

5. BOOK REVIEW - BOOK REVIEW - BOOK REVIEW

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**SPEAKING OF SADNESS:
DEPRESSION, DISCONNECTION AND THE
MEANINGS OF ILLNESS**

AUTHOR: David Karp
PUBLISHERS: Oxford University Press,
1996, \$25-00

In recent years there has been a steady accumulation of published literature on mental health care for people with a serious psychiatric illness. This publication by David Karp gives sustained attention to the impact of depression on relationships and encounters with those who suffer from it.

The generation of research materials was through in-depth interviewing analysis of patient letters and notes, as well as careful documentation of observations and recordings from formal interviews with families, patients and clinical staff.

What makes this book so outstanding is that it could be read by any person across a variety of specialty fields from philosophy, social work, nursing, pharmacy, occupational health, any professional person who is concerned with the care and treatment of depressed people.

The distinctiveness of Karp's contribution to the mental health professional role is situated in how he adroitly shifts between the features of depression, its historical situation and care, and the way we understand and relate to the "person" suffering within it. It is clear that the author respects and appreciates the dynamic and multi-fasciated nature of mental health problems and there is much in this book that speaks to his uniqueness of perspective and professional identity. For these reasons I believe that his book will serve as an important reference point for professionals researching and working with depressed people.

This book is analytically sound and carefully written, making it essential reading for educators, clinicians and postgraduate students concerned with the experience of depression and the therapeutic relationship.

NICHOLAS PROCTER
RN, RPN, BA, GRAD DIP ADULT ED.
**LECTURER: FACULTY OF NURSING
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA**