

Women's Center Newsletter

Spring 2006

Mental Health at Trinity College



TRINITY COLLEGE WOMEN'S CENTER
2nd Floor, Mather Hall
297-2408

www.trincoll.edu/StudentLife/DiversityGender/WomensCenter/

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NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO? COME TO THE WOMEN'S CENTER!

Laura Lockwood, Director of the Women's Center, sees students for short-term counseling on a variety of issues. She's a certified sexual assault counselor, assists victims and survivors in reporting, and referrals, and can act as a counselor in judicial hearings. As SART (Sexual Assault Response Team) Coordinator, Laura can assist in getting the help you need. In addition, she works with both female and male students, faculty and staff on issues concerning stress, dating, relationships, eating disorders, body image, sexuality, self-injury, rape trauma syndrome (see p.6), pregnancy, relationship violence, and "What to Do after Trinity." When students need a professional therapist, Laura makes referrals to the Counseling Center (see Page 4), or to off-campus therapists.

Both the Counseling Center and the Women's Center see friends, roommates and others who are trying to cope with a friends' eating disorder or sexual assault. In addition, the Women's Center and the Counseling Center is well stocked with materials and resources regarding all the above-mentioned topics, with off-campus referrals to therapists, counselors, support groups, out and in-patient treatment facilities. The Women's Center also sponsors students groups like PHAB (Promoting Healthy Awareness of the Body) and the Sexual Assault Task Force (SATF) that offer students opportunities for activism, education and prevention.

To see the Director, it's best to email or call first, but walk-ins are always welcome. Please call x2408, or email: Laura.Lockwood@trincoll.edu. All meetings are confidential, unless the student is a danger to her/himself or others, or s/he is a minor.

A Note To Our Readers

We welcome your feedback and comments on the contents of this Newsletter. Please send your message to: Chelsea.King@trincoll.edu. or Kathryn.Broad@trincoll.edu.

Thank you!

Women's Center Staff & Volunteers

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Where is the Women's Center?

The Women's Center is located on the second floor of Mather Hall, behind the Washington Room. To make an appointment with the Director or to use the Library/Lounge, please call Laura Lockwood at x2408. All students and members of the Trinity and Greater Hartford communities are welcome! ☺

Women's Center Mission Statement

The Women's Center is a place of advocacy, support and welcome for all women in the Trinity College community. Through educational, social and cultural programming, it seeks to promote self-determination; awareness of women's rights and issues; redress gender inequities and encourage understanding among women of different economic classes, cultural backgrounds, religions, and gender identities; and the creation of a campus environment conducive to respectful interaction between women and men.

What is Mental Illness? What to Do if You or Your Friend Has a Mental Illness

By Dr. Sarah Raskin, Associate Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience

Mental illness is a term that refers to a broad range of conditions. These conditions have in common some disturbance in thinking, feelings, or relating to others. We still have a lot to learn about what causes mental illness, how to prevent it and how to treat it. Mental illness is very serious and if you suspect that someone you know may be suffering from a mental illness you should seek help in dealing with them. They may need therapy, other forms of support or medication.

So what are the major symptoms of mental illness? First of all, we all experience some symptoms some times. We all feel sad or blue sometimes, we all get anxious sometimes. A mental illness is when we experience these symptoms for a long period of time (usually months) and when these symptoms interfere with the things we like to do and need to do. So, if you are afraid of snakes but never have to go anywhere near a snake or think about a snake, no problem. If you are so afraid of snakes you cannot attend any of your classes in LSC because you know there is a snake in there - that is a phobia.

Schizophrenia: Schizophrenia has absolutely nothing to do with split personality. It is a serious disorder that affects the person's thoughts and feelings. Symptoms usually start in the late teens and early twenties. In the beginning the person might just feel tense, have trouble sleeping and lose interest in people and things that they used to enjoy. Some people with schizophrenia may experience hallucinations—that is hearing, seeing, feeling, tasting or smelling something that is not really there. Most often, people hear voices that aren't really coming from another person. These voices often tell them to do things. To the person with schizophrenia these voices sound as real as any voice anyone hears. Some people with schizophrenia may have delusions. That is beliefs that are maintained even when faced with evidence that they are not true. So the person may feel extremely suspicious and think that everyone around them is trying to hurt them. The third typical symptom is disordered thinking. The person may talk to you in a way that sounds more like a free association than normal conversations.

Mood Disorder: People with a mood disorder might have bipolar disorder or they might have major depression. Bipolar disorder typically involves periods of extreme highs (mania) and then extreme lows (depression). The mania involves feeling euphoric with increased energy but also can lead to anxiety and irritability. The person may be very grandiose in his/her

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Perspectives on Living through Yoga

By Imani, owner of The Alchemy Juice Bar & Shiva Shakti Yoga Studio

According to the World Health Organization, depression affects about 121 million people worldwide and is the leading cause of disability among people from the ages of 15 to 44. Suicide statistics have continued to soar since the 40's, despite increases of psychotherapy, prescription drugs and public education.

The common use (and abuse) of prescription drugs is the fastest-growing category of health care expenditures. Two out of every three people leave a doctor visit with a prescription for drugs in their hands. Studies are now showing a decrease of psychotherapy since antidepressant drugs came on the market in the late 80's and an increase of dependence on these kinds of prescription drugs. Prescription drugs are "quick fixes" prescribed by doctors who have little time to spend with their patients and do not care to address the underlying issues of their depression. Drugs are not the solution for most people.

Interestingly enough, unlike other parts of the world, drug companies in the US are allowed to market their drugs, spending 2.5 billion advertising dollars a year. Some spend more on advertising than they do in research. This advertising accounts for over 8 million people on some form of antidepressant today. Many individuals use prescription drugs to alleviate anxiety, help them sleep or to keep them awake studying for that big test. Many people assume because the drugs are prescribed by a doctor that they are safe, yet many have long-term affects on the body as well as addictive qualities.

Not eating a healthy, balanced diet can also affect your overall health and wellness. Eating processed foods containing GMOs (genetically modified organisms), using artificial stimulants (such coffee and soda) or irregular sleep patterns can have an impact on both your mental and physical performances during the critical college years. For many, it is a time when we develop "bad habits" that carry forward into our future lives.

With a world full of stressful demands on our time, coupled with well-financed companies offering seductive safety nets and reality altering drugs, we have come too far away from the center of our lives and the earth. Many of us have never worked the earth, walked barefoot or planted seeds to grow plants. Beginning a core spiritual and physical practice that helps to realign our bodies and minds without artificial means starts true healing from the inside of ourselves.

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beliefs about him/herself and what s/he can accomplish. S/he may spend all his/her money on one item. The person may experience feelings of guilt or worthlessness, with decreased energy and a loss of hope. The person may show poor judgment and is more likely to abuse drugs or alcohol. The depression involves persistent sadness and feelings of emptiness and a lack of interest in things that used to make him/her happy. There are often changes in interest in sex, food, and sleep. The person may have thoughts of suicide or attempt suicide.

Major Depression is a feeling of sadness that lasts more than a few weeks and makes it difficult to function in daily life. Any of the symptoms listed above for depression are those that effect people with Major Depression.

Anxiety Disorders: Anxiety Disorders make people feel anxious, frightened or uncomfortable. They feel so uncomfortable that they cannot participate in everyday activities or in activities that they need to do to live their lives. Sometimes the feelings are so intense that the person becomes completely immobilized and has a panic attack. A Panic Attack includes sweating, trembling or shaking, shortness of breath, chest pain, heart racing, nausea, dizziness and a fear of losing control or of dying. Anxiety disorders include Generalized Anxiety Disorder which lasts at least six months and is a pervasive and excessive feeling of anxiety that might include inability to relax, inability to sleep, trembling, irritability, muscle tension, headache, sweating, lightheadedness, nausea or difficulty concentrating.

Panic Disorder is a disorder in which the person has panic attacks and then experiences intense worry about when the next attack might come.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder is made up of both obsessions and compulsions. Obsessions are unwanted thoughts that the person has and that last more than one hour a day or cause significant distress. The person knows the thought or idea is inappropriate or unreasonable but cannot stop thinking it, such as thoughts of causing harm to someone. Compulsions are repetitive behaviors that the person feels driven to do in order to reduce feelings of anxiety but that the person knows is unreasonable. This can include hand-washing, checking that doors are locked or ovens are off, or mental acts like counting or praying.

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can develop in anyone that has experienced a severe crisis, disaster, combat or life-threatening accident. People with PTSD may relive the trauma through intrusive thoughts or nightmares. They may avoid doing activities that remind them of the trauma, or avoid returning to the

scene. They may have increased feelings of anxiety, vigilance and watchfulness. They may have trouble sleeping or eating.

Phobias are intense fears. They can take the form of social phobia, an intense fear of social or public situations. They can also take the form of agoraphobia, a fear of being alone in a public place where it would be difficult to escape if needed. Finally, they can take the form of specific phobias, like a fear of dogs, insects, heights, etc. These fears are intense and include extreme anxiety or panic attacks. The person typically knows the fear is irrational but has no control over it.

Eating Disorders: There are several forms of eating disorders. They are serious and life-threatening. Anorexia typically involves a dramatic weight loss in a short period of time, wearing baggy clothes to hide body shape, an obsession with weight, body image, foods and exercise. Bulimia involves binge eating coupled with purging the food, either through vomiting, laxatives, over-exercising or spitting it out. You may notice friends making frequent trips to the bathroom after meals, visible food restriction, use of diet pills or laxatives, fear of eating around others or unusual food rituals (like cutting the food in tiny pieces). You may also notice hair loss, pale skin color, dizziness and headaches, low self-esteem, feeling cold, low blood pressure, loss of menstrual cycle, bruised knuckles, bloodshot eyes, mood swings and poor sleep patterns.

Compulsive Overeating and Binge Eating disorders involve a fear of not being able to control eating and not being able to stop once eating. The person may hide food in strange places, be on a chronic diet, have vague or secretive eating patterns, have shortness of breath or excessive sweating, have weight gain, mood swings, and poor sleeping habits. If you are worried that you are someone you know has one of these disorders, there are ways to get help.

If you think that someone is an imminent risk to themselves or others you should call 911. You can also call Campus Safety, x2222; Dean of Students, x2156; Counseling Center, x2415; Health Center, x2018, and the Women's Center, x2408.

There are several hotlines you can call for advice and help: Hartford crisis hotline/referrals: 211
National crisis hotline is 1-800-suicide: 24 hours

For assessment and crisis management at the Institute of Living you can call 545-7200 The online referral service is www.harthosp.org/prs/ They have specialty services for addiction, eating disorders, anxiety disorders, mood disorders and schizophrenia. For more info call:

- Mental Health Association of CT: 1-800-842-1501
- Local Overeaters Anonymous mtgs: www.oa.org

The natural by products of this practice we call yoga, are physical strength and flexibility, mental clarity and the ability to meditate, emptying the mind.

Beginning a regular yoga practice can bring positive results and will set in place good habits for your future. Yoga brings a sense of balance to our lives and once you have established a regular routine, you find yourself needing your "yoga fix." In time, our bodies learn to relax and we begin to reap the rewards of the practice.

Many people find relief from depression, post traumatic stress syndrome, insomnia, ADHD, panic disorders & anxiety as well as eating disorders with yoga. During a session, our heart rates slow down and we become conscious of the rhythm of our breathing. Our blood supply increases and washes through the various body systems. Inversions (upside down postures) change the flow of blood in our bodies and are known to be a natural way to alleviate depression. By the end of class we feel a greater sense of clarity and vitality in our bodies.

Through yoga, we strive to maintain a connection with all aspects of ourselves (mental, emotional & spiritual) as well as to the Greater Oneness of the Universe. A yoga practice simply reminds us that we are connected to all living things. Yoga postures (asanas) build strength in the body and maintain flexibility. This physical flexibility expands to mental flexibility and openness in the mind. Through meditation and savasana (final relaxation), we open our hearts to not only others, but ourselves as well.

Imani teaches Forrest Yoga classes at her studio, Shiva Shakti, adjacent to Trinity and extends a first class free offer to all interested students.

References:

www.alchemyvjuicebar.com (for a complete class schedule listing)

Forrest Yoga at **www.forrestyoga.com** (the style of yoga taught at Shiva Shakti)

www.mercola.com (for all things health related)

Yoga for Depression: A Compassionate Guide to Relieve Suffering through Yoga by Amy Weintraub

Learning How to Manage Stress

By Dr. Sarah Raskin

Stress affects everyone at some time or another. Unfortunately, college brings with it its own brand of stress. This includes living in a new environment, adjusting to new friends and professors, coping with classes and participating in other activities and learning to find time for it all. Not to mention the irrational pressure to get great grades, perform well in athletics and look perfect all the time. Exam time can be particularly brutal. So what is stress and what can you do about it?

Stress is the body's natural reaction to something considered threatening. That can be a mountain lion or an organic chemistry final, depending on your perspective. The result is that your nervous system increases those physiological functions that will help you either escape or fight the threat. That means your heart rate goes up, your respiration rate goes up, more blood flows to your muscles and less to your digestive system. So a little stress is a good thing. A lot of stress, of course, is not such a good thing. Over the short term it can lead to headaches, changes in appetite, irritability and difficulty concentrating. Over the long term it can lead to heart disease, chronic gastrointestinal problems, muscle spasms and auto-immune disorders. The secret is to harness a little bit of this stress when you need it and then let it go when you don't need it.

The first step is to have reasonable expectations. You can certainly expect to get an A or the equivalent in any class here at Trinity, but you won't get every question right on every exam you take. Nobody does. You won't ever look like the supermodels in the magazines. Nobody does—they don't even really look that way. Try to keep your goals and accomplishments in perspective.

Take care of yourself because stress also weakens the immune system. Eat balanced regular meals, get at least six hours of sleep at night, do a reasonable amount of exercise, and avoid foods high in sugar and caffeine as much as possible.

As finals approach, remember to start studying early and to take frequent breaks. It will help reduce your stress and is more productive than trying to cram information the day or two before. Get to exams early enough to sit and relax for a few minutes before the exam is passed out.

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There are many great ways to relax, including meditation. One technique is called progressive muscle relaxation. Sit in a comfortable chair, or lie down, in a quiet darkened room. Make sure your clothing is not tight. Start at your toes. Tighten them as hard as you can for 10 seconds. Then release them. Notice what it feels like when the muscles relax. Now move up to your feet and do the same thing. Continue through your legs, your abdomen, your fingers and arms. Slowly contract each set of muscles and then relax them becoming aware of the relaxation. In between every three or four, notice your breathing. Try to make your breathing as long and slow as possible. End up at your neck, your jaw, your eyes and your forehead. Then sit and breathe deeply for a few more minutes. Get up slowly—you might be a little disoriented but you should be very relaxed.

A Message From Your Counseling Center

By Dr. Randolph Lee

Director, Counseling Center, and Associate
Professor of Psychology

The Counseling Center at Trinity is a full service professional mental health resource for all students. In existence since 1963, the Counseling Center staff now includes two full time clinical psychologists, one half-time social worker, one full-time pre-doctoral intern, two consulting psychiatrists, and two or three advanced graduate student trainees. Students can be seen for confidential counseling in psychotherapy for an unlimited number of sessions in our new offices at 135 Allen Place (behind the Campus Safety parking lot).

Students seek counseling and therapy in the Counseling Center for a wide variety of issues and concerns ranging from homesickness, relationship issues, and academic difficulties to eating disorders, depression, and the full range of emotional difficulties.

Where medication is indicated as a part of the treatment, we have two consulting psychiatrists who are available for consultation for students who are in counseling or psychotherapy with a member of the Counseling Center staff.

The Center also runs various kinds of groups. This year, for example, we have a group on social skills, and we have had numerous workshops on study skills, stress reduction, eating issues, etc.

There are a number of myths about the Counseling Center that are worth dispelling. First, there is never a charge for any of the services at the Counseling Center. Students who are prescribed medications by our psychiatrists are responsible for the purchase of the medication and for filling the prescription, but none of

the therapy or consultation services themselves cost anything to the students.

Another myth we often hear has to do with availability. Though scheduling can be difficult if you request to see one particular counselor on one particular day at one particular time, in general, students will be able to see someone within a day or two at most, even more quickly if necessary. If you feel the situation is urgent, we will see you the same day. Every member of our staff has had experience with a wide range of emotional problems and conflicts, and if for some reason the counseling relationship doesn't work out with the person that someone is seeing, they can easily ask to see someone else in the Center.

The Center is completely confidential. No official college records exist of students being seen in the Counseling Center, and no information is given out to anyone (parents, faculty, administrators, or other students) without the student's written permission. This privileged communication is a legal protection, and so students can come to the Center with full assurance that their concerns will be treated with respect, seriousness, and full confidentiality.

We invite any student to stop by the Center even if you just want to come and visit or perhaps see the kind of services that we offer. You can email us through the Trinity website:

What's in a Drink? Perhaps More Than You Realize

By Dr. Carmen Santos

Assistant Director, Counseling Center

Alcohol; it's part of the college experience, or so they say. It can be difficult to make choices when it comes to moderation, if the message received is that a party is no fun unless you are in the same state of intoxication as everyone else. If you have ever been the designated driver or chaperone for friends who are drunk, you might think twice about that statement. In a world of abundant excesses it may difficult to imagine what moderation looks like. The unfortunate reality is that alcohol affects everyone differently at different times. So how choices are made about the amounts and types of consumption are very important. Binge drinking has become the most common way of drinking. About 42% of college students report that they are binge drinkers. *Pre-loading* or *pre-gaming* has become a way of dealing with the expense of buying drinks out, general availability or the limits set at certain functions. The problems and potential risks associated with binge drinking are often not recognized by those engaging in the behavior.

Binge drinking, simply stated, is consuming multiple drinks in a short period of time with the purpose of getting drunk quickly. On average it means five or more drinks for males and four or more for females. The effect can vary depending on what's considered an average size drink, body size, general health factors, tolerance levels, and more. It can be a deadly practice, leading to alcohol poisoning and accidental death. Alcohol is a major factor in about 40% of academic problems and has accounted for about 28% of college dropouts according to national surveys. It has also resulted in an increased number of personal injury and property damage, violence, sexual assault, unsafe sex and suicide. Often the amount of consumption is underestimated and this is not just a product of losing count after having a few. If you were to track your drinking habits for a week or two, you might be surprised to find out that what seems normal to you might be considered potentially problematic when examined closely. Alcohol affects judgment, decision making, motivation, motor reflexes and many other cognitive functions such as memory. Studies have even shown that the number of drinks consumed on a weekly basis can adversely affect grade point averages for college students. The Counseling Center presently has on display an informational bulletin board on drinking that anyone is welcome to drop by and check out.

Longitudinal studies launched by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) are focusing attention on the link between drinking and other mental health disorders as a way of understanding some of the causes of problematic drinking. The study to date has found that problem drinking peaks at younger ages than previously thought. The highest prevalence is among young adults ages 18 to 25. The results were published in *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* (Vol. 77, No. 2 pages 139-150). The study suggests that alcohol dependence can be seen as a developmental disorder among the young. The trends now show that drinking begins in much younger age groups. The study is finding that there is a high correlation between alcohol abuse, use of drugs and mental disorders. Studies have shown that one out of ten adults has a substance-use disorder and that one out of five Americans with substance abuse disorders also has a mood or anxiety disorder.

At the Counseling Center we see a growing number of students who may present with a variety of mental health issues and discover that substance use may play a significant role in some of their difficulties. This is why we prefer to take a more holistic approach to looking at the problems that our clients present, so that we can try and address the problems before there are serious relapse issues or other negative outcomes.

Given the stress inherent in being a college student and combining that with poor coping strategies for dealing with being away from home and new freedoms and choices, many students find themselves not able to appropriately self-monitor their substance use. At the Counseling Center we try to encourage moderation when mental health is at risk by educating our clients about the possible effects that substance use may have on them. Some of the more common effects are those seen in students who have pre-existing mood disorders like depression, manic-depressive disorder, and various forms of anxiety. The consumption of alcohol or other substances such as cocaine, ecstasy, and abuse of Ritalin or other stimulants can result in increased symptoms, lower the threshold for more serious mental health problems and is generally counter productive to the goals of being healthy and academically successful. We do not use labels with negative stereotypes, such as addict or alcoholic. However, we do encourage examination of use to determine if problematic patterns are developing. The choice remains with the individual student.

The services of the Counseling Center are free of charge to any Trinity College student and strictly confidential. We do not participate in the disciplinary policies of the college involved in regulating underage drinking or other substance use violations. Therefore, if you have ever tried to cut back on your use unsuccessfully, had someone express concern about your consumption or behavior while under the influence of alcohol or other substances, or if you simply have questions about your own use or are concerned about a friend or other significant person in your life, give us a call and we will be happy to talk with you.

Simply call our Office Manager, Kristina Cavaliere, at 297-2415 for an appointment with any one of us:
Randolph M. Lee, Ph.D., Director (2413)
Carmen I. Santos, Psy.D., Asst. Dir. (2414)
Laura Reiter, L.C.S.W. Therapist (2412)
Jaimie Kwassman, M.S., Pre-doctoral Intern (2419)

<http://www.trincoll.edu/StudentLife/HealthSafety/CounselingCenter>



What is Rape Trauma Syndrome (RTS)? By Laura Lockwood

Rape Trauma Syndrome (RTS) is the physical and emotional aftereffects of rape, and sexual assault: non-consensual sex. Rape is extremely traumatizing. All rape and sexual assault victims suffer physical and psychological aftereffects. Rape involves varying degrees of physical and psychological trauma. Aftereffects (may be weeks to months) can include: feelings of self-blame and guilt; depression and withdrawal from family and friends; mood swings; feelings of grief, shame, revenge; loss of appetite; fear of sex; fear of men; nightmares, sleep disorders; fear of being alone; and heightened anxiety.

If you or a friend is a victim of sexual assault or rape— please contact a SART (Sexual Assault Team Member) as soon as you can, so we can get you help.

SART - SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE TEAM *

Campus Safety x2222, 76 Vernon Street

Director: Charlie Morris

TCERT (TC Emergency Response Team): x2222

Student Peer Counselors

Emily Beman	x3427
Will Servos	x5149□
Meaghan Kilian	x3575, 978-505-1809 (Cell)
Christopher Giacalone	203-512-7755 (Cell)□
Lindsey Jordan	x2783
Rayn Sakaguchi (abroad now)	x5145
Kellie Copeland (abroad now)	x3382
Monica Sundri	x3508
Tanya Bulloch (abroad in fall)	x3291

Counseling Center x 2415, 135 Allen Place

Dr. Randy Lee. Dr. Carmen Santos. Laura Reiter

Dean of Students Office x2156, Hamlin/Cook

Dean Fred Alford; Assistant Deans: Ann Reuman, Chris Card

Women's Center x2408, Mather Hall, 2nd floor: Laura Lockwood

Health Center x2018, Wheaton Hall, First Floor: Martha Burke

Office of Campus Life x2305, Hamlin/Cook: Amy Howard, TJ Barber, x2049;
Laura DaRos, 2171

Chaplains: Dan Heischman, x2012; Michael Dolan, x2015; Lisa Kassow, x4195;
Sohaib Sultan, x5213

Office of Multicultural Affairs x4251, Hamlin/Cook: Karla Spurlock-Evans

First Year Program x5375, Jones: Margaret Lindsey, Pat Burns

Ferris Athletic Center, x2059, Ferris Athletic Center: Robin Sheppard

Off-Campus: Sexual Assault Hotlines: 1-888-999-5545 (English)

1-888-568-8332 (Spanish)

Hartford Police: 911

* <http://www.trincoll.edu/StudentLife/HealthSafety/CampusSafety/SART>