

❖ WINNING *continued from page 17*

BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SOMEONE ELSE. Whether it's a person, pet, employer or friend - having a feeling of responsibility to someone other than myself makes a big difference for me. I care for my cat, cook dinner for my husband, and go to work each day. I don't want to let these people (and my cat) down.

GET HELP. I'm begging you, if you think you have depression, get help. Although it's true that not every case is as successful as mine, around 80% of people who have depression can be helped. I'm not advocating medication for everyone. I have a friend whose outlook on life has been changed by psychotherapy as much as mine has been changed by medication. Every case is different.

Depression is a terrible, soul-stealing illness. I don't know if we will ever be able to eradicate it, but from my own experience I know that the tools to defeat it are there. You owe it to yourself to give those tools the chance to rescue you from the pain and emptiness of depression.

While I was preparing to write this, I had my yearly physical with my general practitioner that I have gone to for almost 15 years. At the end of the appointment I explained to her what I was planning to do. She encouraged me to write about my own illness, in the hope it might help even one person. Then I asked her how she feels I handle my illness day to day. Her response: "You own it".

And that's the best I could ever hope for.

She's right. I have learned to accept my condition and take control of it. I am winning.

❖ *By Melissa Bader*

Depression

What it is, what it isn't, and where to find help

It's natural to feel down sometimes, but if that low mood lingers day after day, it could signal depression. Major depression is an episode of sadness or apathy along with other symptoms that lasts at least two consecutive weeks and is severe enough to interrupt daily activities. Depression is not a sign of weakness or a negative personality. It is a major public health problem and a treatable medical condition.

Major depressive disorder is one of the most common mental disorders in the United States. Each year about 6.7% of U.S adults experience major depressive disorder. Women are 70 % more likely than men to experience depression during their lifetime. The average age of onset is 32 years old. Additionally, 3.3% of 13 to 18 year olds have experienced a seriously debilitating depressive disorder. More than 80% of people get better with medication, talk therapy, or a combination of the two. Even when these therapies fail to help, there are cutting-edge treatments that pick up the slack.

If you think you or a loved one may be experiencing signs and symptoms of depression, there are many places you can turn for help.

- Talk with a friend or relative
- Contact your primary care -provider
- Talk with your pastor or priest
- Contact your community health center
- If employed inquire about employee assistance programs
- In South Dakota dial 211 for support and resources
- If you believe your loved one is at an immediate risk for suicide, do NOT leave the person alone. Dial 1-800-273-8225 if you or a loved one may be in a suicidal situation or go online to www.sdsuicideprevention.org
- For support and resources for teens and young adults dial 1-800-273-TALK or go online to OK2Talk.org



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