

# Coming

A very common emotional disorder, depression affects 13-14 million in the U.S. each year. Only 20% will get the help they need.

*Written by Robin Rettie*

What do Hillary Clinton, the Judds, the late Ted Kennedy have in common? Depression – a form of mental illness. If not addressed, depression can lead to serious complications. Through compassionate understanding and education depression can be controlled. In order to do that, the stigma linked to the diagnosis of mental illness has to change.

## Amanda's Story

Local resident Amanda\* suffers from Clinical Depression. A once very outgoing, self determined individual, she found herself

quickly spiraling out of control in her forties. Sudden thoughts of wanting to die prompted her to seek help. "I ended up with four different diagnosis' and four different medications," says Amanda. "I spent six years trying to recover from what was actually Clinical Depression."

In those six years, Amanda attempted suicide three times and was hospitalized each time. "One of the most difficult issues for me to deal with was the way it messed with my faith. My joy, my love for life, all of it was gone. I thought, 'I must not be close to God. I must be doing something wrong'. I was completely lost," she says.

# Out of the Dark

## Reaching Out for Help

Although Amanda's doctor was applying psychoanalysis as part of her treatment, it wasn't effective. "Psychoanalysis was not the therapy I needed. It required me to look into my past. I needed to learn to deal with my present day thoughts and how to control them. Although my past had a part in my depression, it also came about genetically."

Amanda's last hospital stay was for six weeks at Menninger's International Psychiatric Hospital in Houston. During her stay, she was weaned from all medications and introduced to Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). To this day, she continues to take a controlled amount of medicine and attends DBT therapy weekly. She has been stable for a year and is enjoying life. "My family supported me all the way through. Without them, I would not have made it. People shouldn't shy away from depressed people. Love them; help them; offer them hope", she encourages.

## Involving the Family

Glenn Urbach, Executive Director of Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of Greater Houston (DBSA) says, "Our National Organization is the largest in the country. We address the entire family, as usually one or more family members

become the psychiatrist for the family. Having the family involved in the care is necessary."

DBSA of Greater Houston joined with its national organization this year to launch Blueprint for Hope, a six-city tour to promote public awareness. Paige Hemmis, celebrity from Extreme Makeover: Home Edition, shares her personal experience with depression, as she makes her way to the six cities. "DBSA's goal is to encourage people who are suffering to go to the doctor. People should not be intimidated by the stigma that is attached to mental illness", urges Urbach.

Clinical research suggests that depression may be genetic, as studies of twins demonstrate. A combination of medication and therapy, and family support is most important. However, much consideration should be given to the type of therapy, and the type and amount of medication prescribed. As DBSA's message of hope is spread throughout the United States, one can find comfort in knowing there truly is hope. It is one of the fruits of the spirits that is always alive. CFM

\*'Amanda' is a pseudonym for privacy reasons.

*ROBIN RETTIE an Educational Advocate and Consultant, consults with families whose children suffer from depression. educationaladvocate.net.*

Experts say teen girls get depressed more than boys. About 1 in 8 teens will struggle with depression.



## What's the Cause?

Although trauma, loss of a loved one, a difficult relationship, or any stressful situation may trigger a depressive episode, that's not always the case. Subsequent depressive episodes may occur with or without a trigger. Depression usually stems from a combination of genetic, biochemical, environmental, and psychological factors. Some types of depression tend to run in families, but depression can occur in people without any family history as well.

# Signs of Depression


Seek professional help if you see a combination of these warning signs.

- Persistent sad, anxious, or empty mood
- Loss of interest or pleasure in ordinary activities
- Decreased energy, fatigue
- Sleep problems
- Eating problems
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- Hopeless, pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness
- Thoughts of death or suicide or suicide attempt
- Irritability
- Excessive crying
- Recurring aches and pains that don't respond to treatment




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### **DBSA**

(Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance)  
Sundays 6 p.m.  
Cypress Bible Church  
11711 Cypress N Houston, Cabin B

### **Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance**

[dbsahouston.org](http://dbsahouston.org)

### **Cohen Associates, PA**

[path2solutions.com](http://path2solutions.com)

### **Endocrine and Psychiatry Center**

[mbug.com](http://mbug.com)

### **Interface-Samaritan Counseling Centers**

[interface-samaritan.org](http://interface-samaritan.org)

### **Louis P. Anderson**

21216 N.W. Fwy.  
281-256-6983

### **DePelchin Children's Center**

[depelchin.org](http://depelchin.org)

### **Carole & Ronald Krist Samaritan Center**

[samaritanhouston.org](http://samaritanhouston.org)

### **Cypress United Methodist Church**

[cypress-umc.org](http://cypress-umc.org)



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