



Melissa has been practicing in the field of mental health and substance abuse for the past 10 years. She received her undergraduate education at the University of Nebraska—Lincoln and completed her graduate work at Arizona State University. She has experience in State and local governmental organizations, hospitals, community mental health, corrections, and private practice.

Growing up and currently ranching with her family on their ranch in Central Nebraska, Melissa has an understanding of the unique challenges and strengths of rural life. She combines her urban knowledge and experience with her rural roots to provide quality, professional, individualized services.

# Sandhills Sense

## *Real Help for Real People!*

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

MAY 1, 2007

## Depression and You

“Why doesn’t she just pull herself up by her boot straps and go on?” We have all heard, thought, or even said this very statement about someone in our lives, and although easy to say, much harder to do, and even an unrealistic expectation in some cases. Many times what we are talking about when we find ourselves making these statements is depression.

It is normal to have a bad day or even a bad week, but what differentiates this from a depressive disorder is the severity and longevity of these feelings. Depression is a common, serious and costly illness that affects 1 in 10 adults in the U.S. each year and costs the Nation between \$30 - \$44 billion annually. Many costs of these disorders are immeasurable, as marriages, families, children, employers and

many other people are affected by depression in one way or another. The longer it goes untreated, the more costly it is to the individual and their loved ones.



Though 80% of depressed people can be effectively treated, nearly two out of three of those suffering from this illness do not seek or receive appropriate treatment. Thanks to years of research producing both medications and therapies that foster high success rates, positive outcomes with treatment is a reality. Medication, therapy, or a combination of both can be life altering for someone suffering from depression. Those who are hesitant to take

medications can sometimes fully recover with therapy alone, depending on the severity of the illness.

It has been my experience that many people don’t recognize the symptoms of depression, realize that these symptoms are treatable, or get help when they should. Depression is not a sign of weakness or a passing blue mood. Without treatment, depression can last for weeks, months, or years. The longer it goes untreated, the more susceptible a person is to future bouts with depression and the more severe these depressive experiences can be. So getting help is very important!

The National Institute of Mental Health lists the following as common symptoms of depression. (continued on next page)

# Depression and You (continued)



The National Institute of Mental Health lists the following as common symptoms of depression.

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood
- Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities that were once enjoyed, including sex
- Decreased energy, fatigue, being "slowed down"
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
- Insomnia, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping

- Appetite and/or weight loss or overeating and weight gain
- Thoughts of death or suicide; suicide attempts
- Restlessness, irritability
- Persistent physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment, such as headaches, digestive disorders, and chronic pain

If someone is experiencing three or more of these symptoms, it is important to talk to your doctor or get an evaluation from a local mental health provider. Most insurances, Medicaid and Medicare cover mental health treatment. In addition, the Nebraska Counseling, Outreach and Mental Health Therapy (COMHT) program is designed to make cost-free, confidential

mental health counseling available to persons in rural areas. The program is not limited to farmers. Any rural person in an agricultural related profession can apply. This includes farm family members, people working in agriculture-related businesses and small town businesses dependent on the agricultural economy, and other rural residents. To access these services you can call the Nebraska's Farm Hotline at 1-800-464-0258.

**Assistance in paying for mental health services can be found at Nebraska's Farm Hotline at 1-800-464-0258**

## Would you like to feature Sandhills Sense in your publication?

Melissa is dedicated to improving rural lives through education and involvement in rural communities. Her articles discuss common problems with a common sense approach.

Sandhills Sense is currently featured in rural publications in Nebraska. If you would like to include "Sandhills Sense" in your publication, please contact Melissa at

Midwest Country Clinic, LLC Box 104  
Bassett, Nebraska 68714  
melissa@midwestcountryclinic.com  
<http://www.midwestcountryclinic.com>

**Real Help for Real People!**