

Depression prevalent among college students across the nation

Trigger Warning: This article contains sensitive material, please be aware.

CASEY HORGAN
MANAGING EDITOR

You are not alone.
No, seriously.

One out of every four college students suffer from some form of diagnosable mental illness. According to a 2010 survey, 44 percent of college students reported feeling symptoms of depression.

Look around. If that held true for Guilford, that would mean that for a given class of 25 students, 11 feel depressed.

Depression is a common but serious mental illness; its symptoms include feeling sad, anxious, hopeless, empty, irritable, worthless and helpless for an extended period of time.

Depressed persons often lose interest in things they once enjoyed, have little energy for daily activities, have problems concentrating or remembering information, and may have thoughts of suicide.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death in college students between the ages of 20-24. Nearly one in five young adults contemplate or attempt suicide each year.

With finals approaching, tuition invoices being sent out, and cold weather time spent outdoors, depression and suicide are two topics that deserve attention.

Depression does not have a single cause. For some, it's genetic. For others, it's environmental factors — surroundings, life experiences, stress and school.

In 2009, a nationwide survey of college students found that nearly 30 percent of students reported feeling "so depressed that it was difficult to function" at some point in the past year.

"I battled depression," said a Guilford CCE student who wishes to remain anonymous. "I hate saying I 'had' (depression). I battled it and it almost won. There were days where I literally did not get out of bed for anything. I just laid there. Never stepped outside my

room, never sat up, never ate, never drank."

Another student admits, "(I function) like a normal college student on the outside, and I keep everything hidden on the inside. My own roommate doesn't know. Maybe they think I'm lazy. I've gotten good at hiding (how I feel)."

When asked why he hides his depression, the student responded that he didn't have "a good reason to be depressed, so how can I explain it to my friends and not have a reason? They're going to ask why."

It isn't unusual for college students suffering from depression to not get the help they need. In some cases, students are unsure of where to get help from, or they may believe that treatment will not help them personally. Others think their symptoms are typical for students, or they worry about being judged if they seek mental health care.

"It took time and prescriptions and psychotherapy three times a week," said one student who overcame severe clinical depression.

"I had to try it all. It took a lot, and I was in such a dark place. I didn't think I could be helped, but look at me now," she said, smiling. "You'd never know. You'd have no idea."

Another student offers advice to people who think they're depressed.

"Tell someone, man. Reach out because you have no idea who else is going through the same thing as you. You don't have to tell everyone if you don't want, but it's nothing to be ashamed of. It's a f---ing disease, not a weak attitude."

One student sees depression and suicidal thoughts as fighting one's mind day in and day out.

"You wake up and your brain is right there telling you how worthless you are and how you don't deserve to exist, and you have to fight that the whole day and wake up the next day with the same thoughts. I don't look back on my depression and see it as months of helplessness or anything. I see it as months of fighting my own brain to exist, and I feel stronger now because of it."

66% of young people with a substance use disorder have a co-occurring mental health problem.



2/3 of young people do not talk about or seek help for mental health problems.

1 out of every 4 college students suffers from some form of diagnosable mental illness.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death in college students.

44% of American college students reported feeling symptoms of depression.



4 out of every 5 young people that contemplate or attempt suicide exhibit clear warning signs.

19% of young people contemplate or attempt suicide each year.

Teens diagnosed with depression are 5x more likely to attempt suicide than adults.

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If you are experiencing a psychological crisis and the center is closed, please contact Public Safety at (336) 316-2911; they will assess your needs and contact the staff member on duty.

Open M-F, 9a-5p

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a form of depression that affects people during part of the year when they aren't exposed to much daylight. A lack of light disturbs the neurotransmitter systems. Similar to other types of depression, SAD causes changed sleeping and eating patterns, loss of interest in sex, social withdrawal, pessimism, and inability to concentrate. Students who suffer SAD may notice a drop in grades during the winter. Therapy and medication used to treat ordinary depression works for SAD, but the most effective treatment plans address the root of the disorder by exposing the eyes to certain wavelengths of light.

For a complete list of available resources and aid, check out WWW.GUILFORDIAN.COM

STATISTICS FROM PSYCHCENTRAL.COM/GRAPHIC BY CASEY HORGAN

Assistant professor Alvis Dunn leaving after 13 years

BRYAN DOOLEY
SENIOR WRITER

Assistant Professor of History Alvis Dunn is leaving Guilford at the end of the semester to teach at the University of North Carolina Asheville. He will be joining his wife Leah, who recently became library director at the university.

"Alvis was my first teacher of my first class in college," said senior Blade Cruickshank, a business management major. "Alvis does these 'panels' or 'talk shows' where you have to play a role of a character in the time period of history that you are studying. This was and still is in my eyes, the most interesting and fun educational exercise I have ever done."

Dunn brought a passion for history to Guilford for 13 years.

"Personally, I find knowledge of history to be the foundation of human activity," said Dunn. "That we are informed about the lives and actions of those who have gone before us makes us, at least theoretically, wiser in how we meet challenges that come at us in the future."

Dunn continued, "History is so very much the story of everything: economics, society,

culture, language, politics. And I do think of history as a story, something to be shared among us, that binds people together or explains why they are estranged."

Dunn inspired students to pursue their own interest for history with his enthusiasm for the subject.

"Prior to taking a class with Alvis, I was not sure if I wanted to be a history major or not,"

"If I was not a senior, I would follow him to Asheville."

Michael Delson, student

said junior Alejandra Ruiz. "After taking his Modern Latin America class, I can definitely say that it made me realize that I wanted to be a history major and someday hopefully travel and study in Latin America."

Dunn personalizes his classes by sharing his own childhood memories.

"My favorite memory of Alvis is his stories

about pig hollerin' contests," said senior Michael Delson. "All I kept thinking about was I wanted to experience a pig hollerin' contest. If I was not a senior, I would follow him to Asheville."

Dunn says he will take a lot of lessons learned at Guilford with him to Asheville.

"I have worked with many wonderful faculty here from my early years adjuncting and being mentored by Alex Stoesen and Dotty Borel, through to more recently learning alongside Phil Slaby, Damon Akins and Zhihong Chen," said Dunn. "Of course, Tim Kircher and Sarah Malino have been great colleagues from whom I have learned a great deal as well."

The faculty has also learned much from Dunn.

"Alvis' approach to teaching many topics by asking students to view, research and then understand the past from the vantage point of view of various people from the past, common figures, someone famous, or even someone infamous, is sort of a model and a marvel to me," said Slaby, assistant professor of history. "The various debates and 'talk shows' wherein he asks students to take on the persona of a historical figure is creative and great training for the students'

historical imagination."

Tim Kircher, professor of history, agrees about Dunn's value to the school.

"He created our first study abroad program in Guatemala," said Kircher. "He has the rare gift of being both passionate and fair, to be both an advocate and an impersonal observer. He has introduced many students to the rich complexities of North Carolina and Latin American history, showing them the evidence of these cultures and helping them weave these sources into compelling narratives."

Students and faculty agree that Dunn's enthusiasm for his subject and his students sets him apart.

"He added his expertise about Southern history and Latin American history," said Adrienne Israel, vice president and academic dean. "Since he came to Guilford over a decade ago at the behest of Alex Stoesen, even during the days when he commuted from Chapel Hill, he inspired us with his enthusiasm for his subjects, whatever he was teaching, and for his students."

Senior Jeff Bowman sums it up best. "Someone once said that when the student is ready, the teacher will come. Alvis is here, and his presence will be missed."