



photo by John Donoughe

# STOP

## Singing The Blues & Get Help! *by Kelly Griffin*

*“Melancholy feelings sometimes dog all of us when we’re having a bad day. No matter how hard we try, we just can’t shake off the bad feelings. But how do you know when it’s time to seek help?”*  
- Diane Wetzig

Below are some additional resources to access for information about depression or other behavioral health issues and their treatment.

### Local:

- Laurelwood Hospital
- Laurelwood Hospital (Willoughby):  
35900 Euclid Avenue, Willoughby, OH 44094  
440-953-3000  
www.laurelwoodhospital.com
- Mentor Counseling Center: 7060  
Wayside Drive, Mentor, OH 44060  
440-639-8989
- Beachwood Counseling Center:  
23240 Chagrin Blvd. Commerce  
Park 4, Suite 610  
Beachwood, OH 44122  
216-595-0500
- NAMI-Lake County  
5930 Heisley Road  
Mentor, OH 44060  
440-639-1200

### Internet-based:

- National Association for the Mentally Ill, www.nami.org
- National Institute of Mental Health, www.nimh.nih.gov
- Mental Health Screening, www.mentalhealthscreening.org

counter-balance the depressive symptoms and often stop a full-blown depressive episode from occurring.

The bad news about depression is that it is much more common than most people think – about one in four people suffers from a level of depression that should be addressed with professional therapy. The good news is that depression is successfully treated and you can feel better. You can restore your hope in the future and feel that life is worth living again. ■



**Diane Wetzig Ph.D.**

*Chief of Psychology for Laurelwood Hospital in Willoughby*

“Sadness is a natural response to a loss and all of us experience small as well as major life losses throughout the day, the week, the month and the year,” explains Diane Wetzig, Ph.D., CCDC-III-E, chief of Psychology for Laurelwood Hospital in Willoughby. “Having an argument with someone you love, losing a job or not getting a promotion you expected might make you sad. Even positive change – retirement, moving to a new home or starting a new job – may bring on feelings of loss,” adds Dr. Wetzig. “With a normal sadness, you will go into a short period where you will experience sadness and lowered feelings but you’ll gradually and naturally come out of it. Depression is of the same nature but has a different intensity.”

“I call depression The Great Thief,” she comments. “It robs you of interest; it robs you of pleasure; it robs you of energy; it robs you of initiative and the ability to concentrate or focus. It takes all these things from you and may give back a feeling of worthlessness!”

### Characteristics And Symptoms

“With depression, you notice that there may be changes in appetite, falling asleep or staying asleep. It’s not unusual for someone to awaken, holding onto and unable to forget a dream or a longing brought out in the dream,” Dr. Wetzig continues.

“Loss of appetite may make some individuals suffering from depression lose a significant amount of weight quickly, sometimes as much as 10 pounds in a month,” she adds. “They just lose interest in eating.” She also warns that sometimes the opposite problem may occur as well. With moderate depression, you may find that you start craving carbohydrates – comfort foods such as cookies, potato chips and other munchies – and that can pack on the pounds!

“Sometimes, men and women exhibit different emotional symptoms when they begin to suffer from depression,” says Dr. Wetzig. “Our social training tells us that it’s okay for men to show irritability, agitation and anger but not to cry. It also tells us that it’s okay for women to show their sadness with tears, and to be fearful and anxious. Recognizing that these symptoms may point to depression is the job of a therapist.”

When some of us suffer from depression, we may begin to feel that our family would be better off without us, that no one needs us, that we’re more trouble than we’re worth. Depression is insidious at times. It can just creep up on you and make you gradually feel totally exhausted, overwhelmingly sad and emotionally drained. Sometimes it’s hard for you to recognize

that you need professional help since you feel so bad. It may take a close friend, significant other or family member to encourage you to get help. Try to listen to them and reach out for assistance.

### Stopping The Pain

Dr. Wetzig tells us that this illness is highly treatable with cognitive behavioral therapy and when necessary, a period of medication. “Medication often provides the capacity for you to do the things you need to do to stop depression.”

An antidepressant may assist you in elevating your mood to the point where you can focus on mindfulness-based cognitive therapy. This therapy teaches you techniques that will help you learn to recognize and often successfully derail depressive symptoms before you slide down the slippery slope into a full bout of depression.

“Therapy provides you with the tools to manage depression, often allowing you to go off medication and continue to use the tools you’ve learned in therapy to keep your depression in remission,” she explains. “It helps you recognize the unique red flags of depression that you experience – losing a few pounds, feeling like you have a cold coming on or just feeling unwell. We train people to recognize the earliest symptoms because depression feeds on itself and robs you of energy, hope, determination and makes you want to withdraw from people.”

Dr. Wetzig says, “We train you to do the opposite of what the depression is telling you to do. It tells you to withdraw into the bedroom and we encourage you to go the mall, pick up the phone and make plans – be with and talk to other people. If you put one foot in front of the other and get out the door, you can often stop the deepening of the depression.”

Comparing the illness of depression to that of migraine headaches, Dr. Wetzig notes that many individuals, after medical treatment and education regarding their illness, can recognize the symptoms of migraines and often prevent them from becoming full-blown take-to-the-bed migraine headaches. She suggests that some depression sufferers, with therapy, become perceptive enough to recognize the beginning of depression and develop the capacity to halt it with specific behaviors like those mentioned above.

Cognitive behavioral therapy has you collect your thoughts and examine them to determine whether they’re valid, notes Dr. Wetzig. If they’re not valid and effective [such as the withdrawing symptoms associated with depression], therapy can teach you how to