

Making Everything Easier!™

Managing Depression with CBT

FOR
DUMMIES®

Learn to:

- Understand depression and how it develops
- Identify and correct negative thought patterns
- Combat your depression and rebalance your life

Brian Thomson
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Cognitive Behavioural Therapists



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Managing Depression with CBT For Dummies®

Visit

www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/managingdepressionwithcbt to view this book's cheat sheet.

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Managing Depression with CBT For Dummies[®]

**by Brian Thomson and Matt
Broadway-Horner**



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Introduction

Depression is one of the most common health problems that people experience, and it can decimate lives. Research shows that one in five people suffer from depression at some time, and yet it's still one of the most misunderstood conditions, often confused with sadness, misery or unhappiness.

This book guides you towards a better understanding of depression and helps you to recognise and address the symptoms by using an approach called cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). The great thing about CBT is that it uses tried and tested methods to help you understand how you became depressed – and what is keeping you depressed – and empowers you not only to help yourself overcome it and start living a fulfilling life again, but to help other people too.

One patient told us that she'd suffered from depression all her life, and that she thought it was genetically based because both her parents had suffered from depression throughout their lives. However, she agreed to try CBT and within the first few weeks she had begun to understand her depression better and to feel empowered to take charge of her life. By the time she completed her treatment, she felt confident in dealing with whatever life threw at her without sinking into depression. At the end of her treatment, she sent us a lovely thank-you card, in which she said:

'If only someone had explained these things to me when I was young, my life would have been so different. I used to think that it was the things that happened in my life that made me depressed, but you've taught me that it's more about how you respond to what happens, and this has given me the power to keep my depression at bay.'

Similarly, CBT can work for you, helping you to understand and overcome your own depression. And with all the practical information gathered together between its covers, *Managing Depression with CBT For Dummies* is just the tool you need to get started and use CBT yourself.

About This Book

When you're suffering from depression, you often feel isolated and as if nothing can improve your situation. But think of this book as an encouraging friend who's on your side. Within it, I help you to become your own therapist, leading you to understand what causes depression, what keeps you depressed, and what effects depression has on your life and the people around you. I then give you lots of tips for taking back control of your life and for improving your mood.

To do so, I describe CBT and the many practical ways in which it can help. More specifically, I examine:

- ✔ The basic CBT model of how depression affects your thoughts, feelings and behaviour
- ✔ The scientific bases for how CBT can help
- ✔ Ways to identify the specific problems that depression is causing in your life
- ✔ How to identify and achieve realistic goals
- ✔ How to discover what causes you to become depressed
- ✔ How to overcome depression
- ✔ How to prevent depression recurring in the future

Conventions Used in This Book

My aim is to make this book extremely easy to find your way around, and to help out I use a number of conventions:

- ✓ *Italics* indicate new words and medical terms. Although I stick to language that avoids jargon and technical terms as much as possible, some new concepts occasionally arise that require explanation. I highlight these with italics and explain the term prior to discussing how to use it.
- ✓ **Boldfaced font** is used to highlight key concepts or action steps to take in lists.
- ✓ Monofont indicates a website address.

Throughout the chapter I include areas shaded in grey, called *sidebars*. These paragraphs contain information that's interesting and adds more depth but isn't vital; you can skip them if you prefer, safe in the knowledge that you're not missing anything essential.

Foolish Assumptions

In writing this book, I assume that you (or someone you know) has been suffering from depression. You want to understand quickly how depression works and discover how CBT can help you to overcome that depression.

I certainly don't assume that you have any existing medical knowledge or experience at all. You just want practical information, easily available, and to be rid of depression permanently.

How This Book Is Organised

I arrange this book into four parts.

Part I: Understanding Depression and How It Develops

An old adage goes: know your enemy! I describe in Chapter 1 how depression works, how and why it often arises, and I distinguish normal feelings such as sadness and misery from the more serious experience of depression. In Chapter 2, I introduce you to the tool you're going to use to defeat your depression (CBT) and explain the ways in which it helps.

Part II: Putting What You Discover into Action

This part covers attacking the symptoms of depression different ways. Chapter 3 focuses on how you think – whether your thinking is positive or negative – because understanding this allows you to change to more healthy, positive methods of thinking (the subject of Chapter 4). I take a look at emotions and feelings in Chapter 5, supplying practical tips for managing your depressive symptoms. The third front in your battle against depression is changing behaviour, as I discuss in Chapter 6. Part of this change is to improve your self-esteem (Chapter 7) and become more assertive (Chapter 8). Chapter 9 is a bit different and introduces you to a very effective way to help in your recovery: the ancient (and yet also entirely contemporary) art of mindfulness.

Part III: Maintaining Momentum

The subject of this part is moving on from depression. Chapter 10 encourages you to rediscover and enjoy your healthy, happy life. Chapter 11 describes how to prevent a relapse, including practical hints for spotting and dealing with the danger signs and situations.

Part IV: The Part of Tens

This regular *For Dummies* section presents some succinct advice and tips for tackling depression in Chapter 12, and reveals negative ways of thinking that can hold you back while recovering from depression in Chapter 13.

I follow the Part of Tens with an appendix, in which I provide several forms for you to complete to increase your self-knowledge.

Icons Used in This Book

Throughout this book, you'll find icons in the margins that will help you quickly identify different types of information and assist you in finding what you're looking for more easily.



The text next to this icon contains particularly useful information or hints to save you time.



This information is important and worth bearing in mind while tackling depression.



Many misconceptions and just plain errors surround depression, and I use this icon to show where I kick such myths into the long grass.



I include loads of examples to demonstrate and clarify the new ideas and models that I present. You can easily identify them via this icon. The stories don't involve real people but are illustrations using composites of the many people I've worked with over many years as a therapist.



I want this book to be as practical as possible, and so beside this icon I supply little exercises for you to try out. They're all proven activities that help people get over depression.

Where to Go from Here

Although you can certainly get loads of useful information by reading from Chapter 1 through to the end, I designed this book so that you can dip in and out as you like, reading bits that interest you at a particular moment. If you want immediate tips and hints to help you as quickly as possible, go directly to Chapters 12 and 13. Or if lack of self-esteem is a problem for you, turn straight to Chapter 7. To help you locate relevant

material easily elsewhere in the book, I employ cross-references as well as a comprehensive index.

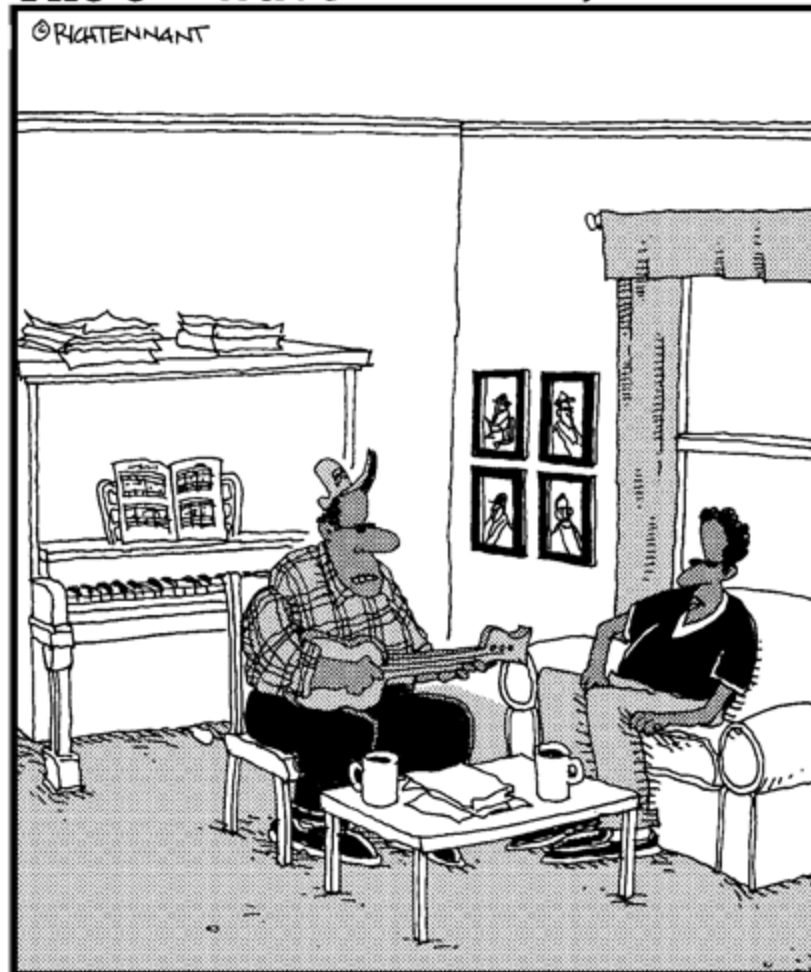
Remember, though, that if you want your life to be different, you have to start doing things differently. Just understanding or knowing the theory doesn't in itself overcome your depression. Therefore pay attention to, and complete, the recommended activities and act on what you discover. And be sure that my best wishes go with you.

Part I

Understanding Depression and How It Develops

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



“The blues I can handle. Usually I can express it with a simple 12-bar guitar lick. Depression, on the other hand, takes a 3-act opera.”

In this part...

You discover all about moods – including the differences between sadness, misery and depression – as well as the symptoms of depression. I also introduce you to cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and you begin the journey of becoming your own therapist. You find out all you need to know to use the most scientific form of therapy available to overcome your depression.

Chapter 1

Introducing Moods and Depression

In This Chapter

- ▶ Defining depression
 - ▶ Describing the symptoms
 - ▶ Understanding how your depression affects you
-

To tackle depression, you have to know a little about the condition. In particular, you have to understand how it differs from normal emotions and moods such as sadness and misery.

In this chapter, I describe the main symptoms of depression and help you relate them to your own experience. I include a number of examples to illustrate different aspects of depression in the hope that they help you when you're thinking about your own situation. I also provide an overview of this book as whole, including cross-references to where you can find further relevant material in other chapters. So if something particularly strikes you while reading, just turn straight to the chapter to get more information.

Recognising the Differences: Sadness, Misery and Depression

The overall human experience doesn't vary that much. Throughout life, everyone has all sorts of experiences and has to face difficult situations; everybody has moments of contentment and periods of trouble. The differences for people