

**Dr. Kirschbaum Says:**

**"Everyone Goes Through Periods Of Depression"**

By Audrey C. Lodato  
Post Staff Writer

Connie K. is at the end of her rope. Thirty-two years old and divorced, Connie is the mother of two young children, ages 2 and 6.

For the past couple months, she's been more tired than usual. "The house is a wreck," she complains to her mother. She's begun to sleep later in the morning and go to bed earlier at night.

The kids are getting on her nerves, which makes her feel guilty. A couple of times her 6-year-old has found her crying and wanted to know what was wrong. She didn't know what to tell him.

Connie is starting to feel like a bad mother and a bad person.

"Connie" is not just one individual, but rather a composite of many people suffering from depression. Dr. Wayne Kirschbaum, unit supervisor for an adult outpatient team at the Mecklenburg County Mental Health Center, has seen and helped many "Connies."

Probably everyone goes through periods of depression at one time or another. "Some depression is normal and is just a part of a natural adjustment to painful life situations, such as the death of a loved one or a move to another state," the psychologist noted. Most times such depressions resolve themselves. "But," states Dr. Kirschbaum, "when a depressed state continues for a prolonged period, or when the severity is grave, that's when individuals need to consider professional help."

There is a difference between depression and sadness, Kirschbaum pointed out. With depression, there are feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness and guilt. The future looks bleak. The person may become apathetic or cry a lot.

Depression also produces physical symptoms. These include, but are not limited to, sleeping problems (too little or too much); loss of energy, fatigue, weakness; decrease in appetite and weight loss (or the opposite); constipation; and decrease in sexual interest.

Dr. Kirschbaum is one of many mental health professionals nationwide who use a form of treatment known as cognitive therapy. "Depressed persons tend to see themselves in a very negative way," Kirschbaum explained. "They interpret situations incorrectly. Their thoughts about what is happening around them affect how they feel. They may feel sad and lonely because of a mistaken belief that they are inadequate."



Dr. W. Kirschbaum  
Unit supervisor

**First in series**

According to the psychologist and others like him, "Depressed people can be helped by altering their thinking rather than concentrating on their depressed mood."

Through cognitive therapy, clients learn to think more rationally and realistically. They learn that what they think ("self-talk") affects how they feel. Finally, they learn they can control their feelings. (Kirschbaum recommends a book entitled, *Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy*, by Dr. David D. Burns, published by Signet and written for the lay reader.)

So how does this "cognitive therapy" apply to someone who is suffering from depression? Let's return to "Connie" and see what happens.

Connie is helped to recognize those aspects of her life that she feels can be changed and to alter her attitudes about those aspects which cannot be changed. She begins to recognize that the negative thoughts she has about her-

self (that she is a bad person and a bad mother) generate negative feelings and adversely affect her behavior. In addition to recognizing the negative thoughts about herself, she begins challenging their accuracy. Eventually, she begins replacing her self-defeating self-talk with more realistic, rational, reasonable self-statements.

Connie learns to deal with a big problem by breaking it down into small components. Instead of tackling the whole house at once, she cleans one room at a time. A small accomplishment is experienced as a success and enables her to move on to other tasks.

Because she has fallen into a pattern of neglecting herself while doing for everyone else, she takes steps to add some pleasure to her life: meeting a friend for lunch, joining an exercise class.

Through a cognitive therapy approach, Connie has a significant recovery in about a month. Not all depressions are resolved as quickly. A lot depends on the individual's motivation and the length of time she or he suffered from depression before seeking help. Also, some depressions are caused by biological factors that need medical attention. In other cases, marriage or family counseling is helpful. When depression is particularly severe, as when the person is suicidal, hospitalization may be called for.

Whatever the cause, depressions that don't go away by themselves in a reasonable amount of time can be treated. Help is available at the Mecklenburg County Mental Health Center, 375-3223.



**CHARLOTTE DOLL SHOW PARTICIPANTS**

*Eagerly anticipate the evening*

**Asali Jeri Howard Crowned "Queen" Of Doll Show**

At the seventh annual Charlotte Doll Show Asali Jeri Howard was crowned queen.

The gala affair, sponsored by the Echoes, benefited the handicapped children of Mecklenburg County and Crisis Assistance Ministry. Mrs. Jeanette Robinson, founder of the show, presented a \$500 check to Shirley Henry of Crisis Assistance Ministry. The Charlotte Doll Show was a successful program in its primary fundraising objective and in its objective of giving children the opportunity to display their talents. Over \$3,000 was raised.

Other winners in the prestigious event were: LaShanda Smith, first

**ST. JAMES**  
Members of St. James United Church of God, 837 Justice Ave., will salute Sarah Hall for her dedication to serving God and the church.

Mrs. Hall is one of the outstanding ladies of the church. She has been superintendent of the Sunday School since 1949, has served on the choir usher board with the youth and just about every capacity in the church.

The service in her honor will be held Friday June 1 at the church beginning at 7:30 p.m.

runner-up, Windy Michelle Berry, second runner-up, and Tiffny Byrum, third runner-up.

Children who participated in the Doll Show met for a picnic at Sugar Creek Park recently. Prior to the picnic, the children toured the city on the WBT

Fun Bus.

Members of the Echoes are: Betty Crawford, Annie Crosby, Angela Gates, Cheryl Gant, Natalie Sanders, Ruby Miller, Regina Sellers, Teresa McVay, Linda Evans, Gwendolyn Ingram, and Vivian Washington.

**City Employees Get More Choice In Health Care Plan**

Amphetamines have legitimate medical uses, but drug abusers take them to get a feeling of great energy or heightened awareness.

The North Carolina Medical Society says that amphetamine abuse can have harmful, even deadly, side effects. Amphetamines stimulate the central nervous system and put the body in a general state of stress, as if reacting to a threat. Physicians prescribe the drug in controlled doses to achieve a specific purpose. Drug abusers don't have that kind of knowledge, and they're also chasing an ever more powerful

high. Amphetamines tolerate develops rapidly, and increases amounts of the drug are needed to produce the original effects. Although physical dependence on the drug doesn't occur, a regular user may become psychologically dependent.

Amphetamine abuse can cause shaking, itching, muscle pain, and tension. Large quantities can cause abnormal heart rhythms and increase blood pressure.

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