</p> <p>WILMINGTON 7:00-8:30 pm</p> <p>Pike Creek 7:00-9:00 pm</p>	<p>WILMINGTON (FOR WOMEN) 12:00-1:30 pm</p> <p>NEWARK (FOR WOMEN) 7:00-9:00 pm</p> <p>WILMINGTON (FOR HISPANIC WOMEN) 2nd & 4th Thurs. 5:00-6:30 pm</p> <p>LEWES (FOR SENIORS) 2nd & 3rd Thurs. 9:00-10:00 am</p> <p>LAUREL 7:00-8:30 pm</p>
Anxiety			<p>NEWARK ANXIETY 2nd & 4th Weds. 6:30-7:45 pm</p>	

(Continued from page 5)

with you?’ She called my mom at work. I just vaguely remember her talking to my mom and crying. My sister was saying, “What should I do? Are you coming home from work?” My mother never came home from work that day. She left my sister to take care of me by herself. Neither of them called an ambulance or poison control center or a doctor, or even attempted to take me to the hospital. My mother had told my sister that as long as I kept vomiting, I would be OK ...”

Another interviewee, Lee, wrote (p. 118):

“I was often suicidal. My mom would say, ‘Let me get a knife for you.’ That would make it worse. ...”

In the fifth section of the book, “Making a Difference: A Plea for Help,” Anglada makes specific suggestions for parents, teachers, health care providers, and therapists about how to help the child manage the illness. She urges parents to deal with their misconceptions and

squeamishness that result from the social stigma associated with mental illness. She acknowledges the grief and devastation that parents feel when learning their child has a chronic illness. She urges parents to make adjustments in their expectations of the child and to remember to take care of themselves. She includes a short piece describing how a school day with accommodations would differ from a school day without accommodations.

Tracy Anglada’s book, well-written in a clear, simple style, is fairly short—only 163 pages. Its tone is gentle, compassionate, understanding, non-accusatory, and non-judgmental. It is very well-organized and very enlightening. It should be regarded as a “must read” by anyone who is associated with BPD or who works with children.

Editor’s Note: Tracy Anglada is the mother of four children, two of whom are diagnosed with bipolar disorder. Her advocacy and education work was born from a desire to educate her own children regarding their illness.
Her website is www.BPChildren.com.

Coming April 21, 2008

13th Annual Drew Sopirak Memorial Program

Lizzie Simon

Author of DETOUR: MY BIPOLAR ROAD TRIP IN 4-D

At Trabant University Center, University of Delaware, Newark

Seasonal Affective Disorder Syndrom (SADS)

by Kate McGraw, Ph.D.

This is the time of year for turkey, snowflakes, and family gatherings. Most people in this country look forward to the year end holidays with excitement and anticipation. Unfortunately, many other people feel anxious when heading into the winter months in fear of feeling blue, irritable, and out of sorts. While the reason for negative expectations for some may be related to conflict within the family, you may not realize that others may have a condition called Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), which is thought to be a subtype of depression.

SAD usually has its onset in the fall and winter months, and recurs at the same time each year in people who suffer from SAD. Some of the symptoms of SAD are similar to the symptoms of other forms of depression and may include depressed mood, appetite changes, weight gain or loss, irritability, and tearfulness. Typically, a person with SAD will feel like they have no energy, will experience increased sleepiness, and will feel loss of motivation as well. SAD can become severe enough, just like any form of depression, that suicide is thought about and/or attempted. This is a tough time of year to not be able to function!

The causes of SAD are still under investigation, but seem to be related to the decreased amount of light available to your brain in the fall and winter months. The decrease in light availability im-

pacts your circadian rhythms (your body clock), which in turn changes your natural production levels of melatonin and serotonin. Both melatonin and serotonin are neurohormones that influence your mood and sleep behavior.

The treatment for SAD can include the same antidepressants used for the treatment of other forms of depression. In addition, people who suffer from SAD will often feel better when treated with phototherapy, a form of therapy that involves use of a light box to increase exposure to light. Phototherapy should always be initiated and supervised by a medical professional as there are some risks involved with this type of treatment. You'll also find that regular exercise, good nutrition, plenty of rest and sufficient time with supportive friends and family are other important ingredients in the successful resolution of SAD. Try to spend time every day outside in the fall and winter, as this additional sunlight snack seems to also serve to help reduce and in some cases prevent severe SAD.

Finally, if you or someone you love is suffering from SAD or any form of depression, there are professionals available to help treat your illness throughout the state; and if you or someone you love feels overwhelmed, feels like life isn't worth living, or feels unable to function, the suicide hotline is available around the clock at 1-800 273-TALK.

We Thank Our Contributors



Are you suffering from

Mixed Bipolar Disorder?

Have you been diagnosed with mixed bipolar disorder? If so, you may qualify to participate in a research study being conducted by doctors in your area.

What is Mixed Bipolar Disorder?

Mixed Bipolar is a disorder that can cause people to experience both manic and depressive symptoms at the same time. Manic symptoms can include distractibility, racing thoughts, decrease need for sleep or restlessness. Depressive symptoms can include feeling sad, losing interest in your day to day activities, sleeplessness, inability to concentrate or lack of energy.

What can I expect if I participate?

- You will receive the following at no charge:
 - o Professional medical examinations, and study drug
 - o Lab results and other information about your health

To learn more, call:

Suburban Research Associates

610.891.7200

www.suburbanresearch.com

Upcoming Program and Support Meeting Schedule

All meetings are held at Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 2313 Concord Pike (Rt. 202) next to Fairfax Shopping Center *except April as noted (*)*. Registration at 7:00 p.m., meeting at 7:15 p.m. All meetings (except the Seminar) are free; donations are requested to defray expenses. For information visit our website or call 302-286-1161 or 610-265-1594.

- Jan. 28 ***Handling a Psychiatric Crisis – What to Do, Who to Call***
Speakers: Dave Ciamarrcon, Director, Mobile Crisis; Elizabeth McCourt, Director, ContactLifeline
- Feb. 25 ***Alternative and Complementary Treatments for Mood Disorders***
Speaker: Seth Torregiani, D.O, Attending Physician Center for Integrative Health, ChrisianaCare and Private Practice, Newark DE
- Mar. 31
(5th Monday) ***Coping When Having a Family Member with a Mood Disorder***
Speakers: Pattie Tillotson, Mother and founder of StepsforSteph.com; Shawna Sullivan, LCSW, Mid-Atlantic Behavioral Health, Newark DE
- April 21*
(3rd Monday) ***Drew Sopirak Memorial Program - Speaker: Lizzie Simon, author of “DETOUR: MY BIPOLAR ROAD TRIP IN 4D”***
*At Trabant University Center, University of Delaware, Newark
- May 26 ***Memorial Day – No Educational Meeting***
- June 23 ***The Brain Chemistry of Depression and Antidepressants “For Dummies”***
Speaker: Ranga Ram, M.D, Medical Director, MeadowWood Behavioral Health Systems

Monday Night Support Meetings: (2nd and 3rd Monday of each month except April)

Jan. 14 and 21 Feb. 11 and 18 March 10 and 17 April 14 May 12 and 19 June 9 and 16

TOPICS AND SPEAKERS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

The Compass Newsletter, Volume 7 Number 3

Reader Feedback Survey

(Please use additional paper if necessary)

1. Did you find the *Compass* informative? ___ Yes ___ No
2. Was the information presented clearly? ___ Yes ___ No
3. Was there an article you particularly liked? (Please indicate title) _____
4. What would you like to see in future issues? _____

Name: _____

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Zip/Postal Code: _____

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New Directions Delaware, Inc.
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Claymont, DE 19703

You may email your response to
compass@newdirectionsdelaware.org

We Really Need Your Help!

New Directions Delaware is a not for profit, IRS 501(c)3 charitable organization. Not for profit does not mean not without expenses though!

We simply cannot meet the needs of the people we serve without your generous support. Donations from support group or speaker meeting attendees don't come near to covering our costs.

In 2006 New Directions expenses were as follows:

Support and Education Meetings	\$ 7,564
Drew Sopirak Memorial Program	\$ 6,810
Compass Newsletter	\$ 4,691
Depression Seminar	\$ 2,513
Wellness Programs	\$ 1,658
Fundraising	\$ 238
Salary, benefits and office overhead	\$ 0
Total:\$23,474	

Last year attendance at support groups, educational meetings and the Depression Seminar was 2,185. We also mailed 8,100 Compass Newsletters, and our website had 31,727 requests.

This year our overall expenses also will be in excess of \$20,000. So we really do need your help!

To allow New Directions to continue, please send a donation using the slip below. We have a lot to cover. Last year donations from individuals like you were \$6,800, through November of this year just \$3,600 has been received from individuals donations!

Please, help us help change people's lives for the better; make your tax-deductible contribution using the form below and return it to us in the attached envelope as soon as you can.

I wish to contribute the following to help New Directions Delaware achieve its purpose to educate, inform, and support individuals, families, and professionals

<i>Friend - \$15</i>	<i>Contributor - \$25</i>	<i>Sponsor - \$50</i>	<i>Patron - \$100 up</i>	<i>Other Amount</i>

Name: _____

Street address: _____

City: _____

State/Province: _____

Zip/Postal Code: _____

Mail to:

New Directions Delaware, Inc.
P.O. Box 768
Claymont, DE 19703

To use a credit card, go to our web site and click on *Network for Good*

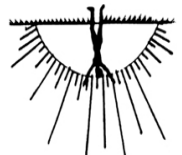
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