



Greetings to you in this New Year of 2010,

In December and January there is a higher incident of depression.

(1) In the holiday season there is much emphasis on joy and happiness, so when a person does not feel happy or joyful, the feeling of sadness or “the blahs” becomes intensified.

(2) At the holiday time we think about gathering with family. When one has lost significant family members, lives without family, or is in conflict with family members, depression may be experienced more deeply at this time of year.

(3) Another reason for the higher incidence of depression is that in the northern hemisphere, there is less daylight during the winter. Some people’s moods are affected by sunlight or lack of it. This has become known as seasonal affective disorder that can be treated with careful exposure to ultraviolet lamps.

Church leaders are not immune from depression and it can be more intense at this busy time of year. Providing care to depressed persons can weigh on caregivers such as rostered leaders. In a time of economic recession and tension in the life of the ELCA, leaders are likely to be more vulnerable to depression.

You will find some Web sites in this issue that focus on depression and ministry, and a self-screening test for depression.

The holidays are also a time of relational conflicts. I am including some suggestions from Dr. Sherod Miller for building up one’s marriage. These principles can be applied to other relationships.

If you have any reactions or suggestions for future items in the newsletter, email I-K Synod Pastoral Counselor Pr. Ted Stoneberg at [tastoneberg@anderson.edu](mailto:tastoneberg@anderson.edu).



## Depression and Ministry

C. Roy Woodruff of the Ministering to Ministers Foundation, Inc. provides these guidelines for persons in ministry. He is an ordained minister who has been a pastoral psychotherapist. [http://www.mtm-foundation.org/Servant/Vol\\_8\\_4/v8\\_4\\_01.htm](http://www.mtm-foundation.org/Servant/Vol_8_4/v8_4_01.htm)

## Depression Self-Check

*Sponsored by Lexapro, a medication*

Cut and paste the following link into your browser bar: [http://www.lexapro.com/check\\_symptoms/dep\\_screener.aspx](http://www.lexapro.com/check_symptoms/dep_screener.aspx)

## Ministry Burnout

Rhett Smith, who is a therapist in Bloomington, IN, has provided this helpful Web site that you can cut and paste into your browser bar: <http://rhettsmith.com/2009/02/02/depression-burnout-ministry-assessment/>

## Building a Relationship to Survive Conflicts

Dr. Sherod Miller believes that couple can discuss potentially volatile issues in a way that builds up the marriage. In order to do this, couples must first understand that their value as persons and marriage partners is not tied to agreement or disagreement.

- The first step in the process is being considerate of the other person.
- Next, you need to focus on managing yourself instead of trying to control those round you.
- The third step is the capacity to talk about the issue without feeling like you have to persuade the other person to come over to your side. Instead of listening for agreement with your point of view, you listen for understanding, you may believe that what the other person is saying is a bunch of bologna, but the key is you don't get angry about it.
- Finally, consider this question: *What is the worst thing that will happen if we don't agree?*

**We need to recognize that we value our special relationships enough that disagreements won't rock the foundation of our special relationships.**

**We can disagree, and at the end of the day, the love is still strong and we respect each other's opinion.**



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