

# Down with the blues

by Karrie Fields

Many of us are now under a great deal of pressure comparable to that experienced during midterms. One of the major side-effects is depression. I've written this article for two reasons; first, because a lot of people are down at the moment, and second, because it is hard when you are to know how to pull yourself back up. This is not meant to be an exhaustive coverage of the topic; it is merely some suggestions that have worked for me.

Frustration and depression occur for several reasons. Boredom, loneliness, failure to deal with a persistent problem (which can make you feel like a failure in other areas as well), and the perceived inability to meet pressure and demands adequately, are four of the "biggies."

\*Stop running yourself down. At the same time, start by accepting yourself as you are at this point and realize that this is not a permanent state. Quit trying to justify your negative feelings and behaviour.

\*Don't justify your negativity, but explore it. Figure out what's making you feel depressed, and take a small step towards solving the problem. If you're just tired, schedule a good night's sleep. If you're feeling alone, call

somebody who means a lot to you, or who you'd like to know better.

\*Structure your time. Set aside time for necessary routine tasks, and stick to the schedule you make. Allow yourself the satisfaction of completing something.

\*Take on some activity with a guaranteed quick reward (positive reinforcement). Examples - bake something; borrow some music you've always wanted to learn and learn it; plan a special treat for yourself that doesn't demand a high level of commitment or involvement, such as dinner out, a show, seeing someone you've never taken time to see before; smile at someone and find out how they're really doing - take an interest in someone else; make yourself up; read a good book; go shopping and buy something special; work on a hobby; try something unconventional; if faith is part of your life, pray! Warning: avoid demanding situations, friends who will drain you at this stage, and so on.

\*Try a change in activity or pace. If things are hectic, take time to enjoy and respond spontaneously to life. For example, fool around in the snow, say "Hi!"; notice and interact casually with others; listen to some good music; meditate and get to know yourself

again; take a memory trip by remembering friends and past events.

\*Try to reduce any tension that's aggravating your depression by taking a quick complete break from the work that's providing the source of pressure. Then go back, divide the area to be covered into manageable, realistic portions, not neglecting to plan and schedule regular breaks. Plan to finish it, then don't bother looking beyond the most immediate goal. If a mental block occurs and you're having trouble getting into it, try to relate it to yourself and past experiences. If you have that flexibility open to you, alternate work.

Try to settle any unresolved misunderstanding that might be causing anxiety. Avoid spending time with people or in situations where either there are demands on you to be feeling a way you're not at the moment (like a party) or where an abundance of sympathy might encourage self-pity.

If you are depressed for any extended length of time, realize that there are people who care and that it's okay to ask for help. Don't hesitate to talk to a friend, close family member, minister, or support group.

## Playboy coverage bugs nurses

Vancouver (CUP) - University of BC nursing students have launched a protest against Playboy's cover story on the nursing profession.

The nurses say posing in the nude, wearing high-cut aerobic exercise suits and lying coyly in a bed of grass won't help the profession gain respect despite the article's content.

The nurses sent a protest letter signed by 150, to Playboy's advertisers, local newspapers, and various nursing associations.

"As University students, we are trying to better state the image of nursing as a profession," said

Sue Roberts, fourth year class president. "Playboy's article is a perfect example of stereotyping and it may contribute to general ignorance of what nurses really do."

The Playboy article says nurses are vocal in their demand for more respect and less stereotyping but the UBC group objects to Playboy's methods.

"I have mixed feelings about the article. It did bring out a lot of good points. If we took away the pictures, would we disagree with it as much as we do?" said Jacqueline McGuiness, nursing 4.

Playboy also briefly deals with the "stressful and demanding"

nature of the profession. They cite dealing with death, being attacked by a patient and the existing sexual tension between doctors and nurses as the main examples of stress.

But the UBC nursing students say those elements are not the most important causes of stress.

The letter states, "Many times, the stress experienced by a nurse is a result of the lack of control... that is why we as nurses are striving to achieve unity as a group."

The nursing students also objected to Playboy's concentration on the physical beauty of nurses

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*Professor of Political Science  
University of Tel Aviv*

to speak at Hillel House  
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