

Dealing with depression

As a child, St. Mary, Annapolis, parishioner Therese Borchard struggled with anxiety. As an adult, the married mother of two is living with depression.

It wasn't until Mrs. Borchard stopped drinking in college that she realized there was a bigger problem in her life – depression.

Mrs. Borchard said there are many feelings involved when a person is depressed, the most serious of which is an overwhelming sense of hopelessness.

"It was kind of this obsession with death," said Mrs. Borchard, 36. "I just didn't want to be alive."

Mrs. Borchard said for six months she was incapable of doing anything. The columnist for Catholic News Service said she couldn't write, so she took some time off. She said she didn't want to get out of bed or even do simple daily activities like shower or get herself ready for the day.

One of the most difficult aspects of living with depression was trying to be a good mother to her children. She said she felt that she couldn't be there for her children and she was always crying. Her then 3-year-old son, David, was more affected by his mother's depression than his younger sister, Katherine. Mrs. Borchard said David would ask her why she was crying and she didn't know what to tell him.

What helped her through was the love and support of her family, her children and her husband, Eric. She also credits her faith in getting her through the hard times. Mrs. Borchard said she has been devoted to St. Therese for as long as she can remember and she always held on to a medal of St. Therese.

In the end Mrs. Borchard's struggle with depression has brought her closer to her husband, and she marvels at the care and devotion he has shown her, she said. About two years ago Mrs. Borchard was diagnosed with a benign tumor on her pituitary gland, which controls the hormones in her body, which was triggering some of her depression. She was given medication to shrink the tumor and she is feeling much better.

When it comes to mild to moderate depression, going to therapy, exercising, getting a massage or doing yoga may be able to help, said Mrs. Borchard.

“I try everything. I take fish oil and vitamin E,” Mrs. Borchard said. “For someone who is severely depressed it’s important for them to seek medical help.”

Mrs. Borchard said there are different levels of depression and what may trigger one person’s depression may not trigger someone else’s. People can become depressed after having a physical injury or a tragedy, said Mrs. Borchard.

“I think I would first try some of the alternative therapies and work at identifying the triggers in your life,” said Mrs. Borchard who encourages people to incorporate a healthy diet, prayers and support into their lives. “If you continue to be depressed see a doctor or therapist. If you have thoughts of death see someone right away.”

Mrs. Borchard has her own blog at <https://blog.beliefnet.com/beyondblue/> where she discusses her experiences with depression. She said this blog helps her heal and it helps her to clear up the misconceptions of mental illness.