



THE MICHIGAN DIFFERENCE®

U-M Depression Center
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UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
DEPRESSION CENTER

update

From the Nation's First Comprehensive Depression Center

SUMMER 2010

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Unique Peer Support Programs Help Veterans and their Families, and Those Across Oceans

The Department of Psychiatry and the U-M Depression Center are committed to finding evidence-based interventions for patients and their families that will allow them to attain wellness more quickly and more successfully. An exciting and potentially advantageous area of clinical research being studied by UMD member faculty is peer support. Led by Marcia Valenstein, M.D., M.S., the U-M Depression Center is venturing into three unique areas of peer support for people at risk for or already experiencing depressive illnesses. These studies include the following:

DIAL-UP

The DIAL-UP study is a very large randomized, controlled trial of military veterans in depression treatment at four Veteran Administration Hospital sites in Ann Arbor, Battle Creek, Saginaw and Detroit. Veterans paired up in a one-on-one team are encouraged to contact each other once a week by telephone to discuss their ongoing illness and treatment, and to trade helpful information and coping mechanisms.

Buddy-to-Buddy

The Buddy-to-Buddy program trains veterans to provide support to newly returning soldiers, and helps them find the resources they need to meet the challenges they face upon their return. Unlike the DIAL-UP study, everyone participating in Buddy-to-Buddy is recently returning from a combat zone as part of their deployment with the Michigan Army National Guard. Citizen soldiers returning to the community after serving sometimes two to three deployments are at high risk of developing mental health complications. In the first tier of the program, mentor soldiers in the unit are trained to provide peer support to six or seven mentee soldiers. Buddy-to-Buddy also has a second tier of veterans who visit military armories once a month to provide assistance in person and by telephone to soldiers as they return.

Peer-to-Peer International

Peer-to-Peer is a unique international peer support program concerned with the fact that many depressed people have poor sleep, and that social support systems are not necessarily operative in the wee hours of the morning. To take advantage of time differences in English speaking countries, participants are put into groups so they have the option to call someone in another time zone for support, anytime day or night. This program will track the experiences of participants over time to identify best outcomes. Peer-to-Peer has several unique tools for participants including an interactive Web site and Skype capability. Leaders of this study plan to expand it to less developed countries interested in adapting the interactive Web site to improve mental health. This Peer-to-Peer International program was generously supported by Jonathan and Therese Miller through their donation to the Executive Director's Innovation Fund at the Depression Center.

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While each of these Depression Center peer support models is slightly different, their common goal is to demonstrate that peer support is helpful and to identify the most successful models for different populations. Previous studies have shown the benefits of social peer support for recovery; however, the U-M studies employ newer, more innovative practices of providing peer support such as utilizing the internet and video conferencing interventions across time zones, and new models of peer training. Whatever the model, peer support is part of a popular recovery movement which demonstrates that not all care needs to be provided by medical personnel in order to be effective, and that we can all contribute to our own recovery.

Tips for Providing Support Depression or Bipolar Disorder

Peer support is unique because it allows people who have a disorder to share their experiences—the “peerness” of it makes it positive for all parties. And while family and friends may not have a shared medical experience, their support can be worthwhile as well. Here is what you can do to help your loved one who is experiencing a depressive illness:

- Take the time to listen to your loved one when he or she is ready to talk, and remain engaged.
- Depending on the severity of the illness, help your loved ones who are severely impaired to complete daily activities.
- Provide gentle encouragement, but be careful not to push or nag. Criticizing someone who is depressed is not helpful and can actually impede wellness and recovery.

A Message From Our Director

When a loved one is suffering from depression or bipolar disorder, it may feel as if everyone in the family is impacted. Yet the experiences of those diagnosed with depressive and bipolar illnesses are distinctive and often difficult for someone without the illness to fully comprehend. Sometimes having the support of another person with a similar diagnosis, who is willing to share his or her personal insights, can be irreplaceable. Peer support allows two or more people to share their understanding of the disorder in a safe and helpful way, develop strategies, and explore coping mechanisms that they may not discover on their own.

Formal and informal models of collective care for people with similar experiences are what we think of as “peer support.” Research has demonstrated that positive impact is often generated by support from family member to family member or friend to friend. Effective peer support can be taught. More research is needed to better understand why some models like those we have been developing for Welcome Back Veterans (www.welcomebackveterans.org) are so successful.

The U-M Depression Center is determined to find new and innovative strategies to help patients attain and maintain wellness. Peer support can be truly powerful in encouraging reluctant individuals to seek evaluation, enter treatment and stick with what works. Peer support principles work for diabetes management and they work for depression. Better but not well is not good enough, so everyone’s help is needed. We encourage you to learn with us.

Merci,

John F. Greden, M.D.
John F. Greden, M.D.



to a Loved One with Order

- Support your loved one in finding valuable volunteer opportunities. Research has demonstrated that helping others actually helps personal well-being. Many people with depression and bipolar disorder can benefit from volunteering because it can give them a sense of fulfillment.
- Encourage your loved one to join a therapist-led support group or other type of positive peer mentoring program.



NEW PROGRAMS AIM TO HELP MILITARY SOLDIERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

More than 1.7 million military veterans have served in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001. Many of these veterans face serious challenges upon their return home when adjusting to life outside the military community. More than 300,000 have co-occurring PTSD, depression, substance abuse, and traumatic brain injury (TBI), and they are at growing risk for suicide. *The Welcome Back Veterans* (WBV) initiative, founded by Fred Wilpon, owner of the New York Mets, and backed by Major League Baseball Charities, the McCormick Foundation and the Entertainment Industry Foundation, was started to help returning veterans face mental health and other reintegration challenges they may encounter as they return back to civilian life.

New East Ann Arbor Friends Gift Shop Open

The East Ann Arbor Friends of the University of Michigan Hospital and Health System Gift Shop has opened for business. Please take a moment to visit the new gift shop and see the variety of gift and snack items available for purchase. Your purchase helps support the Friends, a volunteer organization that uses proceeds from its shops to support patient education.

Under the WBV umbrella, the U-M Depression Center has worked closely with the Michigan Army National Guard to develop outreach and prevention programs for returning soldiers and family members. These programs include the Buddy-to-Buddy peer support program, and *Welcome Back Parenting*, led by Sheila Marcus, M.D. *Welcome Back Parenting* offers a series of workshops for soldiers and spouses to provide support for couples and families, including help with issues around parenting. Other special efforts with the military address suicide prevention. These efforts target overcoming the stigma of help-seeking, and involve lectures and presentations to active duty soldiers and the Pentagon.

The U-M Depression Center is proud to be a part of the *Welcome Back Veterans* initiative and is committed to the citizen soldiers who put their lives on the line and their civilian lives on hold. These brave men and women choose to do a job that only 1% of the population elects to do and their sacrifice is tremendous. Soldiers welcomed home in January 2009 are now under notification that they will be deployed again, with some of these soldiers having been deployed two to three times already. While 28 months between deployments may seem like a lot, in actuality the time home with their families is short due to preparations for the next deployment. The soldiers who take part in the WBV program are typically older soldiers with families, and the sacrifice is not theirs alone. They miss out on the lives of their children and this can have a lasting effect on the whole family unit. In addition, most of these soldiers have civilian jobs (fire fighters, police officers, teachers, construction workers, medics, counselors, etc.) that are placed in jeopardy by deployment and in the current, tough economic climate, are not guaranteed. The extreme demands placed on our soldiers have strengthened the commitment of the U-M Depression Center and its partners to the well-being and adjustment of returning soldiers.

For more information on the Buddy-to-Buddy Program, please visit www.buddytobuddy.org. To find out how you can support programs for military soldiers and their families, please contact Jane Spinner at jspinner@umich.edu or 734-936-4223.

The Depression Center has been a recipient of the Friends' generous support.

The Gift Shop is open Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. The shop is located adjacent to the atrium waiting area of the Geriatric Center and East Ann Arbor Health Center in room 1002 (with the EAA pharmacy). It is easily accessible to Rachel Upjohn Building visitors through the building tunnel or a short walk outside.

To learn more about the Friends of the University of Michigan Hospital and Health System, please visit their Web site at <http://www.med.umich.edu/friends/>

Peer Support: Attaining Wellness One Team at a Time

It is important to talk about your depression in positive and constructive ways.

A support system drawn from the caring, helpful people in your life—family members, friends, coworkers, neighbors and acquaintances—makes it easier for you to be yourself. While support from these individuals is invaluable, they may not fully understand what you are going through.

In many cases it can be helpful to gain support from people who do—others who are also coping with depression.

Peer support provides an opportunity to share feelings in a safe and nonjudgmental way with like-minded people who are experiencing similar challenges. It allows the sharing of helpful information about the disease and its complications, effective coping mechanisms and successful interventions, and can demonstrate positive “modeling.” Peer support can also help to relieve the stress of worrying about potentially placing too much burden on family and friends. Many individuals with depressive illnesses are afraid to share their feelings because they worry that their loved ones will think less of them or



make assumptions without completely understanding the complicated nature of the disease.

Although it may be difficult at first to reach out and ask for help, connecting with others is vital to your recovery. The U-M Depression Center has several research projects underway to study the benefits of peer support, as well as well-established support groups for patients and their families. To learn more about the peer support services offered at the Depression Center or to find out more about participating in a peer support research study, speak with your clinician or visit www.depressioncenter.org.

THE BENEFITS OF PEER SUPPORT

- **Accountability.** Being accountable to someone else has been shown to be a key factor in making successful lifestyle changes. Accountability works best when reciprocated; in addition to reporting your progress, allow your peer partner to be accountable to you for the goals he/she has set, too.
- **Improved physical and emotional health.** Support systems have been proven beneficial for maintaining physical and mental health, including helping to protect against depression, cardiovascular disease, and Alzheimer's disease. Scientists believe these benefits stem from a combination of increased mental activity, physical challenge, and reduction in stress.
- **Better problem-solving.** Social support groups can help you work out problems and relieve stress. Regardless of what you're experiencing, chances are others are dealing with similar issues, and may be able to provide you with useful coping strategies.
- **Enhanced “brain fitness.”** Even if you're not looking to a supportive network to help you resolve specific issues, the interaction is still important for keeping your brain “fit.” From a bridge or book club to a golf league to attending a concert, interacting with others helps you stay mentally sharp.

Depression Center Events



UMDC READING CORNER

Listed below are recommended books on the topic of peer or veteran support. You can find these books, media, and many other resources at the Friends Depression Education Resource Center, located in the east atrium of the Depression Center building.

***On Our Own, Together:
Peer Programs for People with
Mental Illness (2005)***
by Sally Clay

Courage After Fire (2006)
by K. Best Armstrong and
P.S. Domenici

***After the War Zone: A Practical
Guide for Returning Troops and
Their Families (2008)***
by M.J. Friedman and L.B. Slone

***Strategies for managing stress after
war: Veteran's workbook and guide
to wellness (2008)***
by Julia M. Whealin, Lorie T.
DeCarvalho, and Edward M. Vega

***Clinician's guide to treating stress
after war: Education and coping
interventions for veterans (2008)***
by Julia M. Whealin, Lorie T.
DeCarvalho, and Edward M. Vega

**FOR MORE
INFORMATION**
about featured book selections
[www.depressioncenter.org/
ResourceCenter](http://www.depressioncenter.org/ResourceCenter)

Out of the Darkness Community Walks

The Depression Center is pleased to support the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's (AFSP) annual Out of the Darkness Community Walks this fall. By participating in these events, thousands of walkers nationwide raise money for AFSP's vital research and education programs to prevent suicide and save lives, increase national awareness about depression and suicide, and assist survivors of suicide loss. For more information visit www.afsp.org.

Upcoming Bright Nights Events

Tuesday, September 21, 7:00-8:30 p.m.
Family-Centered Treatments for Bipolar Disorder
Ann Arbor District Library <http://www.aadl.org/>
343 S 5th Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI

Thursday, September 30, 7:00-8:30 p.m.: Anxiety
and Depression in Children & Adolescents
Saline District Library <http://saline.lib.mi.us/>
555 North Maple Road, Saline, MI

Announcing the 4th Annual Prechter Lecture

Monday, September 27, 2010, 1-5 p.m.
Rackham Graduate School
Amphitheater, 4th Floor
915 East Washington Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

Housed at the University of Michigan Depression Center, the Prechter Bipolar Genetic Repository was established to advance the scope and pace of genetic research on bipolar disorder. The repository is a collaborative project that includes researchers from the University of Michigan, Cornell University, Johns Hopkins University and Stanford University.

Initiated in 2007, this lecture series annually brings to Ann Arbor distinguished researchers from the partner universities to give a talk on bipolar genetics and spend time collaborating with the U-M research team.

Please join us for this year's lecture, entitled *Foundations and Frontiers*, as we present a scientific summary and discussion on the current status of bipolar disorder research. We are pleased to announce keynote speaker Akira Sawa, M.D., Ph.D., Professor of Psychiatry and Director, Program in Molecular Psychiatry, Johns Hopkins University, who will be joined by other distinguished U-M researchers in presenting the current status of bipolar disorder research.

The entire program is free and open to everyone; online registration begins September 1st at www.prechterfund.org. Of particular interest to the general public is a synopsis of the afternoon's program at 3:30 p.m., presented by Melvin McInnis, M.D., Thomas B. and Nancy Upjohn Woodworth Professor of Bipolar Disorder

and Depression, Director of Bipolar Research Program, Department of Psychiatry, Associate Director, U-M Depression Center. A reception (from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.) will follow the Lecture.

Benefit luncheon with Margaret Trudeau - Former first lady of Canada and mental health advocate

October 14, 2010
The Henry Hotel (formerly Ritz-Carlton)
Dearborn, MI

The Heinz C. Prechter Bipolar Research Fund at the University of Michigan Depression Center is pleased to announce a luncheon featuring keynote speaker Margaret Trudeau, former first lady of Canada and international mental health advocate. Ms. Trudeau will offer inspirational words about her own battle with bipolar disorder and her message of hope. The widow of former Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, Ms. Trudeau was considered one of the world's most fascinating women in the 1970's. Diagnosed just a few years ago, she has suffered from bipolar illness all of her adult life. All proceeds raised by the luncheon will benefit the Fund's gene repository, the only independently funded repository in the nation. The repository collects DNA samples from individuals with and without bipolar disorder. The DNA is evaluated to find clues to early diagnosis and a roadmap to understanding causes and identify treatments. To purchase tickets to the luncheon, or to become a sponsor of this event, please call Leslye Martin at (734) 675-2200.

Announcing the Opening of

Friends East Gift Shop

Located at the East Ann Arbor Health Center

**Open Monday through Friday
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

**Bring in this ad and receive
20% OFF* one item**

*Please see store clerk for restrictions
Expires October 31, 2010
Offer good only at East Ann Arbor Gift Shop

friends
Of the University of Michigan Health System

www.med.umich.edu/friends/

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You've received this newsletter because you elected to be added to our mailing list, or because you have been identified as someone interested in advances in the treatment and prevention of illnesses.

If you want to be added to or deleted from our mailing list, please contact depression@umich.edu or (734) 232-0175.

Information about depression is available online. Please visit our Web site at www.depressioncenter.org.

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PRECHTER FUND IS NOW ON FACEBOOK

The Heinz C. Prechter Bipolar Research Fund is now on Facebook. You can find the Prechter page by searching for "Heinz C. Prechter Bipolar Research Fund." Please share the Prechter page with your friends to encourage a greater fan base, and if you have any feedback or suggestions regarding its content, please contact Kat Bergman at kbergman@umich.edu.



THE HEINZ C. PRECHTER
BIPOLAR RESEARCH FUND
AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
DEPRESSION CENTER

BIPOLAR WELLNESS CLINIC ENCOURAGES PEER SUPPORT

The Bipolar Wellness Clinic at the Depression Center is intended for adult patients diagnosed with bipolar disorder who are stable and no longer require frequent medication management and psychotherapy. Nurse practitioners and social workers who staff the clinic focus on helping patients learn to live with bipolar disorder and to manage the illness so that the possibility of relapse is minimized.

This clinic is held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of every month from 1-3:00 pm, with an evening group on the 3rd Tuesday of every month from 5:30-7:30 pm. The clinic utilizes a group medical visit model, an exciting new treatment model for long term management of chronic health conditions, which offers patients the opportunity to meet with other patients who have the same diagnosis in a group setting. The clinic visit begins with a check-in, in which clinicians assess the patient's status on medications, adjust medications if necessary, provide refills, complete clinical monitoring forms, and check vitals and lab values. The next 1.5 hours include an optional educational presentation and support group. Recent educational topics have included mood management, mindfulness-based meditation for depression, seasonal issues for bipolar patients, bipolar research, and medications for bipolar disorder.

If you are interested in participating in the Bipolar Wellness Clinic, please talk to your clinician or call 734-764-0231.

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