Parents are invited to attend a seminar and discussion on

Preventing Depression in Children and Adolescents

For parents of all year levels

Monday 20 July
7.00pm – 8.30pm
TCW Theatre
St Leonard’s College
163 South Road, Brighton East

Dr Michael Gordon is a highly regarded child and adolescent psychiatrist with extensive experience working with families and schools. He is a consultant psychiatrist and Head of Unit at Monash University. Michael will present some essential things parents can do to prevent their child developing depression. In this age of rising rates of depression this is vital information for every parent.

Please register your interest in attending this seminar at www.stleonards.vic.edu.au/events

For further information or any queries with regards to this workshop, please contact Dr Deb Trengove at the College on 9909 9382.

For booking enquiries contact events@stleonards.vic.edu.au
Eight steps toward preventing depression in your daughter and son

20th July 2015
Words for depression

sad, saddened, unhappy, gloomy, glum, melancholy, miserable, sorrowful, dejected, disconsolate, downhearted, downcast, cast down, down, crestfallen, woebegone, despondent, dispirited, low, low in spirits, low-spirited, heavy-hearted, morose, dismal, desolate, weighed down, oppressed.

Michael Gordon July 2015
What flags possible depression?
Symptoms that might flag depression…

- Withdrawn into their room, withdrawal from friends
- Prolonged sadness, cranky, moody, increase in anger
- Loss of appetite, loss of weight, increase in appetite (comfort eating)
- Hard to concentrate
- Drop off in school marks
- Poor self-esteem
- Guilty thoughts
- Suicidal thoughts, self-harm
- Can’t see things getting better in the future

Michael Gordon July 2015
Psychological Symptoms

- Worthlessness, guilt, lethargy
- Suicidal ideas, plans, attempts

Mood Symptoms

- Irritability, lowered mood, loss of pleasure, withdrawal

Biological Symptoms

- Sleep disturbance, weight change, appetite change

Depressive Symptoms

- Michael Gordon July 2015
Depression exists on a continuum
Depressive Spectrum

Major depression

Minor depression

Suicidal ideas

No depression

Michael Gordon July 2015
How common is depression?
Depression - epidemiology

Major depressive disorder is

- < 1% pre-schoolers
- 2% primary school children (Male/Female = 1:1)
- 5 to 9% adolescents (M/F = 1:2)
- 10 to 20% adults (M/F = 1:2)
Genetics - Heritability

• Major Depressive Disorder 40%
Genetics - Heritability

- Major Depressive Disorder 40%
- Panic Disorder 40 - 50%
- Alcohol Dependence 50 – 60%
- Anorexia Nervosa 55%
- Bulimia Nervosa 60%
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder 60 – 70%
- Bipolar Affective Disorder 60-85%
- Schizophrenia 70-85%
- Autism 90%
Major depressive disorder

- Runs an episodic course, often arising in adolescence.
- Lasts 8 months clinically and 1 to 2 months non-clinical adolescents.
- Major depression remits (i.e. it goes away) in 80 to 90%, BUT in half it comes back later in adolescence or adult life.
Adolescent depression

Factors:
- Low self-esteem
- Anxiety
- Depressive thoughts
- Stresses
- Family history depression
- Hormonal changes
- Abuse, bullying

Factors acting as protective barriers:
- Self-efficacy
- Social supports
- Problem-solving
- Psycho-education
- Other resilience factors

Michael Gordon 2015
Anxiety and depression...
Anxiety

Depression

45%
Words for anxiety

worry, concern, apprehension, apprehensiveness, consternation, uneasiness, unease, fearfulness, fear, disquiet, disquietude, perturbation, fretfulness, agitation, angst, nervousness, nerves, edginess, tension, tenseness, stress, misgiving, trepidation, foreboding, suspense,...
Symptoms that flag anxiety...

- Frequent school absences,
- Not attending school, frequently physically sick/unwell, in sick bay
- Drop off in school performance,
- Won’t present in front of the class,
- Capable but avoids presenting work,
- Excessively worried, excessive need for reassurance, unrealistic worries,
- Lots of physical symptoms (headache, tummy aches),
- Checking, washing, counting, touching.
What is normal?
Adult mood fluctuations

High mood

Normal adult

Depressed mood

Days - weeks

Michael Gordon July 2015
Mood fluctuations

High mood

Depressed adult

Depressed mood

Days - weeks
Normal adolescent Mood fluctuations
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Emotional State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>English class</td>
<td>Negative</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4:00</td>
<td>To stands now, helps friend</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5:00</td>
<td>School hall, in fight with class friend</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>Still worried about fight with friend</td>
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<td>8:14</td>
<td>Meals, in depression</td>
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<td>On bed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>11:16</td>
<td>Gym</td>
<td>Positive</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2:05</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>4:20</td>
<td>Basketball game</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7:40</td>
<td>Watching &quot;Ghost Story&quot; with sister</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8:14</td>
<td>Watching &quot;Family Feud&quot; with dad and sister</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8:42</td>
<td>Pipe assembly</td>
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<td>10:05</td>
<td>Greater education class</td>
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<td>11:54</td>
<td>Hall with friends</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2:44</td>
<td>English class</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3:44</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>9:36</td>
<td>At pizza place with friends</td>
<td>Negative</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11:00</td>
<td>Watching TV with siblings, parents fight</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1:14</td>
<td>In car with mother</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2:44</td>
<td>Accepts when excused, sicking about parent</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2:42</td>
<td>In car with mother</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6:13</td>
<td>Watching TV with mother</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6:42</td>
<td>My GHD is sick, can't be at Pr school</td>
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<td>8:19</td>
<td>Trying to talk to mom about high school</td>
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<td>11:00</td>
<td>Sitting crying, my mother and I hate a fight</td>
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<td>Just got in car, argy with mother</td>
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<td>Sunday</td>
<td>2:41</td>
<td>Atスーパーマーケット with mother</td>
<td>Negative</td>
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<td>4:35</td>
<td>In kitchen, typing</td>
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<td>6:04</td>
<td>Doing dishes</td>
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<td>8:00</td>
<td>In kitchen, typing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>Watching TV with family</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7:24</td>
<td>Getting hair</td>
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<td>Monday</td>
<td>7:44</td>
<td>Watching TV, think at home</td>
<td>Negative</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10:12</td>
<td>Watching &quot;All My Children&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12:28</td>
<td>Watching &quot;Ghost Story&quot;</td>
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<td>1:14</td>
<td>In kitchen, typing</td>
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<td>4:00</td>
<td>Trying on clothes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4:54</td>
<td>Watching &quot;Hear's Company&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7:15</td>
<td>At GHD, taking to think about sexual problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>8:44</td>
<td>Driving to school</td>
<td>Negative</td>
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<td>11:21</td>
<td>Gym</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Positive</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7:58</td>
<td>Watching TV</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9:24</td>
<td>Watching TV</td>
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<td>Gym</td>
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<td>Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>11:24</td>
<td>Riding home</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1:12</td>
<td>Talking with mother</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adolescent emotional development and the emergence of depressive disorders (p.11)
Michael Gordon July 2015
Depressed adolescent mood regulation

Depressed adolescent

Michael Gordon July 2015
Depressed adolescent mood regulation
Why are teenagers stressed (and what gets them depressed)?
Why are teenagers stressed (and what gets them depressed)?

1. Psychosocial challenges/tasks
2. Adolescent thinking
3. Adolescent risk-taking
4. Adolescent coping styles
5. Non-verbal communication
Biological changes in adolescence

• Testosterone (male hormone), oestrogen & progesterone (female hormones)
• Negotiate sexual/intimacy relationships
Adolescent challenges

• Separation from parents
• Finding their identity
  – Who am I?
  – What is happening to my body?
• Adolescent thinking
  – Seeking immediate rewards
  – Problems dealing with failure,
    disappointments
  – Risk-taking behaviours
Adolescent thinking

- I’m at the center of the universe.
- I’m the most important person in the room.
- It’s all about me, me, me. Did I mention it is about me?
- I am not important.
- Everyone else is doing well, and I am not.
- I am the least important person.
- Even my father is more successful than me.
- I will not achieve anything in this life.
I feel so insignificant.

Michael Gordon July 2015

http://www.thethingswesay.com/i-feel-so-insignificant/
Risk taking behaviour
“the bigger the risk... the more the fun...”

https://www.flickr.com/photos/geishaboy500/2911898326/in/photolist-
Michael Gordon July 2015
Adolescent brain

In adolescence:

• Increased accidents
• Increased experimentation
• Increased risk-taking
• Increased novelty-seeking
Risk taking

• e.g. unprotected sex and unplanned pregnancies, sexting, self-harm, smoking cigarettes, use of illicit drugs & alcohol, riding in car with an intoxicated driver, shoplifting.

• Evaluation of risks vs reward differs from adults.

• Increased in the presence of peers, i.e. the adolescent will take more risks in the presence of peers than alone (e.g. drinking, driving).
In the adolescent brain the wiring is such that:

- The social risk center (the bit that says *just do it, its cool!* ) matures faster than the brake (the bit that says *do I really want to do that?*).
Risk vs reward imbalance
Risk vs reward imbalance
Adolescent brain

- Frontal lobe is still under construction in adolescence
- Frontal lobe is very vulnerable to stress (i.e. it shuts down when stressed)
- Differential maturation (i.e. different parts of the brain develop at different rates)
Frontal lobe
Role of the frontal lobe

• Highly evolved, larger in humans than other animals
• Planning
• Judgement
• Personality
• Problem solving
• The brake
• Concentration
• Prefrontal cortex, seat of personality?

Michael Gordon July 2015
The frontal lobe and the Lions on the Savannas
Parents as the young person’s frontal lobes

Michael Gordon July 2015
How do adolescents deal with disappointments?
Ways of dealing with big emotions

Mature/adult way
• Talk to someone
• Ask for advice
• Seek comfort from a responsible adult
• Exercise
• Telephone a friend
• Go out shopping, film, coffee

Immature/child way
• Bullying parents, siblings
• Arguing
• Put others down
• Throw stuff around the room

from The regulation of Emotions Questionnaire, Phillips & Power
Ways of dealing with big emotions…2

**Mature/adult way**
- Review goals or plans
- Decide to do better in the future
- Get perspective (on the situation)
- Concentrate on positives

**Immature/child way**
- Harm or punish myself
- Dwell on feelings
- Keep feelings locked up inside

from The regulation of Emotions Questionnaire, Phillips & Power
How do children & adolescents communicate?
Non-verbal communication
Non-verbal communication
What to do?
Family is a safe place
The child is the most anxious person in the room
Big emotions come as waves
80% of life is turning up
Parents need to work together

Michael Gordon July 2015
Importance of parents managing their own reactions

• Children and adolescents are able to put strong feelings into those around them, especially their parents.

• The child often attempts to control the situation.

• Need for the parent to avoid (as much as humanly possible) becoming upset or angry when the young person has an (emotional) tantrum.
Parents are like an (emotional) petrol station…
Netball; if you need...
Parents as the young person’s frontal lobes
Setting appropriate limits
Children need to experience disappointments
Parents need to model good behaviour
Explain that anxiety is a false alarm
Comfort zone

Stretch zone

Danger zone

Michael Gordon July 2015
Menu

• Massage from mum
• Tell mum
• Exercise
• Bath
• Shower
• Read a book
• Tantrum (not a good idea)
• …
Eight steps toward preventing depression and anxiety in your child

1. Mum and dad need to work together.
Eight steps toward preventing depression and anxiety in your child

1. Mum and dad need to work together.
2. The parents are less anxious than the child/teenager.
Eight steps toward preventing depression and anxiety in your child

1. Mum and dad need to work together.
2. The parents are less anxious than the child/teenager.
3. Understand the anxiety or depression in your child as a non-verbal communication (what is their message?).
Eight steps toward preventing depression and anxiety in your child

1. Mum and dad need to work together.
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4. You need to use your frontal lobe (problem solver) to assist your child.
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5. Ensure that your child is sleeping well. No screens or phones in the bedroom.
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Michael Gordon July 2015
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7. Take your own pulse and look after yourself.

Michael Gordon July 2015
Eight steps toward preventing depression and anxiety in your child

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5. Ensure that your child is sleeping well. No screens or phones in the bedroom.
6. Make sure that they get regular exercise and eat well.
7. Take your own pulse and look after yourself.
8. Seek out professional help when you are not winning.