

by Michael Baird
TWENTY PER CENT
 of this country's
 population is affected
 by depression.

There's nothing funny
 about that, but
 ex-community mental
 health nurse, Martin
 Davies, has written a
 cartoon book to help
 people overcome the
 illness.

The cartoons in no
 way trivialise the very
 serious illness. Quite the
 contrary, they contain
 important messages for
 us all.

DEPRESSION IS NO LAUGHING MATTER

The book is called
*Sod It! The Depression
 "Virus" — And How To
 Deal With It.*

Martin is very
 concerned about the
 number of people now
 affected by depression in
 the UK.

More sense

A father-of-two and a
 grandfather, Martin was
 born and brought up in
 Glasgow, but now lives
 near Grantham,

Lincolnshire, and
 sometimes in France,
 where he reckons they
 may still be getting used
 to his sense of humour!

"Depression has never
 been a popular topic,"
 explained Martin.

"Most books are either
 'heavy', biased to a
 particular person or
 model, or simply not
 understandable.

"For many years, I've
 realised my cartoons
 help make more sense of

the literature — they're
 accessible as well as
 humorous!

"This book is about
 making sense of a
 difficult topic."

Symptoms

Martin reveals that as
 many people die of
 depression as from
 asthma, diabetes and
 heart disease, but it
 doesn't receive anything
 like the same resources
 for treatment.

Depression doesn't
 respect age, culture,
 gender, background or
 lifestyle — it can
 "infect" the young, the
 old, the rich, the poor,
 anyone.

With a slow rate of
 onset, the symptoms
 may not become
 apparent until the
 depression "virus" is
 well-established.

Martin agrees that the
 cost of depression in
 terms of human misery

is incalculable, but
 argues, "The tragedy of
 depression is that, in
 most cases, it need not
 be a long-term illness, as
 it can be prevented and
 treated."

Techniques

Martin himself
 suffered several bouts of
 severe depression.

However, by using
 many of the techniques
 described in his book, he
 was able to work

through his own battle
 with the condition.

He recommends:

- Acknowledgement —
 admitting you may be
 depressed is the
 first major step to
 recovery.

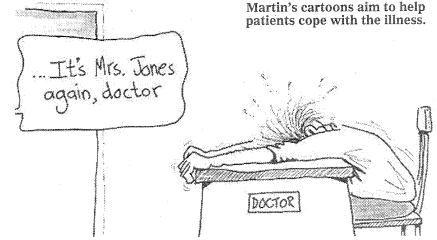
- Get support and use it
 — you'll be surprised
 how much others are
 willing to help.

- Talk, express and
 share — don't bottle it
 up.
- Learn how to problem

solve — taken step by
 step, this is achievable
 by most people.

- Realise that
 depression isn't all bad
 — sufferers can come
 out of the experience
 wiser and more
 knowledgeable, and
 with an increased
 ability to cope with
 daily life.

*Sod It! The
 Depression "Virus"
 And How To Deal With
 It* costs £5.99, and
 can be obtained by
 calling 0151 432 0662,
 or going on-line to
www.sod-itbooks.co.uk



Martin's cartoons aim to help
 patients cope with the illness.