

Forced Depression

In unit F3A we are forced into a state of depression. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5th edition (DSM-5)* states that five or more listed symptoms (e.g. depressed mood, diminished interest in activity, weight loss or gain, insomnia or hypersomnia, psychomotor agitation, fatigue, feelings of worthlessness or excessive or inappropriate guilt, diminished ability to think or concentrate, recurrent thoughts of death) need to be present to diagnose someone as Major Depressive. I contend that every man that has lived in F3A at Lee Correctional Institution during the COVID-19 quarantine could be diagnosed with this disorder.

We are forced to be depressed because we are stuck in our rooms with only a bed to lie in and a toilet to crap in. Our interest in activity is diminished because we are unable to participate in activities. Weight loss is forced upon us due to lower portions of food, lesser quality of food and lower canteen limits. Hypersomnia is forced on us because the only activity we can involve ourselves in is sleeping. "Lay down and get some time served" is a common colloquialism in prison. Psychomotor agitation and retardation is forced upon us because pacing is the only way we can exercise. Our whole life is not only slowed down but brought to a screeching halt. Fatigue is forced upon us because lying in the bed for long periods of time will make you sleepy. We feel worthless because our existence is serving no purpose; we cannot even speak to family regularly. We feel inappropriate guilt because being locked in our rooms is usually for punitive reasons and we equate being locked in our cells with punishment. Our ability to concentrate is diminished because the only thing we can think about is getting out of our cells. Recurrent thoughts of death are a common response to all of the symptoms mentioned above.

This leaves no symptom unchecked and therefore we are being forced into a Major Depressive disorder by Lee Correctional Institution and South Carolina Department of Corrections. If this continued state of lockdown or "quarantine" continues, a plan needs to be put in place for the men in F3A to have outside recreation and for men to be involved in some activities. Mental Health counseling needs to be

offered to every man that has suffered through these depressing times. We have missed the entire summer and will be shocked when we realize the seasons have changed. The current way things are being handled in this dorm makes our environment dangerous, its dangerous to our mental health, for the safety of SCDC employees, and it is creating new problems in men that need rehabilitation instead of being forced into traumatic and depressive living conditions.