Hope for Depression Research Foundation was proud to conduct a panel discussion on “Bullying and Mental Health” at the Solomon Schechter High School in Westchester, NY on January 10.

The panel is part of a new initiative, Next Generation Mental Health, which aims to educate the public about children’s mental health issues and how to get help. The program involves school visits as well as a public symposium with nationally-renowned speakers in midtown NYC in May (see sidebar).

The January 10 panel consisted of clinical and research experts who spoke to an auditorium of 75 students and their teachers about how bullying can lead to mental and physical health problems later in life.

“Children who have been bullied are six times more likely to develop depression and two times more likely to develop anxiety,” said HDRF Executive Director Louisa Benton. She pointed to a 70% rise in youth suicide since 2006.

- Neuroscientist Hope Kronman Mount Sinai explained how bullying can cause physical changes in the brain that can lead to depression and negative effects on the body’s immune system.
- Actor Jeff Lima (Chicago Fire) shared his personal story of being severely bullied as a child growing up in NYC.
- Social worker Kelly Lennon-Martucci, head of school mental health programs at Henry Street Settlement, said it is important to report the bullying to a trusted adult. Early intervention is key.

During 2019, HDRF will conduct panels on bullying and mental health at schools in Nassau County and Queens, as well as the NYC symposium in May. For more info: hopefordepression.org/events
Dear Friend,

Depression is a global public health issue and demands heightened public awareness as part of any solution.

Every year we strengthen our outreach to the community to dispel myths and chip away at the stigma that is a barrier to treatment.

We see attitudes changing, more media and public awareness, and a real hunger in the younger generation to speak more openly about mental health.

We have many new initiatives, like the Race of Hope and the Next Generation Mental Health program, featured on page one. We launched it last year to address the question – Is social media making teens depressed? This year, we are diving into the critical topic of bullying and mental health.

Through education and awareness, we can promote compassion and action that will drive science – and society – forward.

I thank YOU, our HDRF community, for your unwavering support of our critical work.

Audrey Gruss
Founder & Chair

Our 12th Annual HOPE Luncheon at the Plaza Hotel focused on the fundamentals of brain health and well-being, with keynote speaker Dr. Richard J. Davidson, founder of the Center for Healthy Minds at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. Davidson’s extensive research of the brain and mindfulness was inspired by the Dalai Lama. The research has shown that well-being is a skill to be cultivated by building healthy habits, like generosity and gratitude.

“There’s substantial evidence showing that engaging in acts of generosity is an effective strategy to increase well-being,” he said. “By being generous to others, you benefit them and yourself.”

Our next speaker, Dr. Samantha Boardman, stressed the mental health benefits of good sleep, diet and exercise. Dr. Boardman is a psychiatrist at Weill Cornell Medical Center and a specialist in Positive Psychology.

Ali Wentworth accepted the HOPE Award for Depression Advocacy with keen and funny observations about her own ups and downs, therapy and medication.

Bringing the conversation full circle, Ali touched on the theme of empathy and compassion that Dr. Davidson highlighted in his presentation.

“I do believe in kindness, and the other thing is it is a good time right now to hug your friends, hug your kids,” she said. “Hug and love everybody.”

Attendees listen to Dr. Richard Davidson

Ali Wentworth and Audrey Gruss

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IN THE NEWS: KETAMINE

This March, the US Food and Drug Administration approved a new antidepressant medication, in a milestone for the field.

The treatment, a nasal spray called esketamine, is related to ketamine, an anesthetic for humans and sedative for horses.

Unlike other antidepressants, esketamine lifts patients’ moods within hours; whereas other drugs available now can take weeks, if they work at all. Esketamine is only intended for patients who are severely ill and have not responded to traditional antidepressants.

HDFR’s team of scientists were not involved in the drug’s development, as that research happened in the early 2000s before HDFR’s Depression Task Force was formed. However, HDFR is now working to elucidate esketamine’s mechanism of action and refine the way it is administered.

“Esketamine represents the first new category of medication for depression in over 30 years, so we’re excited by this milestone,” said Dr. Eric Nestler, Director of the Friedman Brain Institute at Mount Sinai and Chair of the Depression Task Force.

We need better understand how ketamine works in the brain so we can assess long-term risk and develop a pill, Nester said. We look forward to more research progress on ketamine and other novel treatments for resistant depression.

Mother Nature tried but failed to deter hundreds of intrepid souls who came out in pouring rain and hurricane wind for the HDFR’s Inaugural Palm Beach Race of Hope 5K on Sunday, January 27, 2019.

While a nearby state fair saw a rare closing for weather, more than 300 participants of all ages gathered at 8 AM at Palm Beach’s Royal Poinciana Plaza to walk or run the 5K Race and take a stand for depression awareness.

HDFR Founder and Chair Audrey Gruss was Race Co-Grand Marshal along with Palm Beach influencer Scott Snyder. “Anybody who thinks sunshine creates happiness has never danced in the rain,” Gruss said. “Depression is the number-one reason in the world for disability, and the leading cause of suicide.”

Scott Snyder said “so we thank you for coming out to dance in the rain today. Our research is leading to discoveries that can turn the tide on depression and suicide in this country.”

The event raised over $275,000 for advanced depression research. Best-time medals went to John Schilkowsky (male) and Stephanie Pezzullo (female).
UPCOMING EVENTS

Second Annual
NEXT GENERATION MENTAL HEALTH SYMPOSIUM
Bullying & Mental Health
Wednesday, May 29, 2019
New York, NY

SOUTHAMPTON RACE OF HOPE
Sunday, August 4, 2019
Southampton, NY

THIRTEENTH ANNUAL HOPE LUNCHEON SEMINAR
Wednesday, November 6, 2019
The Plaza Hotel

I GIVE BECAUSE...

Emilie Sullivan
“Three years ago, I lost my father to suicide after a three year battle with depression. He was successful, happily married and loved by so many - but because he couldn’t receive a clear diagnosis, he didn’t think he was sick. I give to Hope for Depression because of their cutting-edge research in both the diagnosis and treatment of depression. I give to HDRF because of the hope they have given to my family and me.”

Emilie Sullivan with her father, Michael Sullivan

HELP SUPPORT HDRF

100% of all donations go directly to research into the origins, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of depression and its related mood disorders including: bipolar disorder, post-partum depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorders, and suicide. HDRF is a non profit 501(c)(3) public charitable organization. All donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Visit us at: hopefordepression.org

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