

News Release

16 October 2008

2008/2009 BLACK DOG INSTITUTE WRITING COMPETITION

Tackling Mood Disorders in the Workplace is the theme of the latest Black Dog Institute Writing Competition.

According to Professor Gordon Parker, Executive Director of the Black Dog Institute, the workplace can be either supportive or unfriendly for someone with a mood disorder and there can be a wide divide between how workmates and bosses react to the situation.

“When someone has a mood disorder – depression or bipolar disorder – their capacity to work is often seriously diminished” stated Professor Parker. “They may or may not be aware of its impact on their work but they are usually extremely sensitive to how their fellow workers and managers interact with them.”

This writing competition is an opportunity to take the next step in learning more about how people with a mood disorder, co-workers and bosses cope – positively or poorly – in dealing with the many immediate problems and potential concerns in the workplace.

Professor Parker suggested that “there are right and wrong answers” and that the Institute was looking for “people’s strategies” – both those that were effective and those that were less successful – in order to derive a workplace blueprint for dealing with mood disorders.

“What we want is for workers to describe what either worked or did not work for them,” he said. “Further, we wish to hear from managers and co-workers about what they have found helpful when they are confronted with this issue.”

Professor Parker observed that this was the fifth Black Dog Institute in as many years. Three of the competitions have resulted in the publication of books by distinguished publishing companies. Last year’s competition, which took a candid look at mood disorders in adolescence, has also produced material for a fourth book.

“What the Institute is aiming for is to provide new insights. People have commented that most books on mood disorders have been written from the outside looking in. Drawing together insights and personal accounts from those who have experienced mood disorders is allowing us to reverse this approach. ‘Inside out’ views offer rich information that assists in breaking down the mysteries of mood disorders and their management,” he said.

In collating and broadcasting people’s stories to a wider audience, the Black Dog Institute believes it will be able to assemble from its latest competition a Jobholder’s Toolkit of effective strategies to use to tackle mood disorders in the workforce.

The 2008/2009 competition invites entries from the Australasian region.

Prizes will be awarded for the three best essay entries. Essays are to be no more than 1500 words.

First Place: \$2000

Second Place: \$1,000

Third Place: \$500.

The closing date for receipt of entries is 31 January 2009. Participants are required to complete an application form and forward, where possible, an electronic copy of their essay to blackdog@unsw.edu.au, plus an original copy of the essay on A4 paper (held together by a paper clip/not stapled) by post, addressed to:

Black Dog Institute Writing Competition
Black Dog Institute
Hospital Road
Prince of Wales Hospital,
Randwick NSW 2031

An application form and further information can be obtained via the Institute’s website (www.blackdoginstitute.org.au) or by telephoning (02) 9382 4523.

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