

Get it done when you're depressed

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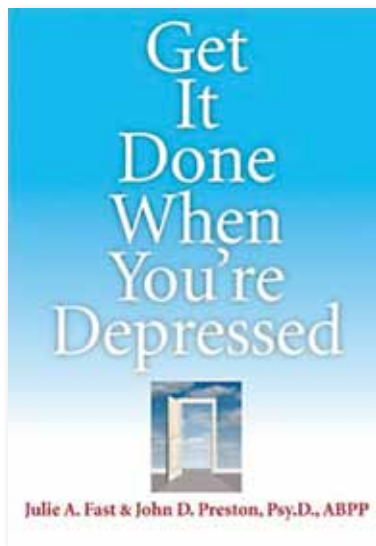
OVERALL RATING Good

STRENGTHS Practical; written by knowledgeable authors

WEAKNESSES Some redundancy

AUDIENCE Patients, families, therapists, and family physicians

This is one of the many books that promote and support what I would call a "do it yourself" approach to mood disorders. It contains well-selected testimonies by real patients, outlining the frequent problems encountered by depressed people. In each case, Dr Preston, a



psychologist, gives his therapeutic opinion.

Julie Fast, one of the authors, has been struggling with depression for many years. She admits that depression might be a chronic situation but believes that no one is doomed to be a passive victim. She developed strategies to cope with her chronic moods and is now sharing her successful experience.

The book contains 50 chapters, each covering a specific strategy addressing the many facets of depression. All chapters share the same structure: the nature of the difficulty, a description of its frequent

manifestations, a testimony by a patient followed by Fast's testimony, some exercises, and, finally, the clinical perspective of the therapist.

The book's structure and approach is fairly effective. This book is not necessarily intended to be read from cover to cover. Interested readers can simply browse the book and choose a topic of interest; reading an appropriate section might be sufficient to get some working strategies.

The book is relevant to both depressed individuals and their primary health care providers. It can be used to provide both parties with the words to describe vague or unclear symptoms and emotions, giving patients better ways to express their feelings. For physicians or therapists, the book offers nonpharmaceutical means to help depressed patients.

The book is easy to read, well written, and well focused. Doctors won't gain new knowledge but they could use the book to learn some interesting strategies that could be useful to their patients. Patients can be advised to read all or some parts of the book and discuss certain topics with their physicians.

—Robert Gagnon MD

Dr Gagnon practises family medicine at the Centre Hospitalier St-Joseph in La Malbaie, Que.