ARE YOU OK?

What affects your mental health and how to seek help
Suicide rates on the rise

Rosiland Fletcher
Copy Chief

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, between 2007 and 2017 there was an increase in the rate of suicides by 56%. Kinzey Schreiber, a senior history major, compared the statistics to the snap of Marvel’s Thanos, who could make half of the universe disappear with a snap.

“That’s Thanos snapping us away,” she said. She has faced undiagnosed anxiety, and though she is not personally affected by other illnesses, she recognizes it can be a major part in others’ lives.

“I am shocked, and I wonder what makes the statistics that age range because there’s so many different identities that could be experienced within that,” she said.

Schreiber also said she has had family and friends affected by mental illness and has become more sympathetic to those who are crucially suffering from mental illness.

“I feel like hearing the statistics gives me more compassion for people … it gives me more compassion to be kinder to people. I don’t know what you’re going through, but I am able to empathize,” she said.

The other data presented from the CDC ranged specifically between the ages of 10 to 24 year olds, with other numbers that broke down into sub-statistics. In the report, it was stated that between 2007 and 2013, the youth suicide rate rose 3% per year, then between 2013 and 2017, the number rose 7%.

“It’s so sad, but I definitely believe it because of the things we see on social media or the things we have experienced,” Stephanie Cotrone, a junior tourism, hospitality and event management major, said.

She organized This Is Me: Anxiety and Depression Awareness Event at BGSU on Oct. 26. She spoke about why she ran the event and also what her experience with mental illness.

“I’ve actually struggled with anxiety and depression before, and I’ve had friends who have, so I really wanted to bring awareness to. (The subject) was an avenue I’ve never really explored before, so I really wanted to learn more about it,” she said.

As the event was a part of Cotrone’s honors project, she brought her interests, experiences, the things she loves and her studies together for something that would bring awareness to the BGSU community.

“Just a lot of my loves kind of combined together,” she said.

Cotrone, in her own experience of coming to university, has faced different life events, which triggered her anxiety and depression, but sought out available resources at BGSU.

“We as college students are under so much stress and craziness, that I think sometimes it gets to me,” she said.

She recommends for students to utilize the available resources on campus like the Counseling Center or Falcon Health Center. She said whether it is to speak with a counselor or medical professionals, they’re great resources if students need help.

Suicide rates have increased 56% from 2007 to 2017.

According to Business Insider, with the increased rate at which Americans are committing suicide, Gen Z may be facing a crisis worse than that of millennials. According to the Pew Research Center, in 2017, 13% of teenagers have reported they’ve experienced at least one major depressive episode. In 2007, around the time frame some millennials were in their teenage years, the number was 8%.

In looking at the statistics, Cotrone and Schreiber highlighted media may play a major part and people are affected by what they watch, see and listen to.

“I just wish the media had more compassion for individuals with mental illness,” Schreiber said. “Positive representation of mental illness should be a thing, and not like positive because mental illness is a good thing but because it’s a thing people deal with. It’s something people go through each day and carry. I just wish everyone would just be more compassionate about it. And understand their experience is not someone else’s, even if they have the same illness or are in the same situation.”

She also said each situation can be individualistic when it comes to mental health and how others struggle with it. Yet, the outcome is an issue when someone may take their own life regardless.

“Mental health looks different to everyone. … One person’s depression may look different than another person’s depression,” she said.

The statistics are daunting and the struggle with mental health is not easy, but Controne said there’s always an optimistic approach.

Read the rest at bgfalconmedia.com.
Organized is not OCD
Why it isn't OK to use mental illnesses to describe people without them

Annalynn Smith
Columnist
Those without mental disorders have no real reason to take time out of their lives to learn about false stigmatization or process negative social commodity, so typically they don’t. It can be easier for people to believe nothing is wrong, when they use what has always been perceived as casual lingo.

Certain phrases demean the lives of those with mental illness, and it’s important to evaluate the damage being done and the ways to practice simple peace.

Surprisingly, the weather is not bipolar, and someone pushing organization does not mean they have obsessive-compulsive disorder. It isn’t uncommon to hear people apply these seemingly harmless statements amidst idle conversation. The truth of the matter is that these hyperbolic phrases can be damaging and problematic to daily life for those with mental illness.

When someone tosses these medical terms into conversation as a descriptor, they push stereotypes farther into the minds of unknowing peers. For example, bipolar disorder is not a constantly changing set of emotions throughout the day as most would believe.

Bipolar disorder is experiencing the highest highs and lowest lows, known as manic episodes and depressive episodes, and they can last anywhere from hours to months on end before shifting into a different mood. Bipolar disorder on its own is a term for all the actual diagnoses, including Bipolar Disorder type I, Bipolar Disorder type II, Mixed and Cyclothymic Disorder. All may be similar but have unique symptoms.

It is possible to overcome grief

Nick Bowers
Columnist
Dealing with the loss of a loved one is one of the most difficult things that everyone has to go through.

On Feb. 5, I lost my grandmother after a month and a half long battle with complications resulting from a fall. It was a rough time in my life after her passing. I had to still go to classes and fulfill my extracurricular commitments as though everything was okay. Being a freshman at the time and just starting my second semester on campus only made the anxiety and sadness I felt all the more worse. I would be lying if I said that I do not still think about her frequently and struggle with that loss to this day.

Grief is, after all, a natural process which you go through after a personal tragedy, but it is not eternal; it does eventually improve.

Through my struggle with grief, I have learned some valuable lessons on coping with situations such as these. I want to share with you all, specifically to anyone experiencing such a loss these days, ways to be able to overcome this monumental challenge while away from home.

Channel negative energy into something positive

One of the ways I found to cope is to take that negative energy and channel it into something positive instead. Sitting around your dorm or apartment will only make you more miserable, which gives your brain time to dwell on what has happened. Rather than do that, I am currently working on a project for a class of mine in honor of my grandmother and grandfather. I am studying my grandfather’s unit from World War II for my historiography and research methods class, using the information about his service my grandmother gave me before her passing, alongside scholarly research and looking at period documents.

Read the rest at bgfalconmedia.com.
Head injuries are prominent in football
Student explains effects of concussions on student athletes

Shayne Nissen
Sports Reporter

BGSU student Matthew Lamos played football from the age of 5 to 18. He has had three major concussions and too many minor concussions to count. It still affects him today.

Lamos, a middle childhood education major with a specialty in math and science, went to Riverside High School in a suburb east of Cleveland. He played on the offensive and defensive lines in high school and loved to play football. Concussions were just something that came with the sport.

“I was pretty good at keeping it together, playing for so long. If I have a headache you just play through it, you fight through it. So if it wasn’t serious, I kept it together,” Lamos said.

For him, the concussions started early, and they always continued throughout his playing career.

“My first concussion was in peewee football. I was playing defense and I came screeching across the back, me and the running back came screeching on to each other and we clashed helmets. I got up, he didn’t, so we both kinda got messed up. They had to carry him off, so I think we both got concussions. I was wobbling off and my coaches saw me and they gave me a little bit of an evaluation and they said ‘you’re done’, he said.

That concussion was the first of three major concussions he would encounter when playing football. But even after every major concussion, or minor one for that matter, Lamos was never discouraged from playing football.

He wasn’t discouraged by himself, his teammates, coaches, his parents or even his doctors. They never deemed the concussions had enough for him to stop playing the game he loved. Lamos believes that there is a multitude of reasons behind that.

“I think, and I don’t know exactly for sure, but the protocol in high school is if you get a certain amount of concussions at a certain time they tell you you can’t play anymore. Because of how spread out mine were, I was okay. They are all in different varying levels and mine were never carted off on a stretcher like they were never that bad,” he said.

For him, in the moment, it wasn’t something that really alarmed him. He wasn’t always able to discern whether or not he had a concussion. It wasn’t until after he stopped playing that he realized the toll the multiple hits had taken on him.

“If you got hit too hard, you would get a headache, but it would go away after a little bit. You don’t feel the effects of a concussion then, you feel it later. It’s like you’re buying something that you are going to have to pay for later,” Lamos said.

This is a problem that has been ongoing for a while now in football. We have seen plenty of efforts at all levels to reduce the number of concussions by increasing the knowledge surrounding head injuries.

But the numbers are still jarring, and according to former EMT turned BGSU public health professor, Bradley Fervier, there is still a problem with the amount of concussions in our youth.

“These traumatic head injuries really do affect our children. For instance, in the United States it is estimated that about 3.8 million concussions occur every year. To me, that is alarming but really that is kind of small considering that half of those really go unreported. So that in it of itself is a big issue,” Fervier said.

Not only is the problem that these children and young adults are simply acquiring the concussions at an early age, but it’s that these concussions can lead to further problems.

“We do know that when you have been concussed once, it is easier to get another concussion. The more that you get them, those issues can develop into more serious problems later in life,” Fervier said.

The fact that it takes longer for children to recover from concussions than adults makes it even more alarming considering that children are the ones taking the brunt of the hits.

“What we know is that children and teens make up more than half — I would say about three quarters of all of those sports related concussions. Do we have a problem on our hands? Yes we do, because as you know, concussions lead to other problems so for instance, you can have problems with balance and problems with focusing,” Fervier said.

These problems are already taking effect in Lamos’s life, and it’s not just balance and problems with focusing as Fervier suggests. It’s much more severe than that, and he’s only been out of the game for about three years.

“I still feel the effects without feeling the effects. I get headaches every now and then, and I don’t want to say I’m starting to develop a stutter but lately I’ve been having a little bit of difficulty articulating my words. Me and my friends were actually reading down the list of symptoms of CTE and it’s like ever since I’ve stopped playing football I’ve noticed I have had a little bit more irritability. I have a little more of quickness to anger. The whole entire symptom list like I don’t want to say that I have all of them but, I can check a lot of the boxes,” Lamos said.

This is something that should be alarming to all parents that have children playing football, but the key isn’t just in preventing concussions, it’s making sure that students know when a concussion has occurred. Even when they do realize that something is wrong, that still isn’t always enough to get them off the field.

“It’s a very toxic, masculine thing but you don’t like to talk about injuries when you are hurt because it’s a form of weakness. Everyone has always told me through any type of sports, push through. Either you’re hurt or you’re injured, if you’re injured you come out, if you’re hurt you play through it and no one wants to be injured,” Lamos said.

This is one of the biggest problems regarding the health of football players at any level after they stop playing the game.

Fervier mentions this isn’t just a case of student athletes swallowing their pride to see viable change. The parents need to be knowledgeable too.

“With coaches and parents I believe that if they are knowledgeable about the signs of concussions, they can teach their kids how to observe these kinds of things as well,” he said.

As the old saying goes though, boys will be boys. And getting them to admit they are actually hurt is a challenge itself. For Fervier, he believes that we need to pay more attention to how we treat male injuries compared to female injuries.

“Females actually reported more concussions as opposed to males, in similar sports with similar rules. That is important in answering that question because what we know if you got hit as a guy, you were told to toughen up. As a female, you are always asking if they are hurt,” Fervier said.

Although it varies from person to person, for people like Lamos, even through all of the injuries, he stays steady in his love for the game.

“If I went back in time and was able to do it all over again, I wouldn’t change a single thing because of how much I love the sport and how much I love doing it,” he said.

So, in looking at how the game of football can be made safer for young people, there isn’t an exact answer. Not all children are the same, some will let you know they have any injury. Some, even though they have been told the dangers of concussions, live in the moment and will continue to put their bodies at risk.

No matter what is done, as long as the game of football exists, so will concussions. It’s ultimately up to the student athletes and, more importantly, the parents to decide when the game is too dangerous. The more transparent the athlete is, the safer the game will be for everyone. As Lamos’s story proves, there is always something to be done to make the game safer.
Should college students bring their pets to school?

Mary had a little (emotional support animal)

Mary had a little lamb; its fleece was white as snow. It followed her to school one day; Which was against the rules.

—Sarah Josepha Hale, child’s nursery

Feeling homesick? Classes have you overwhelmed? Maybe a pet will help. That’s the thought behind the upswing in college students applying for and receiving emotional support animal certifications over the past decade. So, what’s the big deal if Fido comes to school with you?

College students have experienced, or reported, higher levels of anxiety and mental illness over the past decade according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness. With the increased levels of stress and mental illness, students may be seeking help from sources that are “outside the box.” One source is an emotional support animal.

Research is mixed on the benefits of emotional support animals. In an article for Inside Higher Ed, Jeremy Bauer-Wolf explained requests have risen, which may cause challenging situations for college campuses. Federal law protecting ESA’s prevents investigative questioning into why an ESA is needed, which may lead to universities struggling with fraudulent claims.

Lauren Siffert, a sophomore microbiology major, shared her story of trying to help her roommate get the documentation she needed for her ESA. They started with Accessibility Services here on campus to get the facts.

“I called Accessibility Services and they said ‘don’t do the stuff online.’ Siffert said.

Her roommate had a letter from her doctor, which is the right place to start. Getting certified from a doctor or therapist you have a relationship with also strengthens the claim if you are challenged, according to an article from The New York Times. The article goes on to explain many states are beginning to “crackdown” on false claims of ESA.

John Newlove in BG is federally compliant with the requirements when it comes to ESA accommodations. Not only did they provide a copy of all the pet friendly housing they have, they also gave a copy of the federal guidelines for review. Their lease agreements do not have an ongoing pet “rent” or fee. They charge a one-time fee when the pet comes, and that lasts the life-time of the pet.

Newlove, Greenbriar and Almar all spoke about the housing they have available and gave copies of the pet policies. All three had both pet-free, and pet-friendly, housing for those interested. The benefit is there’s no need to go the route of getting certified with a mental illness to have a pet live with a person who wants it.

Obtaining an ESA letter works if a person has a verified mental illness. Barring that, a person could be looking at fraud charges if it could be proven they are not in need of emotional support. “Dog Whisperer” Cesar Milan discusses the downside to ESA abuse on his website.

“This isn’t just about bothering people who might be allergic or who don’t like dogs. It can be a very stressful experience for a dog that isn’t trained to handle crowds or busy public places. It can also harm people with a legitimate need by forcing businesses to question everyone with a service animal,” he said in an article on what some think is a victimless crime.

Twenty-three states have laws against fraudulent service dogs, but Ohio isn’t one of them. The penalties vary by state, and can range from a $100 fine to fines of $1,000 and six months in jail.

Taryn Ruebusch, a senior human development and family services major, said a pet would definitely help her stress levels. She has owned pets most of her life, and looks forward to owning one again. She said she wasn’t sure as a college student that now was the time to have a pet.

“The fact that I am not sure where I am going to be after I graduate makes it hard. I plan on moving in with my parents or my sister, and they both already have cats. I think getting one now would be a bad idea because it could make it hard when I move on,” she said.

She also added pets are a huge responsibility. One she is capable of, but not one she wants to take on right now. She said she would definitely consider fostering as an alternative after watching a friend do it.

“She fostered an older dog when the shelter didn’t have enough room for all the dogs. She had it for about two weeks. It was a great experience,” Ruebusch added.

For the average college student, bringing Fido, or Fluffy or even Slithers may be helpful, or it may create its own challenges. Ultimately it comes down to weighing the pros and cons and making the decision that works for you.

For Siffert, the stress relief is worth any hassle.

“It’s definitely helped my mental health. Having him be weird, having him run through the apartment after a water bottle or a ping pong ball is great. It just makes you happy or smile. When you sit down and he just wants your love and it’s such a pure love—that’s what makes it worth it,” she said.
Songs to lift you up

BG News Staff

‘Mr. November’ The National
Andrew Bailey | Pulse Editor
This song is about John Kerry’s presidential run in 2004, which he lost. Although I have no plans to ever run for president, the song’s themes of anxiety and meeting other people’s expectations is still a relatable human experience. The song shows Kerry struggling to reassure himself that he will succeed and the massive difference between practicing in his dressing room and appearing publicly in front of the country. Something that has weighed over me since I graduated high school is that I am woefully unprepared for the real world, post-college. Whenever I worry that I’ll end up falling miserably (which is every day), repeatedly telling myself that everything will turn out fine helps mitigate my anxiety. Like the titular Mr. November in the chorus, I tell myself that I won’t f--- up, and that keeps me hopeful.

‘Geronimo’ Sheppard
Brian Geyer | Social Media Editor
At one time, “Geronimo” was a hit. It was on the top of the charts and was played on every major radio station. Although “Geronimo” is no longer popular enough to be on radio stations, I believe the beat the song brings is still worth listening to. “Geronimo” reminds me of a summer day where the sun is shining bright. When I’m not having the best day or the winter days are a little too dark for my liking, I know I can listen to this song with its high-energy beat to get me out of bed or get me to my morning classes. I love the atmospheric sound the track projects, making it a perfect song to listen to while walking to class. Plus, the fast beat is perfect when you’re a little late to class.

‘Mr. Brightside’ The Killers
Courtney Brihan | Reporter
Even though this song came out in 2003, it has become a timeless classic. There is something about screaming the lyrics at the top of my lungs that instantly puts me in a good mood. The lyrics are so iconic and different from other songs and really has such a distinct message that it can’t be compared to any other song.

‘Hand in My Pocket’ Alanis Morissette
Abby Shifley | Managing Editor
Life is full of paradoxes, just like this song. Even though Alanis Morissette was best known when my parents were in college, “Hand in My Pocket” still resonates with me and my college experience. In this song, Alanis says you can be unsure about where life will take you and still be OK. “What it all comes down to / Is that no one’s really got it figured out just yet,” but “Everything is just fine, fine, fine.” Sometimes it can feel like you have to have it all figured out in college. But guess what? You don’t. Life is unpredictable, and it’s going to take you to amazing places if you just let it. Remember: You can be “broke,” “green,” “overwhelmed,” “happy,” “wise” and “sane” all at the same time. Oh, and the song has some sick harmonica solos, in case you need further convincing to give it a listen.

‘Happy Dance’ MercyMe
Brionna Scebbi | Editor-in-Chief
I first heard this song while attending a dance fitness class my best friend was leading. From the first few notes, I was convinced that it was impossible to be down while listening to this song. The music is upbeat, the message is overwhelmingly positive and some of the religious undertones — MercyMe is a Christian group — have been helpful to me when I need an energy boost in life. So if you’re in need of a peppy song to do your happy dance to, add this one to your pick-me-up playlist.

‘The World at Large / Float On’ Modest Mouse
Hunter Huffman | Campus Editor
These songs stand side-by-side as the introspective opener to Modest Mouse’s 2004 album “Good News for People Who Love Bad News.” I discovered them during my junior year of high school, a point marked with both good and bad times, often at the hand of anxiety. At the beginning of the day, as I drove to school, I’d throw on “The World at Large” as a meditation of sorts – it’s mellow, slow-burning instrumental alone was therapeutic, shoving my anxiety to the side. The song’s runtime took up most of the drive, so I’d queue “Float On” to the very moment I pulled into school. Both songs discuss uncertainty, change and staying positive through these hurdles, all of which applied to me back then and apply to me more than ever in my college years. The transition from childhood to adulthood can be undoubtedly be distressing, but “good news will work its way to all them plans,” as “Float On” reinforces.

‘Could Have Been Me’ The Struts
RC | Reporter
Life moves pretty fast. If you don’t stop to look around every once in awhile, you could miss out. This is essentially the theme of The Struts’ 2014 single “Could Have Been Me.” It’s a song that urges the listener to not think twice about taking a risk in life. This is a perfect uplifting song that can be used as motivation for almost anything: the gym, asking out that guy or girl or anything in between. Nerves be damned. Don’t live to regret not listening to this track.

‘Don’t Give Up’ Peter Gabriel
 Vaughn Cockayne | Web Editor
The video for Peter Gabriel and Kate Bush’s “Don’t Give Up” is so perfectly choreographed. It consists of the two singers just spinning in an embrace as the sun is eclipsed into complete darkness, only to find the two singers still in a supportive embrace after the sun has come back from behind the black eclipse. That is what the song feels like to me. A long and beautiful embrace. Supportive words of people who seem to know exactly what your soul is capable of. The song begs all to not give up on life.
Counseling Center aims to provide meaningful care to all students

Vaughn Cockayne
Web Editor

According to the American College Health Association, three out of five college students experience “overwhelming anxiety” in their years at a university. While the number of students experiencing issues with their own mental health is concerning, the crusade to remove the stigma and to provide students with services to safely work through these problems is growing.

BSGU’S contribution to this crusade is the Counseling Center, a free service to all those enrolled at the university. Behind the thoroughly modern and comfortable lobby are professionals that are there to provide quality services to those in need of counseling.

“Our mission is to attend to the mental health needs of the BGSU students. So that’s students who come here for services we provide mental health treatment for a variety of concerns. Anxiety, depression, relationship issues adjustments to transition,” Counseling Center Director Garett Gilmer said.

The center also provides resources to help those that think that they are witnessing someone in need. This includes faculty here at the university that would want to have a more involved relationship with their students’ mental health.

“We also serve as consultants and educators for the campus community as a whole, including people who are trying to help students. So we are consultants for faculty or staff or parents or other students who are trying to offer support to students that they are worried about,” Assistant Director Stefani Hathaway said.

Students generally are introduced to the services of the center through the walk-in hours that are held weekly. The Counseling Center tries to provide an environment during these walk-in hours that is affirming and as comfortable as possible.

“The most common thing for someone to experience during walk-in would be a kind of intake process, where we find out about what is going on with the person, talk about what their concerns are and how they are functioning. We screen for a few key issues, and then we help them figure out what kinds of services or referrals make sense to them,” Hathaway said.

The eventual goal of having the walk-in hours is to provide students with a pathway to continual sessions. One of the ways that students can better work through some of their issues with the counselors is to go back for repeated sessions with the same counselor.

Sophomore communication major Owen Ehinger, who has used the center since the beginning of his sophomore year, said there is no question about the benefits of repeated sessions for him.

“I think you have to go through it a couple times before it actually becomes worth it. Because the first, and even the second, session you’re just trying to lay the groundwork for who you are,” Ehinger said. “You have to kind of push through the first couple of weeks before you start to see results.”

Read the rest at bgfalconmedia.com.

The Counseling Center is in the College Park office building.
Social media’s effects on mental health

Kylie Tusing
Reporter

An overwhelming amount of options, never-ending feeds and a place to share thoughts. When it comes to social media usage, it can feel impossible to avoid the pressure to consume. Social media has been built up so significantly that people are able to make entire careers out of it, whether it be Instagram models, Tik Tok creators, YouTubers or multi-platform influencers. The potential is endless and the power significant.

Research indicates that social media has the potential to be both helpful and damaging to one's mental health. Recent studies showed an increase in depression, anxiety and eating disorders as a result of too much social media consumption, according to an article from Psyc.com. In 2018, the average time spent on social media daily is 136 minutes, Statista reports.

Hallie Cunningham, Instagram influencer and BGSU student, had much to say on the addiction and effects of social media usage.

"I check social media a lot, so it does consume parts of my everyday life. But to me, social media is just an outlet to express yourself creatively. I rather find a lot of inspiration. Mainly for clothes I think are cute or places I would like to travel," Cunningham said.

Typically, each person has a specific platform they use most often. For Cunningham, it’s Twitter.

“I think it is because it’s my platform which I am most political. I am able to directly see what legislators are posting about, rather than waiting to read reports or to watch videos later,” Cunningham said.

Another side of social media is the business platform. Cunningham’s main business platform is Instagram where she is a brand ambassador, influencer and blogger. When discussing her time as an influencer she expressed she ultimately found her purpose.

“you almost have to make yourself marketable and you attract the energy you want. There was a period of time in which I took it super seriously. I was doing brand deals and reaching out to other influencers for collaborations. But now, it has just been more fun for me lately,” she admitted.

On average people spend over 136 minutes on social media per day while research shows the maximum should be 30 minutes.