

A Black Dog About The House



Book Contributor Guidelines and Question List

To the Contributor

Thank you for your interest in contributing to the book, 'The Black Dog About the House – supporting a partner with depression'. We really appreciate you and your journey and feel that your story will resonate with other carers who need the support and understanding from those who have gone before them or remain in the struggle.

Book Aim

The aim of this book is to raise awareness and shed insight into the journey of people supporting a partner with depression. It is in sharing your raw and honest account that you allow the reader to find hope and healing. By being vulnerable and truthful, your story will not only honour and bear witness to your account, but provide a rich background for the reader to relate to your journey and that of their circumstances.

Submission Guidelines

On the next page you will find a template filled with questions. You are not obligated to answer all of the questions. You are more than welcome to write your story without using the template but if you feel they will help you, just answer each one in the template box that relates to your story and send this document back to us via email. The questions are written using past tense. If your carer role is ongoing, please answer the questions in the present tense to reflect your current situation.

The template will grow as you write into it, so don't worry about the length of the document when you return it to us.

Please save the file with your name in it so we know which contribution is yours.

You are welcome to use a pen name if you prefer and we are hoping to read your honest feelings about your story. Feel free to be as raw and unfiltered as you like and we will ensure your story is shared with sensitivity.

Please note that we will use either all or parts of your story to share in the book.

You may not be someone who spends time writing, or feel that you write well, but rest assured, we will make sure your words flow and that your story connects with readers. Just write from your heart using the first person perspective (in other words 'I feel this...'), and let us take care of the details.

If you have any questions or concerns, please email us at ablackdogaboutthehouse@opel.com.au.

Thank you for contributing to this wonderful project and we hope you have found a place of love and healing in sharing your story. Writing our thoughts can be a transformational process and witnessing it in print can further cement the act of releasing the past and moving forward stronger and happier.

*We look forward to working with you and sincerely grateful for who you are and your courage.
Blessing to you,*

Carmela & Miriam

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Following are Question Prompts to help you write your story

	Please answer the following questions	Please write your responses here
1	How did you meet your spouse/partner?	
2	<p>What were and the circumstances that brought you together?</p> <p>Include pertinent events and how it has affected or changed your life. Include here marriage or any other commitment ceremony details if relevant.</p>	<p><i>Please email</i> <i>ablackdogaboutthehouse@opel.com.au</i> <i>to request MS Word file to respond to questions.</i></p>
3	What qualities did you admire in your partner why?	
4	<p>At what point did you begin the journey of caring for your partner through depression?</p> <p>Was it at a particular moment, i.e. depression triggered by family or friend dying for example, or was it a long time in coming? (For example a build-up of many events/hardships that brought on the depression).</p> <p>If it was triggered by an event e.g. death in the family etc., please expand on the circumstances.</p>	
5	<p>Did your partner tell you about his/her depression at the start of the relationship, what was your reaction?</p> <p>Did their illness concern you and why?</p>	
6	How did your partners depression affect your relationship emotionally and physically?	
7	What symptoms did your partner display, e.g. mood swings, anger, rage, agitated behaviour, thoughts of suicide, socially self-isolated, poor sleep, etc.	
8	<p>How did you handle your partner's symptoms? What emotions did you experience?</p> <p>Explain the internal struggle you have experienced and how you worked through it?</p>	
9	<p>Have you experienced a change in your physical health due to your struggles?</p> <p>Describe your situation. Explain what and how it affected you.</p>	
10	<p>Do you and your partner have any children and if so, how did they deal with a parent with depression?</p> <p>Did you notice any behaviour changes?</p> <p>How did you parent them to understand depression and understand their feelings toward mental illness?</p> <p>Explain how the parent/child relationship was impacted for you and your partner.</p>	
11	What were you most afraid of during the relationship? What fears came up most for you and why? Has this	

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	changed over time?	
12	If you experienced physical violence from your partner, how did you handle this and what emotions did you experience?	<p>Please email ablackdogaboutthehouse@opel.com.au to request MS Word file to respond to questions.</p>
13	<p>What relationships were impacted by the depression (e.g. friends or family)?</p> <p>Did your struggle cause a temporary or permanent disconnect from someone close to you? If so, who and was it and explain the impact.</p>	
14	<p>What were your coping mechanisms during the relationship, e.g. (exercise, meditation, support groups, prayer, etc.) and how did it help you or not?</p> <p>Some examples: provided clarity after an argument, timeout to refocus, kept you mentally healthy so that you could look after yourself and your children etc.</p>	
15	<p>Did you hide or share your feelings with family, friends or co- workers?</p> <p>If you shared them, did you feel supported? What learning came from sharing? Have your interactions with those people changed over time?</p>	
16	<p>If you chose to hide your feelings, explain why. Did this create additional stress or problems for you?</p> <p>Looking back, would you have done this differently?</p>	
17	<p>Are you still together/married?</p> <p>If <i>yes</i>, provide insight on the reasons why and how as a couple, you have both grown from the experience.</p> <p>If <i>no</i>, what opportunities have presented themselves since the separation, e.g. new partner, new career, etc.</p>	
18	<p>Are you and your loved one still journeying through this time of mental illness?</p> <p>If so, please share how you are feeling at this point. Please be as honest as you can and as raw as you need to be.</p> <p>If not, do you have some insights you can share? For example - what gifts lie in your struggles? How has this experience helped you to grow who you are today? What silver lining has resulted from your situation? What would you tell others to help them through their journey?</p>	
19	<p>Hardships have a way of redefining our life. What does hope mean to you?</p>	
20	<p>Please provide a favourite quote that supports or represents you and/or your journey.</p>	