



### **Tackling Depression at Work—A practical guide for employees and managers**

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In New Zealand, up to one in ten men and one in five women will suffer from depression at some time in their lives. Depression not only leads to a reduction in personal happiness, for workers it is likely to lead to a drop in productivity. The prevalence and severity of effects mean that managers need to become more adept at identifying and dealing with the symptoms of depression in their staff.

The two authors of this book are based at the Black Dog Institute in Sydney. Eyers is a clinical psychologist, and Parker is the executive director of the institute and Scientia professor of psychiatry at the University of New South Wales. These are people who know what they are talking about.

The book addresses major depressive disorder and bipolar disorder. It is divided into 12 chapters, each focusing on an aspect of depression. The authors use a combination of factual information and real-life stories told by people who have experienced depression.

In my view, they have struck a successful balance between the clinical and the personal and have gone a long way towards lifting the aura of mystery around depression.

Depression is a complex condition, and no one solution fits everyone: medication, counseling, exercise, diet, social support and other factors have all got a role to play; the balance will depend on the individual. With this in mind, the focus in this book is upon the individual—getting them to recognise their problem, get the help they need and work towards full recovery using a variety of approaches.

However, while the individual carries the main load, managers, HR professionals, friends and family all have a role to play in assisting this recovery. This book provides context to help you understand the difficulties being faced by depressed staff, and gives some possible assistance managers can give to help bring them back to full recovery while still being a valued member of your team.

The Black Dog Institute has an excellent website that I heartily recommend—[www.blackdoginstitute.org.au](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au). This includes videos and fact sheets on various aspects of mental health.

Here in New Zealand we are lucky enough to have the Mental Health Foundation Working Well team who provide training and resources in workplaces aimed at giving managers and staff the skills and understanding to deal with mental health disorders at work and I thoroughly recommend their work <http://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/page/31-Welcome>