

August 12, 2014

Press Release – For Immediate Distribution

In light of the sudden and tragic death of Actor/Comedian Robin Williams, the Association of Psychology in Newfoundland and Labrador (APNL) wishes to provide the public with some facts regarding depression, potential warning signs of suicide, and local sources of assistance for those struggling with depression and other mental illnesses.

What is Depression? (source CPA.ca)

- Almost everyone feels sad or “depressed” at times. Clinical depression is more than feeling sad. It must include at least five of the following symptoms and last for two weeks or more
- Symptoms include sadness, loss of interest in usual activities, changes in appetite, changes in sleep, changes in sexual desire, difficulties in concentration, a decrease in activities or social withdrawal, increased self-criticism, and thoughts of(or actual plans) related to suicide
- Approximately 1% of Canadian men and 2% of Canadian women are clinically depressed at any point in time. About 5% of men and 10% of women will experience clinical depression at some point in their life

Suicide Warning Signs (source suicide.org)

- Appearing depressed or sad most of the time (untreated depression is the number one cause of suicide)
- Talking or writing about death or suicide
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Feeling strong anger or rage
- Feeling hopeless or trapped – like there is no way out of situation
- Experiencing dramatic mood changes
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Exhibiting a change in personality, sometime acting recklessly or impulsively
- Losing interest in most activities
- Experiencing a change in sleeping and/or eating habits
- Performing poorly at work or in school
- Giving away prized possessions
- Writing a will
- Feeling excessive guilt or shame



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Where/How to Get Help?

- Immediate assistance is available through the Mental Health Crisis Line (709) 737-4668/1-888-737-4668 or through your local Emergency Department
- Psychologists can assist with Depression and Suicidal thoughts. Psychologists can be accessed through your local health care centre, via workplace Employee Assistance programs, and privately (see www.apnl.ca for a listing of private psychologists).

Media interviews with a Psychologist on this (or other topics), can be arranged by contacting APNL at info@apnl.ca or calling 709-739-5405