



Helping a loved one with depression



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.



Common symptoms of depression:

Emotional

Feeling sad or hopeless

Losing interest in things they used to enjoy

Feeling worthless or guilty

Physical

Eating or sleeping more or less than usual

Feeling tired or lacking energy

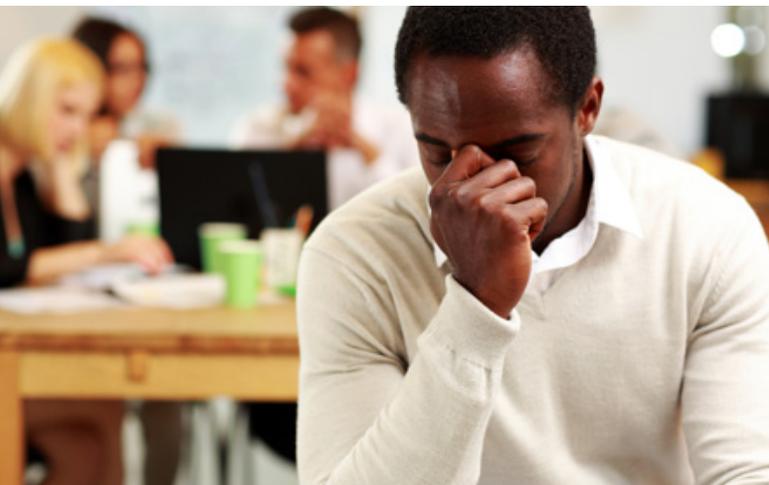
Feeling agitated or restless

Mental

Having trouble concentrating

Having trouble making decisions

Sometimes thinking about death, dying, or suicide



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.

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.

People with depression may want to stop taking their medicine if:

They are having side effects.



Remind them some side effects may start to go away as their body gets used to the new medicine.

Encourage them to keep track of their side effects and talk about them at their next doctor's visit.

They are starting to feel better.



Remind them that can mean the medicine is working.

Encourage them to keep taking the medicine.

They think the medicine isn't working.



Remind them some medicines for depression may take up to 8–12 weeks before they work best.

Encourage them to give their healthcare provider time to see whether the medicine is working.



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.



Emotional support: Encouragement and understanding

- Call to see how he/she is doing

How often? _____

- Tell him/her if signs worsen

How often? _____

- Help him/her be more active

How often? _____

- Encourage him/her to stick with care

How often? _____

- Go to a support group meeting together

How often? _____

- Point out when he/she makes progress

How often? _____

Practical support: Help with daily tasks

- Help him/her make appointments

How often? _____

- Remind him/her to take medicine

How often? _____

- Help with medical paperwork

How often? _____

- Take him/her to appointments

How often? _____

- Make a meal with him/her

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.
