

Depression and Stress are Big Factors In College Suicides

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CCSG Contributor

Oct. 10, 2005 a young man by the name of Kyle Ambrogi took his life by a gunshot. He was a running back from the University of Pennsylvania's football team, and had run for two touchdowns the Saturday before his death. He was greatly cared about by his family and community. So one question comes to mind: Why? The short answer is depression.

Depression is a condition that plagues people all over the world. Unfortunately, there are only two things close to a cure. First, there is medicine, which serves to balance out chemicals within the affected person's system. The other solution is psychiatric help. Each has its own drawback. Medicine isn't guaranteed to work, but when it does, it only works for a short period of time. Psychiatric counseling allows insight to the cause of the person's

depression, and aims to eliminate the problem at its source. Depression can result from many things, like stress and home life. In some cases, there is no defined cause for depression, only the symptoms. Depressed people exhibit feelings of uselessness, and often consider the only solution to be killing themselves.

According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, suicide is the second leading cause of death for college students, the first being car accidents. Such a statistic is likely to conjure up myths about the cause of suicide. Falsities include the fact that students who attend schools with high academic standards are more likely to kill themselves than others.

According to Brown University's Psychological Services Website, "student

suicide rates are not related to institutional prestige, size or to one's class standing." An article found in The University of New Hampshire's student newspaper supports this statement. Graduate student Jen Conant says "I know people who go to Harvard that come from really messed up families, and their escape is going to Harvard. Academics is their escape." Such evidence supports the theory that schools with high academic standards do not attract students with suicidal tendencies. In most cases, the cause of depression-triggered suicide is the abuse of alcohol or drugs.

Students arrive at colleges and universities with a sense of liberation. No longer are they living under the old "ball & chain" at home. The responsibility is placed squarely in their hands. Some students

turn out to be diligent workers who can handle themselves, while others bask in the distractions offered by most university social scenes. These students might begin to fall behind in their work. Understandably, they would be upset by this. Unfortunately, these students often turn to drugs and alcohol as a means of venting their frustration with the class work. Alcohol, by its very nature, is a depressant. Combine alcohol with a student who is already down-and-out, and the results could be dire.

We, as students, must look out for one another. Losing a friend, or even a classmate, is a traumatizing experience nobody should have to endure. Villanova University suggests the following methods for dealing with a fellow student who has suicidal tendencies: be

willing to hear the student out, don't act surprised (doing so may distance yourself from the student), or seek help from professors or advisors. While peer involvement is a necessary factor in suicide prevention, Dr. Alan Lipschitz, M.D. suggests that university officials, administrative or otherwise, should pay attention to students who are quiet and withdrawn. Even a simple two-page paper can give insight to a student's suicidal tendencies, Dr. Lipschitz says. Instead of focusing on disruptive students, focusing on these withdrawn students can possibly prevent suicide.

Here is a memorial site to Kyle Ambrogi: <http://www.tedsilary.com/kyleambrogi.htm>

Together We'll Prevail: All 19 Campuses Come Together For a Cause

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The exhaustion is apparent. The dedication is obvious. The love is true.

It's Thon 2006 and Rec Hall is packed with dancers and Four Diamond Families who would stay just as long as the dancers do.

Dani Leonardo, CCSG Programming Director, formerly from Penn State Altoona, said, "I danced last year. It is hard, but it's easier when you have 100's of people supporting you, telling you to keep going, and sometimes literally holding you up."

We're somewhere around hour 30, and in the midst of it all a water gun fight breaks out between a tiny warrior and a

battle-hardened avenger. The soldiers ride into battle on piggy-back because they've danced for so long they can barely walk.

As arms link, an impenetrable wall is formed against cancer and is so high, only love can climb it. That's exactly what is in this room: love. But sometimes, even love needs a little support. I held CCSG dancer Patty O'Leary in my arms as she struggled to stay on her feet and dance for the kids who couldn't.

As I held her and she stretched out her legs I wondered how these students were able to do this extraordinary feat. Would I be able to stay on my feet for 48

