Diagnostic and Treatment Algorithm

BLACK DOG INSTITUTE

Step 1. Is the Patient Depressed?

- **Depressed mood**
- **Decreased self-esteem**
- **Self-criticism**

Step 2. Is it Clinical Depression?

Depressed mood
+
Associated symptoms
+
Duration (2 Weeks)
+
Disability

Step 3. Exclude other primary condition (eg anxiety, other physical or organic disorder)

Step 4. Assessment

1st part of the GP mental health care plan (item number 2710)

- **Assess for melancholic, psychotic & bipolar features**
- **Personality style**
- **Any disordered personality function**
- **Drug and alcohol history**
- **Any primary anxiety disorder**
- **Suicide and self-injury risk**
- **Current daily functioning**
- **Medical conditions**
- **Drug interactions**
- **Family history**
- **Social world (especially work and relationships)**
- **Acute triggers and chronic stressors**

Step 5. Derive and Negotiate a Management Plan

2nd part of the GP mental health care plan (item number 2710)

Consider:

- **Antidepressants**
- **Antipsychotics for psychotic depression**
- **Mood stabilisers & other drugs for bipolar depression**
- **Non-physical treatments:**
  - **adjunctive for psychotic and melancholic depression**
  - **potentially primary treatment for non-melancholic depression.**
- **Counselling and common sense advice for all patients with depression**

Step 6. Assertive Follow-up (item number 2712)

- **Review at appropriate intervals**
- **Educate on recognition of relapse**
- **Encourage continued compliance with biological and psychosocial therapies**