

# Students prone to depression *Caution, awareness crucial during hurricane season*

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STAFF WRITER

Campus life and class demands add hundreds of pounds to the weight that already looms around the necks of college students, but too much stress can be dangerous.

Depression is a mental disorder that affects brain function and motor coordination skills. College students make up a large part of the people suffering from clinical depression, especially undergraduates.

"I see less graduates than undergraduates," said Jim Cuomo, a licensed clinical school worker.

Cuomo has specialized in psychiatric treatment since 1971. He estimates that three out of four of his clients suffer from depression.

Assistant Director of Counseling Dea Casey warns that some individuals may have a certain brain chemistry that is susceptible to depression. People who have relatives who suffer from depression are at a higher risk of developing the disorder.

Common causes of depression include the loss of a loved one, relationship trouble and news of a life-threatening medical condition. Depression can also manifest from minor blues, such as homesickness.

"However the symptoms of depression can be the same as certain medical conditions, such as dysfunctional Thyroid gland," Cuomo said. "A physical exam is always a good idea."

Cuomo speculates that there is no significant part of the UNCW population that is affected more than any other. However, most people suffering from depression don't come to a counselor early enough.

"Sometimes when people are depressed they feel so low, they don't even feel like getting help," Casey said.



Therapists at the counseling center can help students battle depression.

UNCW is prepared for students suffering depression. The Resident Assistants at each Residence Hall are trained to notice the signs of depression. Counselors as well as medical consultants are available at the Health and Wellness center.

For more information about depression contact the Counseling Center at 962-3746.

## Signs of depression

- ◆ Inability to concentrate
- ◆ Diminished or increased appetite
- ◆ Crying spells
- ◆ Suicidal thoughts with or without plan
- ◆ Loss of energy and/or fatigue
- ◆ Diminished motivation and pleasure in daily life
- ◆ Sleep disturbances

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The threat of storms looms during hurricane season, but that threat peaks in September, the most active month for tropical weather.

Hurricane evacuation policies are a precaution at UNCW that have been integrated into the curriculum for many years now. In case of a storm, safety measures are exercised to reflect the students' best interests.

Educational buildings and residential halls used to be boarded up, but in recent years it has become evident that evacuation of the campus is a much safer procedure. The hurricane evacuation policy became formal in 1999 when Hurricane Hugo hit Charleston.

The hurricane policy is set up by the Administration of Environmental Health and Safety. Under the policy, students are allowed to leave during the voluntary evacuation of the beaches.

"The debriefing of this new policy offers a wider opportunity for students to evacuate," Assistant Chief of Police Major Bob Riley said.

In case of an evacuation, a student who does not have previous access to a house that is inland should contact the Dean of Students Office. They have a list of potential host families. Resident students should leave a contact source for parents with their resident assistants or resident coordinator.

"There is plenty of warning and ways to prepare for the hurricane," Riley said.

When a hurricane is announced, the police move to the Command Center in the University Union. They transfer phones and communication equipment and operate out of the Command Center.

The dorms are shut down during evacuation. Resi-

dence halls and academic areas are cleared and sealed during an evacuation. The police keep the campus secure, complete with inspection teams and engineers.

"Through this policy, houses as well as furniture are secured before the storm, and the safety of residents can be guaranteed," Riley said.

In the event of a hurricane, the Director of Environmental Health and Safety, Stan Hartz and volunteers make available resources in the event of an emergency recovery.

"It is the task of Stan Hartz to make changes to the original plan as the hurricane progresses," Riley said.

Police, maintenance men, grounds keepers, mechanics, heating and air repairmen and electricians all work to restore the campus after a hurricane hits. The Environmental Health and Safety Agency monitors science buildings, prevents loss of ventilation, and inspect buildings for damage.

After the hurricane, students can find out information about the current status of the area, when to return to campus and when classes will begin at the Hurricane Hotline, 962-3991.

To find out more information about the evacuation policy, contact Senior Management at 962-3151.



NOAA satellite image of 1999's powerful Hurricane Floyd as it headed toward the east coast.

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