Major Depressive Disorder is a clinical diagnosis that is given to individuals when their experience of being depressed results in a number of issues with functioning, overall outlook on life, and an inability to enjoy the positive aspects of life. These feelings and the effects associated with them are considered to be in excess of what would be considered “normal” and lead to significant dysfunction or distress in the person’s daily living.

There are no formal medical tests or laboratory tests that can interpret specific biological signs in individuals to determine if their emotional states have become pathological. For example, there are no neuroimaging tests, blood tests, x-rays, etc., that can be used to diagnose major depressive disorder in anyone. Instead, the diagnosis of major depressive disorder (as is the case with the majority of mental health disorders) can only be made by a licensed professional mental health clinician, such as a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, etc.

The diagnosis is made based on a number of behavioral signs and symptoms that are observed during a formal assessment of the person’s behavior and functioning. These signs and symptoms must occur for a minimum of two weeks and cannot be better explained by other factors, such as another mental health disorder, some physical problem or medical disorder, or as a direct result of using some drug. Individuals who have co-occurring conditions will experience exacerbations of both issues, as these conditions tend to “feed off” one another. An individual with a substance use disorder will consume more of their substance of abuse, and this will lead to a greater number of functional impairments, which can lead to greater issues with clinical depression, etc.

Someone with a major depressive disorder may become isolated, pessimistic, and self-destructive, and this can lead to increased substance abuse, which in turn will exacerbate the negative symptoms of clinical depression, etc. It is long been known that when individuals are diagnosed with co-occurring disorders, it is not possible to focus on treating one disorder and hope that the other will resolve as a result of one disorder being treated. Instead, clinicians recognize that individuals need both disorders to be treated concurrently in order for them to be successful in recovery.

MSH CHRISTMAS SERVICE
Tuesday, December 17 at 1:30.

We are looking for staff who would like to participate in “The Gathering Christmas Service”. If you are interested in helping, please give me a call or email me ASAP!

Chaplain Howie, 7436. Thank you!

Welcome New Employees!
Back L to R: Meredith Heitz, SLP; Ashley Reynolds, BHRA; J. Faith Bowen, BHRA; Greggory Kyle Sullivan, BHRA; Gabriona Callis, Housekeeper; Katelyn Lyon, BHRA.
Front L to R: Abigail Pearson, BHRA; Brooke Griffin, BHRA.

Tips for Coping with Christmas After Loss

- Talk to your friends and family.
- Schedule time in the day to perform a small ritual in memory of your loved one.
- Plan at least one thing during the day just for YOU.
- Ask for support from friends.
- Don’t be a martyr.
- Don’t beat yourself up if you feel sad and depressed or cry.
- Try and find an inspirational reading or poem.
- Avoid numbing your pain with alcohol.
- Do try to have fun.
Italian Sugar Cookies

Ingredients
- 1 cup butter at room temp
- 2 cups sugar
- 3 eggs
- 2 heaping teaspoons vanilla
- 15 ounces ricotta cheese
- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda

Icing
- 1 container store bought vanilla frosting
- colorful sprinkles

Instructions
In large mixing bowl, place butter, sugar, eggs, and vanilla. Mix well with electric mixer until fully combined. Add ricotta and mix again until incorporated.

Add flour, salt, and baking soda. Beat again until fully incorporated and a dough is formed. Dough will be soft and sticky.

Using a cookie dough scoop or two spoons, drop by tablespoons full onto greased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for about 10 minutes, or until lightly browned around bottom edges. Remove from oven and allow to cool completely.

Remove lid and foil seal from can of frosting and microwave for about thirty seconds. Stir. Gently spread a little icing on top of each cookie and sprinkle with sprinkles of choice before icing sets.

DIY String Light Christmas Card Display

All you need are some command hooks, your favorite twinkle lights, and whatever clips you want to use to hang up your Christmas cards and photos on a wall or door.