



East Bay Center

...leading lives to hope and recovery

Coping with Clinical Depression – A Personal Story

Tony shares: “I am seventy-four (74) years young and have been coping with depression since my teen years. Depression is an unrelenting attack of “negative imagination thoughts” (nits). It is insidious in that it will attack without warning; it is unrelenting in that it bothers you day and night (24/7). It is a constant inner struggle, which others may not be aware of. It takes superhuman effort to cope with, but it will pass away!

In my later teens I suffered a severe mental relapse, which required psychiatric care (at the time depression was not recognized as it is today). My recovery was helped by living a rather stress-free college life. After graduation, I taught in public schools as a special education instructor. In 1979 I took a sabbatical leave due to mental stress and earned only half pay. It was a difficult time for my family – we had three (3) growing sons. The individual and family counseling and medication prescribed by my psychiatrist at East Bay Center helped, along with a cooperative school administration and staff. Personally, I found it wise to be open about the condition. People are understanding; a kind word goes a long way.

How did I survive the episode? My wife and children have patiently endured over the years. Depression causes pre-occupation with self at the expense of others. My children did not receive the personal attention of their father during their developing years. This is a serious omission, but hopefully they learned from my example of patient endurance.

My deep rooted faith has helped me cope. Through my Catholic Christian faith, I believe in the cross of suffering, which ultimately leads to eternal life. Sometimes all we can do is pray: “Lord into Your hands I commend my spirit”.

Above all I realize it's up to me to be aggressive in coping since I know myself better than anyone. My daily schedule includes physical exercise.

I enjoy running every other day. It relieves the mind and the shower after feels great! If I get into a mental lapse, I change my environment and do something different, like weeding the garden or reading a book. I may not be able to change my feelings right away, but I can change my environment to help the process. Having trust in others helps, by realizing that they accept me in good times and in bad. I realize when I suffer a bout of depression, it will in fact pass away. During depression it's difficult to remember our good days! It isn't wise to make major decisions during periods of depression – seek counsel."

I hope that these ideas help you better understand the effects of depression. **"Love believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."**

Anthony DaPonte was a successful special education teacher in the State of Massachusetts for forty (40) years. He proudly served as a member of East Bay Center's Board of Directors from 1995 – 2002. We appreciate and applaud his contribution to our organization, and his ability to share his personal story with others.

EBC's mission has remained the same for many years – to improve the lives of individuals and families within our communities by providing a broad range of high quality mental health and addiction services. Especially in the face of adversity, EBC will be here to help you, your family, and your community. We encourage you to visit our website at www.eastbay.org for information regarding services, employment, locations, etc. To speak to someone regarding services or to schedule an appointment, please call 401-246-1195 and ask for "Intake".