

Book Review

Title: *Helping Your Teenager Beat Depression: A Problem-Solving Approach for Families*

Authors: Katharina Manassis and Anne Marie Levac

Publisher: Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House, 2004

Paper, ISBN: 1-890627-49-6, 201 pages

Cost: \$19.95

Reviewer: Shirley Gerum, Center on Disability Studies, University of Hawaii at Manoa

Why do depressed teens get angry? “Probably because anger doesn’t feel so bad,” explain Katharina Manassis, MD, FRCPC and Anne Marie Levac, RN, MN, in Chapter 10 (p.95) of *Helping Your Teenager Beat Depression*.

Manassis and Levac explain how anger and other negative emotions make one feel “strong—not vulnerable, like fear or sadness—” (p.95) and address how teens get to this point and how parents can help them out.

The advice and problem-solving strategies in this paperback are based on a form of cognitive-behavioral therapy the authors call L.E.A.P.: (1) LABELing their own thoughts and emotions regarding their teen’s behavior; (2) EMPATHIZING with their teen’s perspective and exploring options for response; (3) APPLYing an alternative way to respond, and (4) PICKing a follow-up time to think through the process and PLAN the next steps.

The workbook-style format is user-friendly and invites parents to respond to situational roadblocks with this clearly-outlined process. Clearly-defined, eye-catching boxes highlight key points; checklists help readers identify and write their own responses to behaviors. Situational problem-solving tips are included as are exercises for changing unhealthy patterns: dealing with anxious situations; improving habits, causes and treatments of depression; seeking professional help for your teen; discussing what is “normal” for adolescents; dealing with school and peers, and the importance of activity/getting teens moving.

There is empathy and encouragement for parents as well as teens throughout the pages. The authors provide parents with a checklist of what to expect at each step when seeking professional counseling and mental health assessments—including, what conditions need to be ruled out, what happens after assessments, worst-case scenarios, deciding if medications are right for your teen, side effects, school avoidance, bullies, and peer pressure. Chapter 13 anticipates and addresses the ripple effect in families of depressed teens: “Talking About Depression” (pp.128-129), “What Should a Parent Who is Depressed Do?”(pp. 129-130), and “Parenting Despite Depression (p. 132).

The combined author education and experience bring a wide range of depth to this publication. Anyone who parents, works with, or teaches teens may find the insights, suggestions in this book helpful.

The publisher’s use of extra-large print for paragraph topics and key points are helpful. However, the two-tone fractured shading for the page numbers creates reading challenges. The publisher’s choice of various shades of pinks, with a photo of a lone young girl for the book

cover will catch the eye of parents of teen girls. The chance taken here is that this insightful book may go unnoticed—or dismissed by parents of young males.