Supporting a Loved One With Depression

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Recognize depression as an illness.

Depression is a real mental health condition, not a sign of weakness or something a person can just “snap out of.” It can affect emotions, energy, motivation, sleep, relationships, and daily functioning.



Stay connected.

People with depression often withdraw from others. Regularly checking in with your loved one and extending invitations can help them feel less isolated. Even just sitting with them can be a helpful reminder that they aren’t alone.



Listen more than you try to fix.

It’s beyond your power to cure your loved one’s depression or convince them to feel or think differently. Listening with patience, understanding, and validation can be one of the most helpful forms of support.



Support healthy habits.

Encourage activities that support mental health, such as physical activity, healthy sleep habits, social connection, and meaningful daily routines. To keep things manageable, focus on just two or three priorities each day.



Encourage treatment.

Therapy and medication are effective treatments for depression. If your loved one feels overwhelmed, offer practical support such as helping them find a provider, schedule an appointment, or explore support groups.



Take mentions of suicide seriously.

When a loved one with depression talks about wanting to die, feeling hopeless, or harming themselves, take it seriously. Encourage immediate support from a mental health professional or crisis service.



Honor your own needs.

Supporting someone with depression can be emotionally demanding. It’s important to take care of your own mental health, which can mean making time for yourself and being honest about limitations.

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