

# Depression causes, cures discussed at lecture

By Pam Alward

If you are a woman, you are more likely to be depressed more often than most men, the director of the UNL Psychological Consultation Center said Tuesday.

Natalie Porter spoke about "Women, Depression and Suicide" at the second of eight "Women in Perspective" lectures sponsored by the Women's Resource Center.

Women seek treatment for their depression twice as often as men do, Porter said. The higher depression rate for women could be misleading, however, because most men are reluctant to seek help for their depression, she said.

Depression seems to have many causes, Porter said. The main one being loss of a loved one. This kind usually abates after being untreated for nine months.

Depression in the clinical sense, which lasts more than weeks, is characterized by low self-esteem, changes in biological functions and either a great reduction or increase in activity, she said.

One out of every 10 people is clinically depressed at one point in their life, Porter said.

Many theories exist which explain the cause of depression.

"Feminist theories of depression differ from traditional ways psychologists look at women's depression," Porter said.

Traditional theories centered almost completely on hormonal factors in women, she said. One traditional theory blamed early childhood losses for many women's depression.

One feminist theory also links hormonal changes to depression. Pregnant women and those going through menopause or other hormonal changes undergo possibly adverse role changes that can lead to depressions.

"Mental health problems in general are greater for married women than for single women. With men it is the opposite," Porter said.

Another feminist theory is called learned helplessness.

"It is a result of the socialization of women," Porter said. "We have become more passive and dependent and helpless."

A third theory involves social status. Women feel guilty if they reclaim society's traditional values or forsake them entirely, she said.

"We've got to be careful about taking on a double set of guilt," Porter said.

Other causes of depression in women are incest and rape. Sometimes it takes four to six years to recover from such violations, she said.

One result of depression is suicide.

Time is the best cure for depression, Porter said. But if it is recognized early, the person should act to prevent it.

"The best way to beat it is aerobic exercise," Porter said.

Students interested in participating in today's Homecoming Royalty elections can vote in polling places in the Nebraska and East unions from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Nine men and nine women are finalists for the royalty honors. The names of the winning couple will be announced at half time of Saturday's

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## Shorts

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Illustration by Chris Medley

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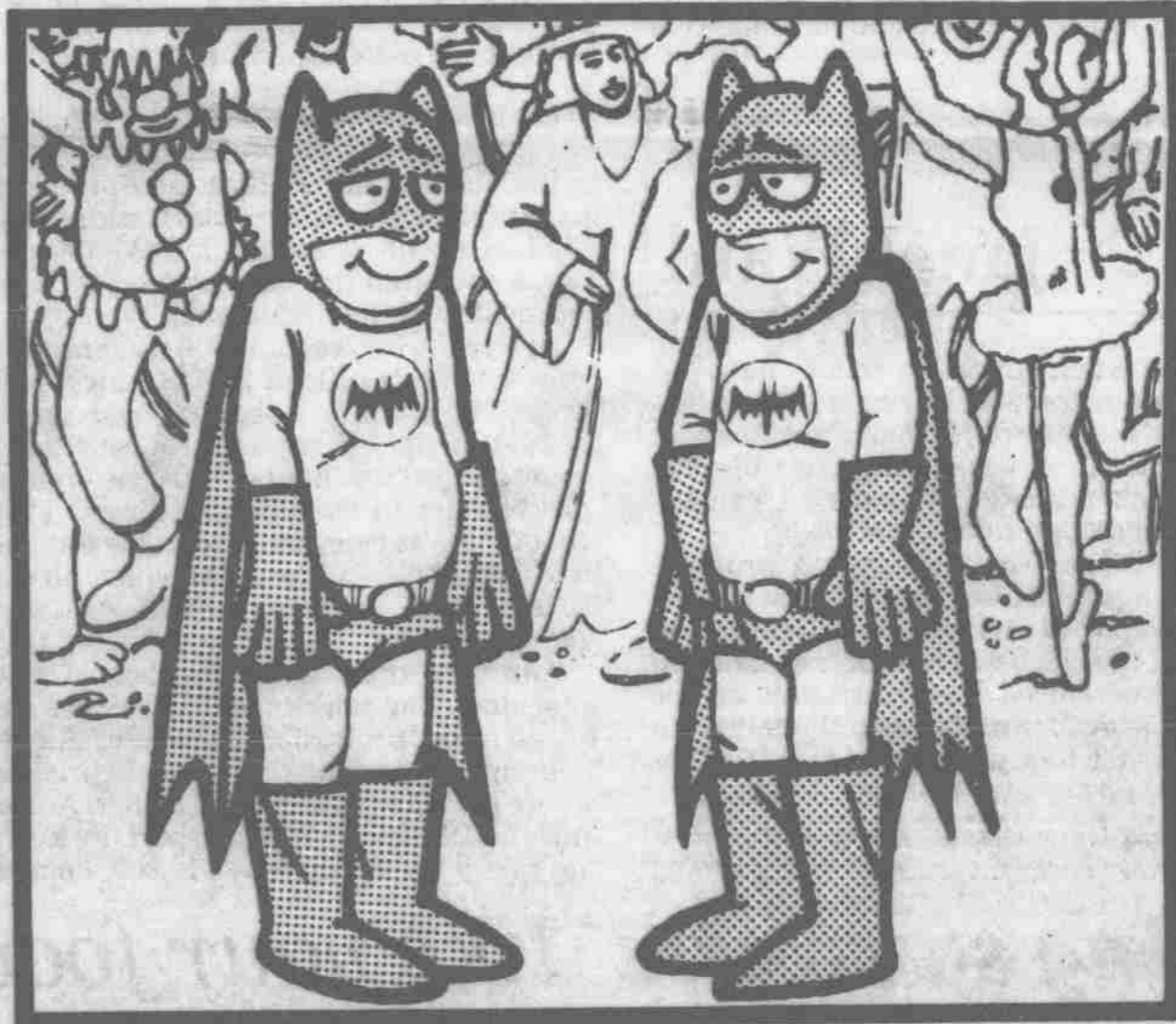
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