Helping a loved one with depression

How can I help?

Even if your loved one isn’t ready to talk about his or her depression, you can still be helpful in the meantime. Just letting your loved one know you’re concerned can help.

Talk with your loved one about what he or she would like help with. Put a check in the box next to each way you can help. Then, write when or how often you will help in that way.

**Emotional support:**
- Encouragement and understanding

**Practical support:**
- Help with daily tasks
- Call to see how he/she is doing
- How often?
- Help him/her be more active
- How often?
- Go to a support group meeting together
- How often?
- Tell him/her if signs worsen
- How often?
- Encourage him/her to stick with care
- How often?
- Point out when he/she makes progress
- How often?
- Help him/her make appointments
- How often?
- Help with medical paperwork
- How often?
- Make a meal with him/her
- How often?
- Remind him/her to take medicine
- How often?
- Take him/her to appointments
- How often?
- Do something fun together
- How often?
Support from loved ones can help

Depression is a common and serious mental health disease. It is not simply a case of sadness that goes away after a while. It needs to be treated. If you have a loved one with depression, you may play a vital part of your loved one’s care.

If your loved one mentions suicide, do not ignore the comment. Call his or her healthcare provider. If you think your loved one might harm himself or herself, do one of these things right away: Call 911, take your loved one to the emergency room, or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

Ways you can help someone with depression

Your loved one might avoid family and friends. This could make you think that your loved one doesn’t want your help. But that may not be the case. Your loved one just might not know how to ask for help.

Here are some ways you can help someone with depression:

- Go with your loved one to appointments.
- Help your loved one get involved again in activities.
- Actively listen to your loved one and be encouraging.
- Remind your loved one to continue his or her therapy. It can help him or her feel better.
Support from loved ones can help. Depression is a common and serious mental health disease. It is not simply a case of sadness that goes away after a while. It needs to be treated. If you have a loved one with depression, you may play a vital part of your loved one’s care.

If your loved one mentions suicide, do not ignore the comment. Call his or her healthcare provider. If you think your loved one might harm himself or herself, do one of these things right away:

- Call 911, take your loved one to the emergency room, or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

Ways you can help someone with depression:

- Go with your loved one to appointments.
- Help your loved one get involved again in activities.
- Actively listen to your loved one and be encouraging.
- Remind your loved one to continue his or her therapy. It can help him or her feel better.

Recognizing the signs

People experience depression in different ways and with different symptoms. You might have noticed some changes recently in a loved one. Some people with depression might seem unhappy for no reason. For others, it might be very clear that something isn’t right.

### Common symptoms of depression:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Mental</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling sad or hopeless</td>
<td>Eating or sleeping more or less than usual</td>
<td>Having trouble concentrating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Losing interest in things they used to enjoy</td>
<td>Feeling tired or lacking energy</td>
<td>Having trouble making decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling worthless or guilty</td>
<td>Feeling agitated or restless</td>
<td>Sometimes thinking about death, dying, or suicide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When symptoms return

Sometimes symptoms can come back or get worse. If you notice this, you can:

1. Look for things that are making their depression worse. This may include stress at work or money issues.
2. Talk with your loved one and encourage them to make an appointment with a healthcare provider.
Support from loved ones can help. Depression is a common and serious mental health disease. It is not simply a case of sadness that goes away after a while. It needs to be treated. If you have a loved one with depression, you may play a vital part of your loved one's care.

If your loved one mentions suicide, do not ignore the comment. Call his or her healthcare provider. If you think your loved one might harm himself or herself, do one of these things right away: Call 911, take your loved one to the emergency room, or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

Ways you can help someone with depression

Your loved one might avoid family and friends. This could make you think that your loved one doesn’t want your help. But that may not be the case. Your loved one just might not know how to ask for help. Here are some ways you can help someone with depression:

- Go with your loved one to appointments.
- Help your loved one get involved again in activities.
- Actively listen to your loved one and be encouraging.
- Remind your loved one to continue his or her therapy. It can help him or her feel better.

Recognizing the signs

People experience depression in different ways and with different symptoms. You might have noticed some changes recently in a loved one. Some people with depression might seem unhappy for no reason. For others, it might be very clear that something isn’t right.

When symptoms return

Sometimes symptoms can come back or get worse. If you notice this, you can:

- Look for things that are making their depression worse. This may include stress at work or money issues.
- Talk with your loved one and encourage them to make an appointment with a healthcare provider.

The goal of treatment

It’s important for people with depression to talk openly with their healthcare providers. They should discuss how they’re feeling now and how they expect to feel during treatment. Different people may have different goals. Generally, treatment is successful when depression stops getting in the way of daily life. You can help your loved one reach that goal.

Encourage your loved one to stick to his or her care plan. That plan may include regular visits to a healthcare provider and continuing to take medicine as directed.

Did you know?

Stopping a medicine too soon can make depression worse. It can also cause side effects. If your loved one wants to stop taking a medication, talk with a healthcare provider. He or she may change the dose, change the medicine, or add a new one.
How can I help?

Even if your loved one isn’t ready to talk about his or her depression, you can still be helpful in the meantime. Just letting your loved one know you’re concerned can help.

Talk with your loved one about what he or she would like help with. Put a check in the box next to each way you can help. Then, write when or how often you will help in that way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional support: Encouragement and understanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call to see how he/she is doing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help him/her be more active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to a support group meeting together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Tell him/her if signs worsen                     |
| How often?                                      |
| Encourage him/her to stick with care            |
| How often?                                      |
| Point out when he/she makes progress            |
| How often?                                      |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practical support: Help with daily tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Help him/her make appointments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help with medical paperwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a meal with him/her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Remind him/her to take medicine                 |
| How often?                                      |
| Take him/her to appointments                    |
| How often?                                      |
| Do something fun together                        |
| How often?                                      |
Additional resources
Check out these organizations for more information about depression or how to find help:

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
dbsalliance.org | 1-800-826-3632

Families for Depression Awareness
familyaware.org
1-781-890-0220

Visit lillyforbetterhealth.com for more information about depression.