

Dealing with Depression at Work

Start – Finding Help

If you've recognised that you're depressed, then hopefully, you've already begun treatment for depression, visited your local GP and are working with a clinician and / or support group. This is the best way to help you cope with your symptoms, which in turn will help you better manage your professional life.

If you are reading this you are likely to have an Employee Assistance Program with services available at your place of work. You may be entitled to some free sessions of counselling.

Finding the Right Support

Having the right support, a trusted friend, ideally at work, who can support you through this difficult time. There will be tough days—some that seem nearly impossible—on the road to recovery, and to have someone to lean on and talk to is extremely important. There may be others at work who have been through a similar experience or your organisation might have an Onsite Support Service – this person will be ideal to talk to.

Group therapy is another great way to see that you're not alone in your struggle. This can often be one of the best places to learn coping strategies for the workplace from other participants.

Set Clear Goals

One of the difficult things about some forms of depression is that it can be difficult to focus. To set small, achievable goals on a daily basis can be helpful. Creating lists for the day and highlight top priorities, which will ensure that you are meeting the needs of the most important audience—the employer. Notes are important, especially when your memory can be unreliable. Do whatever helps you, and don't be too hard on yourself when you have a difficult day.

Speak Up

If things are incredibly difficult, or if you need to take more time off than your sick days allow for, you may need to say something to your employer. This can be helpful to your employer particularly if your work focus is not 100% and understanding the cause takes away any assumptions that you may have lost interest in the job.

Take Care of Yourself

Taking care of you is OK. Not only will it benefit you, but also those you work, live and socialise with.

It is not being selfish to recognise your needs and ensure you have good balance in your life.

Finally, remember that you won't only get through this, you may even be a better employee and discover new things about yourself because of it. In the meantime, find your village of support and don't ever feel the need to suffer in silence. You are definitely not alone.

Some ideas stated here are from an article in the Daily Muse by Betsy Aimee (USA)

For further information:

<http://www.mentalhealth.org.nz>

www.depression.org.nz

www.thelowdown.co.nz