



# Don't worry, be happy this month

by Sarah Orr  
health page editor

October is the month that many of us think as exciting, fun, and beautiful. Fall has arrived, and the leaves are a brilliant array of crimsons, oranges, yellows, and browns. Halloween, costume parties, candy, and fall break are all things Behrend students look forward to with great anticipation.

However, the personal counseling office is dedicating the month of October to depression awareness and screenings. This condition is very serious and more common than many realize. Occasionally everyone, especially college students can suffer from a bout of the blues. For some, sadness can be more extensive, which could lead to depression.

Depression is a common mood disorder that affects the mind and body simultaneously. Approximately 17 to 20 million Americans develop a particular form of depression each year. It can be caused by a myriad of factors such as an imbalance of neurotransmitters in the brain, medical illnesses, negative experiences associated with loss or stress, genetics, or personality traits. The symptoms can range from continual feelings of emptiness, changes in appetite and weight, oversleeping or inability to sleep, to sluggishness, restlessness, problems concentrating, feelings of guilt, fatigue, and thoughts of death or suicide.

It doesn't take a cataclysmic event to spark the onset of depression. College students are particularly susceptible to depression caused by stress. Adjustment issues also plague some when faced with a new situation, which can cause a form of depression.

There are different types of depression. One form is called dysthymia,

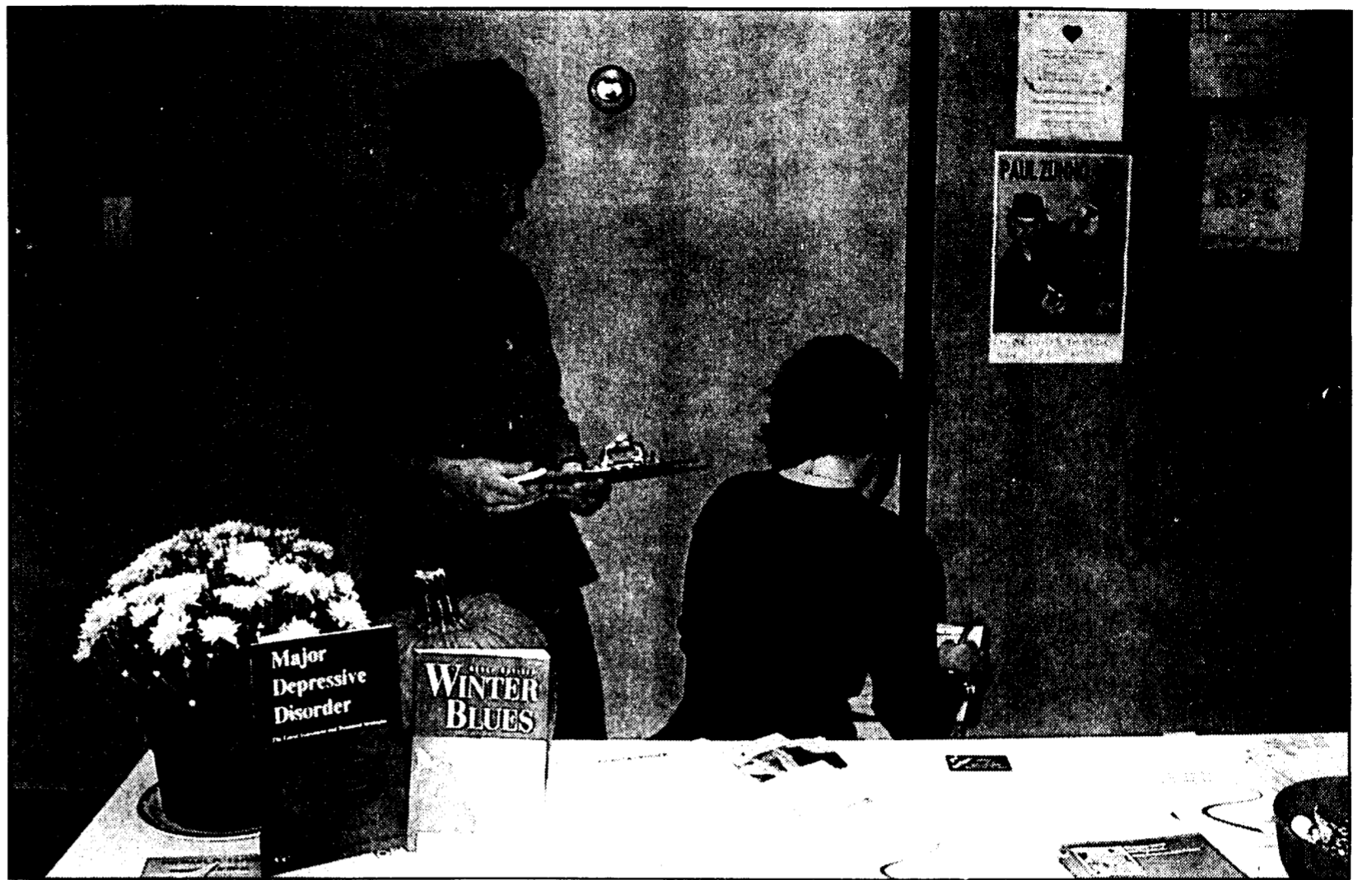


PHOTO BY JEFF HANKEY

The Personal Counseling Office is offering depression screenings this month to raise awareness of the disease.

which is characterized, by a milder, chronic depressive state lasting two or more years. Another type is bipolar depression, which is the depressed phase of bipolar disorder. In this particular form, there are both extreme high and low mood swings. The last type is seasonal affective disorder. This depression follows seasonal rhythms; symptoms will occur in the winter and decrease in the spring and summer months.

Depression is an illness that can

be treated, but it can be costly. Annually, Americans spend about \$50 billion to treat different forms of depression. Treatments available include antidepressant medications, psychotherapy, electroconvulsive therapy, and self-help groups. A person may try various treatment options before finding the most successful method.

Psychotherapy is sometimes referred to as talk therapy and employs techniques to create new ways of thinking, improving interpersonal relations, or resolving conflicts that

could stem from problems during childhood. Electroconvulsive therapy is usually used for those with severe cases of depression as well as those who are unable to handle medication. It is an effective and safe procedure, contrary to popular opinion. Self-help groups are effective by providing support for people with depression as well as friends and family.

Depression screening took place outside of Bruno's Cafe on Wednesday from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. The personal counseling office sponsored

the screenings. If any Behrend student feels they are having a prolonged period of sadness or having trouble dealing with an issue, they can contact Sue Daley or Allison Parr-Plasha for appointment to discuss a course of action to remedy the situation. If you notice a friend experiencing difficulties, you may want to refer them to the personal counseling office.

## Pay attention to your body language

by Ryan Anthony  
staff writer

You have two exams on Monday, a paper due Tuesday, work on Wednesday, work and a group project on Thursday, and another exam on Friday. It is now Sunday night. Did I mention you have a group meeting to be at in five minutes?

On top of all of that your girlfriend is not quite so sure she likes you any more, your car needs new brakes and tires for the winter, your parents want to visit next weekend, someone from work wants you to cover a shift, your girlfriend decides she likes you again, your intramural team wins its championship, your roommates are having a party this weekend, and your cousin gets married.

Welcome to the week of a college student. The stress can be overwhelming, but you can learn how to deal with it.

Busy schedules are part of what our tuition gets us. A million different things can happen to someone during a week and a million different people will handle these things in a million different ways. The best way to cope with life's obstacles is to identify how you react to them.

Stress is an integral part of life. It is the motivating reason for getting us out of bed every morning. Anxiety, on the other hand, is the uneasiness and apprehension we feel because of stress. Any number of circumstances can lead to anger or pleasure. Every so often we feel relief when we hear an exam or assignment is pushed back a day. Friends or other familiar events can bring about excitement.

Stress, anxiety, anger, pleasure, and excitement are a tiny fraction of the emotions we go through in a day. Almost anyone can describe how they "feel" when they feel these emotions, but few are in tune with what goes on inside their bodies at these times.

Just as we "feel" certain ways during certain emotions, our bodies also feel a certain way too. Recognition of the way your body reacts is a good way of becoming a more relaxed and focused individual.

Most people do not realize it, but it is possible for you to control how you physically and mentally feel.

"The way we think determines how we feel," according to Behrend personal counselor, Allison Parr-Plasha. If a person has a constant negative attitude about himself or herself, they

are obviously going to eventually convince themselves that this attitude is true. Conversely, if one holds him or herself in high regard, then this person will tend to feel and behave in a way that projects this opinion. Our bodies contain many clues to how we feel and even more clues to how to feel better. According to Parr-Plasha, the key for most people is awareness.

One of the biggest challenges Parr-Plasha faces, she says, is getting students to slow down enough to realize where their problems are focused inside their bodies. Students need to take a few extra minutes each day to focus on their feelings, whether they are positive or negative. Students need to pay more attention to what their bodies are telling them. Our bodies feel the way they do for reasons. If something is not right, we need to be able to identify what it is in order to make it better.

Emotions locate themselves in the body in a number of ways. According to Parr-Plasha, everybody's body holds emotions in different places. She suggests this exercise as a way of locating where in your body certain feelings hide themselves.

First, close your eyes and relax. Think of a specific topic that is troubling you or that is on your mind. Then concentrate on only that topic for the next 15 seconds. After this time of concentration, begin to realize how your body feels, starting with your head. Where can you feel that thought? Is it in your temples or head or neck? Many people feel upset stomachs or back pain. Nausea and sweating can even be brought about by just focusing on a single thought. Once you become aware of where your body harbors a specific emotion, you can then begin to treat it.

Parr-Plasha mentioned several common emotions and symptoms that go along with them. If your neck and back are constantly tense and sore, you might be feeling angry. Illness, ulcers, and lack of concentration have also been known to accompany stress.

After becoming aware of where your body stores these emotions, you can begin therapy. The best remedy for most emotion-related ailments is relaxation. Parr-Plasha

suggests practicing breathing exercises because most Americans do not realize they do not breathe properly. Changing breathing techniques can allow more oxygen to the brain and rest of

a physical activity such as working out or yoga. These activities definitely will help you get more in tune with your body.

If any student wants to seek help

personal counseling office at (x)6164 to schedule and appointment or email Parr-Plasha at alp9@psu.edu or Sue Daley at sxd21@psu.edu.

### 100 Mile Mania Update

If you are inspired by these students and wish to begin exercising, here are a few tips to keep in mind before you start.



- Start with a 15-minute low intensity warm up.
- Be sure to stretch.
- Drink plenty of water during your exercise routine.
- Don't strain yourself.
- Be sure to incorporate a cool down

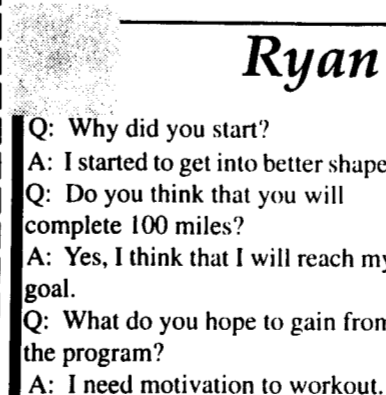
#### Allison Jawdy



Q: Why did you start?  
A: It's a way to stay healthy and to stay motivated to exercise.  
Q: Do you think that you will complete 100 miles?  
A: I think that there is a slim chance.  
Q: What do you hope to gain from the program?  
A: I hope to become healthier, gain more muscle mass, and lose some weight.

Miles:  
**22**

#### Ryan Brewer



Q: Why did you start?  
A: I started to get into better shape.  
Q: Do you think that you will complete 100 miles?  
A: Yes, I think that I will reach my goal.  
Q: What do you hope to gain from the program?  
A: I need motivation to workout.

Miles:  
**30**



#### Sundeep Bhatia



Q: Why did you start?  
A: I started for the challenge.  
Q: Do you think that you will complete 100 miles?  
A: Yes, I hope so.  
Q: What do you hope to gain from the program?  
A: I want to be buff.

Miles:  
**5**



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