

Ruby Wax social site to “bash the stigma of depression”

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A respected psychologist and physician will be offering live advice to online users of Ruby Wax's mental health site Black Dog Tribe (<http://www.blackdogtribe.com>) this week, in support of Depression Awareness Week (<http://www.depressionalliance.org/how-we-can-help/depression-awareness-week.php>)

Dr Tim Anstiss, a medical doctor trained in cognitive behavioural therapy, interpersonal therapy, motivational interviewing and positive psychology will be working with Black Dog Tribe (<http://www.blackdogtribe.com/talk-from-experts>) for an hour each day to offer users online advice and encouragement. He will be joined by a number of celebrity guests during the week, all of whom have suffered from depression and are determined to tackle the stigma associated with it. Tim himself had an episode of depression when at medical school, and knows just how painful and isolating it can be. He is a member of the tribe.

The sessions start on the Black Dog Tribe site today at 4PM and can be followed using the Twitter hashtag #bdt or by following @followbdt (<https://twitter.com/followbdt>)

“The aim is to help anyone who believes they may be suffering from depression or excessive stress to open up and talk to people that have already experienced it,” said Ruby Wax, a co-founder of the Black Dog Tribe site.

“The word ‘depression’ is well worn and consequently trivialised. There is still a stigma attached to it. It means that people with real problems feel less inclined to talk. So the aim of Black Dog Tribe is give these people a platform to talk, to share problems and experiences and hopefully find a route out.

“Depression Awareness Week is great for focussing people's attention and for us it kick-starts a plan to bash the stigma of depression and boost our support platform with some excellent advice and forums for the people who need it.”

Dr Tim Anstiss added:

“We won't be diagnosing complaints but will be listening, sharing experiences and exploring options which other people have found helpful. It's not just about depression either. It's about helping people experiencing stress and other issues that may lead to depression over time. There should not be any stigma associated with depression. It is part of the human condition. We have to help people realise that. Nor is it a sign of weakness. Unfortunately, depression is becoming more common. There is something about modern lifestyles that are making many people depressed, and it can be helpful to talk with like-minded people who have or are experiencing similar things. During the week we will be exploring positive solutions and simple steps that can help people become ‘undepressed’ and stay that way.”

- During the course of Depression Awareness Week, Black Dog Tribe is also inviting users to submit experiences and insights into depression via blogs, forum posts, poems, essays, videos and tweets – just about any form of insight that users are prepared to share with the community at BDT. Each day, the

BDT team will pick an insight and that person will get a special gift and an invitation to tea with Ruby at the Ritz.

About Black Dog Tribe

Founded in 2011 by Ruby Wax and Nina Storms, Black Dog Tribe is a social place to meet people suffering from stress and mental illnesses such as depression. It's also a place for care-givers to chat and share experiences. It consists of forums and blogs and the overarching aim is to help stop the stigma associated with depression and other mental illnesses.

www.blackdogtribe.com

About Dr Tim Anstiss M.B, M.Ed, D.Occ.Med, M.F.S.E.M

Tim is a medical doctor with a master's degree in sports medicine and a diploma in occupational medicine. He is a member of the British Psychological Society and has a particular interest in mental health and its improvement.

After working in psychiatry Tim ran an NHS occupational health department and developed some new health services for workers. He then trained in several psychological improvement approaches including behaviour therapy, cognitive therapy, interpersonal therapy and motivational interviewing and began training NHS staff in motivational interviewing and health coaching techniques.

A Member of the Faculty of Sports and Exercise Medicine and the British Psychological Society, Tim once pole vaulted for Great Britain and was a contender on ITV's Gladiators. He was also one of the 'Slough 50' in the BBC documentary: Making Slough Happy.

Tim's personal site (<http://drtimanstiss.com/>)

The Academy for Health Coaching site (<http://academyforhealthcoaching.co.uk/>)

The Applied Wellbeing site (<http://appliedwellbeing.com/>)

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