

From the Booth

Throwing pills at the problem

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In case you have not noticed, this newspaper is not your typical end of semester “let’s hear it for Christmas” type of newspaper. This season, I am very proud of the Red Ink staff as a whole for writing about topics that are meaningful and pressing.

Topics like suicide and depression will always be relevant. This past year has been a year of mourning for the Greeley community after three suicides. There is no question that mental illness and depression plague our society and that people need to be informed on the issue.

According to the American Psychological Association, depression as defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) as “a debilitating depressed mood or loss of interest in daily activities for a least two consistent weeks,” and must be accompanied by a major depressive episode that occurred in the past twelve months.

According to the Anxiety and Depression Organization of America, other symptoms of depression include “decrease or increase in appetite, insomnia or hypersomnia, psychomotor agitation or retardation, constant fatigue, feelings of worthlessness or excessive and inappropriate guilt, recurrent thoughts of death and suicidal ideation with or without specific plans for committing suicide, and cognitive difficulties, such as, diminished ability to think, concentrate and make decisions.”

However, as common as all these symptoms may appear, studies have shown that depression is over diagnosed. I would argue that our culture has simply been throwing pills

at the real problem. According to an article from The Atlantic, which includes figures from a Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health study, over the course of 20 years, the U.S. has seen a 400 percent increase in antidepressant use. In reality, over 60 percent of adults previously diagnosed with depression by a clinician did not meet the official criteria for the depression upon re-evaluation in the study.

Overmedicating a large portion of the nation is not getting at the heart of the problem. People feel sad, go to a doctor, and the doctor gives them medication to “increase quality of life.” We give people pills and tell them to be happy again. “Depressed” teenagers, are not being taught how to cope with anxiety and stress.

I have been fortunate enough to have an amazing family. I have always known there are places for me to turn if I need help or someone to talk to. However, that cannot be said for everybody.

So many students are battling bottled-up emotions. They’re stressed and sad with nowhere to turn, so society just tells them they’re depressed without giving them any tools to overcome it. For some people, that’s all they need to remain stuck in a cycle of prescription medication.

That’s the point of this issue you’re reading right now. Red Ink wants to talk about things that matter, and hopefully, let students at EHS know they are not alone in their struggles.

So Merry Christmas from the Red Ink staff. We realize that holidays can be a hard time for many people for a myriad of reasons, and sometimes the best gift you can give someone is a listening ear.



ISSUES CHANGE: SO SHOULD APPROACH

Current generation left unprepared for life after highschool



Staff Opinion

Let’s get something straight: The school administration’s heart is in the right place with programs like Eaton 101 and Red Ribbon Week and their efforts are to be applauded.

Yet these programs fail to address the heavy and difficult topics that teens have been dealing with, don’t provide the solutions to solve rapidly growing epidemics and issues.

Kids literally have been skipping and/or leaving class to vape in the bathrooms. And only now, after far too much time has passed, the administration has taken steps to prevent an already widespread epidemic of drug abuse...by posting simple public service messages on posters outside the bathroom doors. Something more is needed.

A recent report from the CDC has found that Colorado leads 37 states in teen vaping use. Nationally, out of 1300 stu-

dents surveyed, 25.7% said they didn’t realize that they were inhaling anything more than flavoring.

Every generation has its own issues, but according to Psychology Today, the average high schooler has the same stress levels as a psychiatric patient of the 1950s. Times have changed and health issues should shift to include mental health as well. Eaton’s school administration should adapt to the issues directly facing their current classes.

Events like Red Ribbon week and the safe driving presentation in the spring are good, but these approaches, especially compared with the actual severity of the issue, seem redundant or rather tame, and students at Eaton High School are left unprepared for the darker and often unspoken villains of modern teens.

Eaton 101 is essential to the freshman experience—Excellence, Awareness, Tenacity, Ownership, and Noteworthiness are all noble goals. But upperclassmen have no programs like Eaton 101

for dealing with actual struggles. The issues directly facing current classes are being overlooked by staff and administrators.

We should be having assemblies on the tough topics, such as drug abuse, suicide, domestic abuse, depression, and anxiety, to make them more approachable.

Students are depressed, students struggle with anxiety and drug abuse. Kids are killing themselves in Greeley, but all the freshmen get is a safe driving assembly every year.

In order to address these difficult issues, they must first be approached. Eaton 101 is a beneficial program for the freshman but there needs to be similar programs available to the rest of the school.

Principal Tapia’s Student Advisory Council is a step in the right direction, but further actions to support the rest of the students need to be taken to ensure student success in school and beyond.

More education is needed to address the issues relevant to today’s high school students.