



Thao Nguyen Foundation Inc. Newsletter

14th Issue
July 2019

TOGETHER, WE BRING LIGHT TO MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Greetings from the President

Nhung Hendy

I hope you all are well. As you know, it has been six years since the foundation was established. According to studies published in the Non-profit Times, one in five non-profit organizations ceased to exist during their first five years because of various reasons, but mostly due to lack of financial capital. The fact that we have continued operation after six years is a success. But I admit that we are facing tremendous difficulties this year in fund-raising. We have seen a significant drop in donations probably due to the American Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (2017), which took effect last year where many donors were unable to itemize their charitable donations. Almost all our raised capital so far this year comes from committed donors through automatic checking account deduction. My heart-felt thanks for your continued support.

I am happy to report that we awarded two \$1,000 scholarships to Jack Felts (pictured right) from Loch Raven High school and a student from Drexel University who is yet to be decided as of my writing of this column. Jack will attend Towson University this fall majoring in music. Our best wishes are with Jack as he embarks on his college journey.

We are going to sponsor another Art Show in partnership with the Art Department at Towson University. The date is yet to be

finalized due to the difficulty in getting a venue, but I hope that we will be able to agree on a date soon. Please stay tuned as we will announce the date in our next newsletter. I hope some of you will be able to showcase your talent in art and photography at that event.

In this newsletter, I hope you will enjoy some of the photographs my husband Ted Hendy took while we visited Yellowstone National park this year. Looking at those pictures truly inspires and motivates me to maintain my mental health. I hope you'll be able to experience that motivation by enjoying the beauty of nature. As usual, we summarize some of the most recent research findings on mental illness.

Please consider supporting the foundation if you have not done so. Your support will not only help us fund scholarships at Loch Raven High and Drexel University in Thao's memory, but also support outreach activities at events such as Out of the Darkness walk and Art show to raise mental health awareness and suicide prevention. Thank you and have a safe and enjoyable summer.

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Jack Felts

Upcoming events

1. Howard County Out of the Darkness Walk by AFSP – Sunday (9/28/2019) – Lake Elkhorn, Columbia MD 21045
2. Baltimore Out of the Darkness Walk by AFSP – Sunday (10/6/2019) – Rash Field/Inner Harbor, Baltimore MD 21230

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The Grand Prismatic Spring, Yellowstone National Park



Lower Falls, Grand Canyon, Yellowstone National Park



Old Faithful Geyser in eruption, Yellowstone National Park



Snow Egret, Chincoteague Island, VA
Photo credit: Ted Hendy

IF YOU WANT TO CONTRIBUTE AN ARTICLE

Contact Nhung Hendy,
President, TN Foundation Inc.
nhung@tnscholarshipforthearts.org
410-663-0207

Is social network site usage related to depression?

Facebook depression is defined as feeling depressed upon too much exposure to social networking sites. It is proposed that upward social comparison made on social networking sites are the key to the Facebook depression phenomenon. Four meta-analyses were conducted by four researchers from the University of South Florida to quantify this effect. Their findings were published in *Journal of Affective Disorder*, January Issue of 2019. They found that greater time spent on social networking sites (across 33 studies) and frequency of checking such sites (across 12 studies) were related to higher levels of depression, albeit the effect size was small.

Further, higher levels of depression were related to greater general social comparison (comparing oneself to others) and upward social comparison (comparing oneself to those better than oneself) based on 5 studies with small to medium effect sizes. Both general comparison and upward social comparison were found to be more strongly related to depression than was time spent on social networking sites.

Is cognitive behavioral therapy effective in treating depression in children and adolescents?

Depression contributes 2% of total reported illness worldwide. A first onset of depressive symptoms is common in adolescence, necessitating early prevention. However, trials of preventive interventions for depression in children and adolescence show conflicting results. A group of researchers from Sweden conducted a meta-analysis investigating the effectiveness of group-based cognitive behavioral therapy as a preventive intervention targeting depressive symptoms in children and adolescents. Cognitive behavioral therapy is known as a talk therapy in which the therapist helps you challenge your unhelpful beliefs and behaviors to improve your emotional regulation and develop coping strategies to reduce depression and anxiety. The research findings show that group-based cognitive behavioral therapy was effective (17% gain) because it significantly reduced incidence of depressive episodes at post-test (after attending the therapy session) compared to a control group without receiving the therapy. However, the effect decayed after 12 months, suggesting a need to have continued therapy sessions over time. The researchers noted that their finding was inconclusive due to the small number of studies included in the meta-analysis (38 studies in total with few studies included booster sessions). More research is needed to clarify to what extent maintenance strategies such as booster sessions can prolong the effectiveness of group-based cognitive behavioral therapy.

Do patients with bipolar disorder use cannabis more so than others?

Bipolar disorder is commonly associated with substance abuse. A group of researchers from Brazil conducted a comprehensive review of the literature based on 53 studies. They found that contrary to the common stereotype or misperception of bipolar disorder

patients, the prevalence of cannabis use among bipolar disorder patients included in the meta-analysis was low, at 24% based on a combined sample of 51,756 patients. Cannabis use was significantly associated with being younger, male, and single. Those having fewer years of education and at an earlier onset of affective symptoms were also found to have higher levels of cannabis usage relative to others. The number of suicide attempts was also a significant predictor of cannabis usage. Bipolar disorder patients who have exhibited lifetime psychotic symptoms and use tobacco, alcohol, and other substances were also more likely to use cannabis more so than others. The researchers provided implications for both clinical practice and public health based upon their findings, including early intervention and education.

Sources:

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