

When nothing matters anymore: a survival guide for depressed teens

Cobain, B. *Když už naničem nezáleží: Rádce pro dospívající s depresí a poruchami nálad*. 1st ed. Praha: 2018. 149 p. ISBN 978-80-262-1387-1

Reviewed by Tereza Houšková

As the title suggests, this is a book with a difficult content addressing a mental disorder identified as depression. Research clearly suggests an increase in mental disorders, primarily in the teenage period. Therefore, this monograph, which is intended especially for teenage persons, is absolutely desirable.

One of the main motives of the author Bev Cobain for writing this book was the death of her cousin. The Nirvana singer Kurt Cobain, who was a model for many teenagers, committed suicide as a result of deep depressions. Because the author herself is a licensed practical nurse in psychiatry and mental health and as a teenager had rich experience with sexual abuse, panic disorder, alcoholism, depression and suicidal thoughts, she decided to offer a helping hand to those who suffer from these problems. Bev Cobain is also member of several boards in suicide prevention associations. She is the co-author of the monograph *Dying to Be Free: A Healing Guide for Families After a Suicide*, which she wrote together with Jean Larch.

The book "When Nothing Matters Anymore" has two main parts and seven chapters. Chapters one to five present the basic facts about depression, types of depression, manifestations, effects of depression in the brain, and associations between depression and suicide. In the second part of the book the author presents practical information on where to find help and how to keep up one's strength when symptoms of depression occur. The author describes various approaches to the treatment of depression including pharmacotherapy, therapeutic approaches, self-help techniques and exercise. A very important part of the last chapter is a section entitled Top Ten Questions, in which Cobain summarizes what her readers ask in their letters. Using a supportive language, the author briefly explains everything or refers to various parts in the book. Cobain says: "*No one is immune to tragedy, bad luck or ill fate. But everyone can learn to stand strong against hardship and adversity. Don't let depression*

get the best of you. You can survive physically, emotionally and spiritually. Some problems may even be gifts in disguise."

The language of the monograph is very warm-hearted even for the lay community. In the text, young adults should be able to find both scientific facts relating to depression and support and encouragement. The chapters of the book also include case reports, which explain specific problems using specific cases of the persons who underwent these problems.

As a reviewer, however, my subjective opinion is that the many case reports concerning this very negative issue are likely to give a rather frustrating and anxiety-causing impression. A minor negative aspect is that the original was written in a different country with different mentality. This need does not always match the Czech mentality including the population of young people. Specifically, this includes children's gangs and various services which are provided in a different way.

On the other hand, a great advantage is the large number of worksheets that can be freely copied and used. The book also includes a number of references to websites, telephone numbers and other services available in the Czech Republic that people suffering from depression, problems with habit-forming substances or suicidal tendencies can use.

Overall, I think the monograph is a useful guide for a young person who fights depression. In conclusion, I would like to cite the words of Bev Cobain that she addressed to the parents of these young people. These words express the mission of the whole book. *"You are your teen's most valuable ally in the fight to defeat depression. Depression is a treatable problem. You have every reason to feel hopeful about your teen's future."*

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