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# Depression among college students is a growing concern

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By Hannah Lane, Reporter / Anchor [CONNECT](#)

MONTGOMERY, AL (WSFA) - Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college age students, according to the National Institute of Mental Health.

It's no secret college can be challenging.

"Right after high school, I was so so excited about college," said Lavashti Moxey, a student at Auburn Montgomery. "To come to school and to miss my family and be far away from my family, really caused a lot of depression, on top of the fact that I had to maintain my grades."

Moxey is a typical college student balancing school work, extra-curricular activities and a social life. But she says doing the balancing act wasn't always easy for her, and as a freshman she quickly found herself in a different position: suffering from depression.

"I wasn't eating as much as I used to, I wasn't hanging around my friends as much as I wanted to. I didn't really have anyone to really talk to or sometimes I didn't feel safe," said Moxey.

Although it's not always talked about, experts say depression and mental health is a major issue among college students.

According to [healthline.com](#), 44 percent of American college students report having symptoms of depression and 19 percent of young people in the US either contemplate or attempt suicide every year.

"It's difficult to deal with depression because of the stigma and I feel like a lot of times we college students don't know how to deal with it," claims Moxey.

Jessyca Darrington is the former Director of Counseling Services at Alabama State University, serving in the position for nearly 20 years. She says she's seen an increase in college student depression.

"It's a lot more prevalent than people even realize," explains Darrington.

She says there are key signs of possible depression.

"Changes in behavior. Are they withdrawing from activities they enjoy doing, are they eating more, are they eating less, are they drinking more, are they sleeping more, not going to class? Just a lack of interest in those things that were really important to them at one point or another," said Darrington.

Moxey sought assistance to overcome depression and advises that everyone can do their part to help those in need.

"You never know what someone could be going through. Someone could be smiling on the outside, but feel so trapped on the inside," says Moxey. "I think it's so important to just be caring to everyone you meet and try to be a listening ear as well."

Most colleges and universities have mental health resources available for students. Moxey says visiting Auburn Montgomery's counseling center is what helped her.

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