



# Depression and Anxiety

Rochester Recreation Club for the Deaf

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# Supporters

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- University of Rochester's Center for Community Health
- Rochester Recreation Club for the Deaf (“REAP”)

# Overview

- What is depression and anxiety?
- How common is depression and anxiety?
- Symptoms and signs of depression and anxiety
- Prevention
- Treatments

# How Common Is It? (Prevalence)

- Depression
  - 17-21 million Americans with depression
  - 1 in 20 people have significant depression
  - Affects females, African-Americans, poor, “Baby Boomers” more than other groups

# What is Depression?

- Feeling sad or hopeless for weeks at a time
- Feelings of guilt
- Feeling negative about yourself
- Not interested in fun stuff
- Avoiding friends and family



# Depressed?

- Yes- if feeling sad or depressed for most of the time
- No- if only sad for a short time (e.g. a friend died)
- Common Symptoms of Depression
  - Can't sleep
  - Not interested in fun stuff
  - Feel inferior or worthless
  - Tired all the time
  - Can't concentrate
  - Eating a lot more or a lot less
  - Feeling sluggish or weak
  - Suicidal thoughts

# Seasonal Affective Disorder

- “Winter Blues”
- Occurs when there is less sun
- Same as depression
- Goes away when warmer weather returns



# Post-Partum Depression

- Occurs after having a baby
- Same as depression
- Can affect relationship with mother and baby

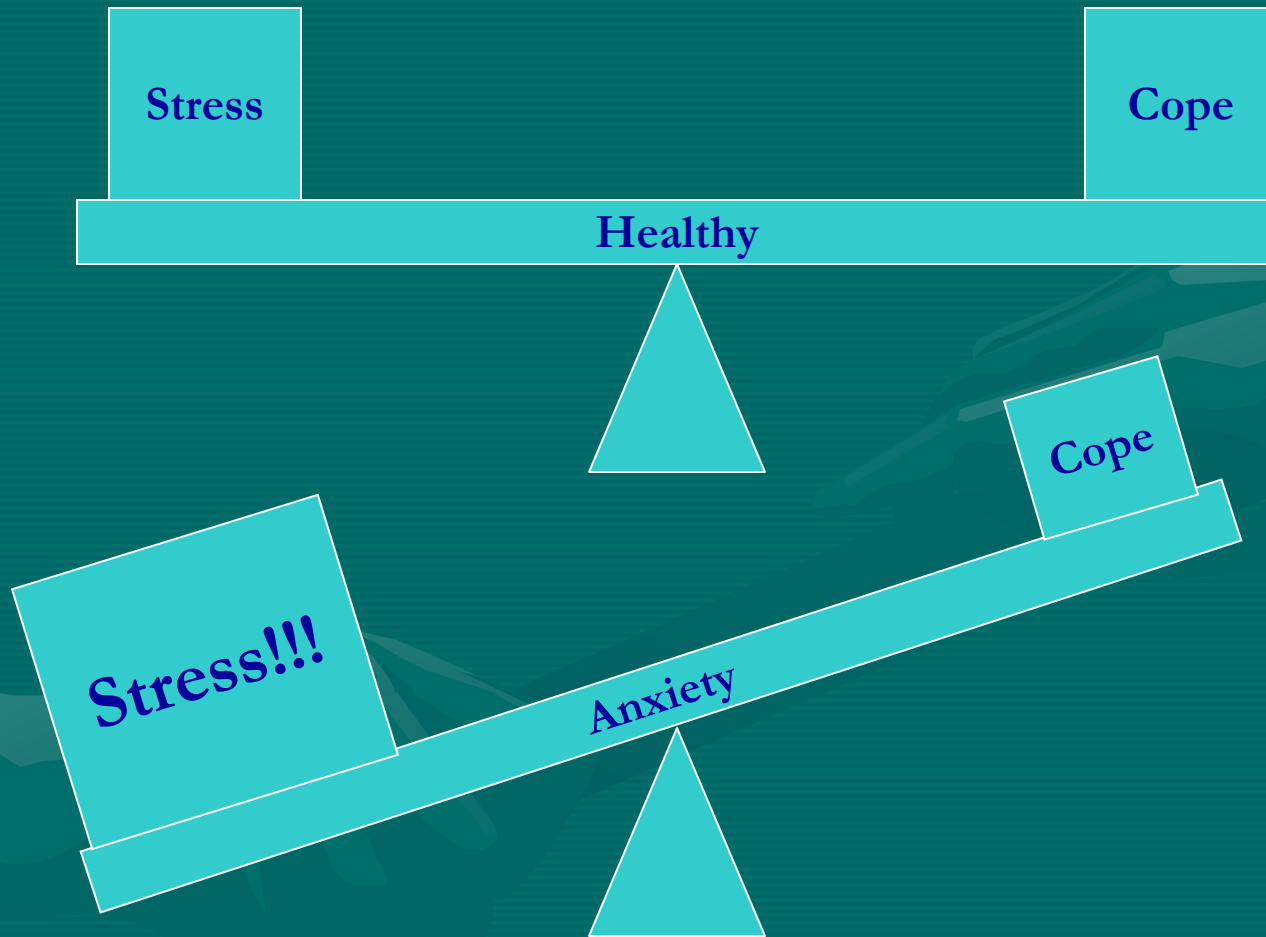
# What is Anxiety?

- Generalized anxiety disorder
- Social anxiety
- Panic attacks
- Phobias



[http://endanxietydisorder.com/blog/images/overcome\\_anxiety.jpg](http://endanxietydisorder.com/blog/images/overcome_anxiety.jpg)

# Stress versus Anxiety



# Depression and Anxiety

- Deaf and hard of hearing have higher rates of depression and anxiety when compared to hearing peers (Kvam et al., 2006)
  - Below are those who responded quite a bit or extremely to 3 of the questions in the survey- a) fearful; b) hopeless; c) blue (depressed)

	Deaf	Hearing
Fearful	10%	1%
Hopeless	21%	4%
Blue	20%	2%

# Mental Health Disparities

- Higher rates of mental health issues due to:
  - Social isolation
  - Language barriers
  - Higher risk for emotional distress (Turner & Beiser 1990)
  - Lack of specialized treatment approaches

# Abuse

- Deaf and hard of hearing children are more likely to be victims of physical, emotional and sexual abuse (Knutson et al., 2004; Kvam, 2004; Sullivan & Knutson, 2000)
  - Potential abusers seek out children with (Conte et al., 1989):
    - Low self-esteem
    - Poor or few good peer relations
    - Small possibilities to tell about the abusive event

# Abuse

- Deaf children have 2-3 times higher risk than hearing children (Kvam, 2004; Sullivan et al., 1987)
  - Risk for children with disabilities is doubled (Chamberlain et al., 1984)
- Gender distribution Differences:
  - Sexual abuse with deaf females and males are more equally represented (Sullivan et al., 1987)

# Suicides

- No reliable data available
- Yet it does appear that deaf individuals are at higher risk for suicide tries (attempts)
  - deaf and hard of hearing women had increased suicide tries compared with hearing females (Samar & O'Hearn- in press)
  - Suicide tries rates among deaf school and college students in the previous year varied from 1.7% to 18% (Turner, 2006)

# Suicides

- Reasons for suicide thoughts: family and relationship issues (Boyechko, 1992)
- Reasons for suicidal behavior: decreased social support (Boyechko, 1992) and more likely to be depressed (Turner, 2006)

# Strategies

- Provide educational programs and talks on healthy relationships
- Encourage family members to sign even in private discussions
- Provide deaf mentors and deaf coaches

# Preventive Strategies

- Exercise (body makes endorphins)
- Sunlight or light boxes (helpful for the “winter blues”)
- Healthy diet
  - Fish (omega 3 fatty acids)
  - Vegetables and fruits
  - Whole grains
  - Plenty of water

# Counseling

- Deaf Wellness Center offers counseling in American Sign Language
  - All of the counselors are fluent in ASL
  - Can provide therapy to help with a variety of mental health needs
- Contact Amanda O'Hearn at [amanda\\_ohearn@urmc.rochester.edu](mailto:amanda_ohearn@urmc.rochester.edu)

# Medications

- Anti-depressants  
(common choices)
  - Prozac (fluoxetine)
  - Zoloft (sertraline)
  - Celexa (citalopram)
  - Paxil (paroxetine)
- Anti-anxiety medications  
(common choices)
  - Same as anti-depressants
  - Benzodiazepams
    - Xanax
    - Valium
    - Ativan

# Get Help!

- Depression can affect the following:
  - Your relationships with loved ones
  - Your quality of life
  - Your work performance
  - And your heart!
- Depression doubles your risk for heart disease!

\*<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/03/090304182113.htm>: Washington University School of Medicine. "Depression Increases Risk For Heart Disease More Than Genetics Or Environment." ScienceDaily 5 March 2009)

# Questions?

- Thank you for coming!
- Next Deaf Health Talk will be on Thursday, March 25 at 7 pm!
- Location: Rochester Recreation Club for the Deaf