

How to support someone with depression.

Depression is an illness. Similar to other illnesses, people cannot just choose to get over depression. Use these tips to as a starting point when supporting someone with depression.



Check in consistently.

Just like a cold or flu, a person cannot simply choose to “get over” depression. Also like other illnesses, depression can affect anyone. A person can develop depression even if they seem to have a good life, with little to be upset about.



Make time for listening.

Many people with depression will isolate themselves, often falling out of touch with friends and family. You can't make someone accept help, but you can provide the option. Check in regularly, invite them to talk, and reemphasize your support.



Encourage healthy habits

You don't have to fix your loved one's problems or convince them that their negative feelings are wrong. Even if you disagree with some of their thoughts or feelings, respect and acknowledge that these experiences are real to them.



Promote seeking professional help

Exercise, healthy sleep habits, and socializing all contribute to mental health, and help combat depression. Support these activities by giving encouragement, offering to accompany your loved one, or providing positive feedback.



Create a social support structure

Mental health counseling and medication are effective in treating depression. If your loved one is unsure where to start, offer to help them find the right provider, such as a physician, mental health counselor, psychologist, or psychiatrist.



Schedule time for self-care activities

In addition to professional help, your loved one may benefit from other sources of support. These could include community organizations, religious groups, or mental health support groups.



Know that you are not responsible for the cure.

Symptoms of depression include intense sadness, despair, and thoughts of suicide. If you feel that someone is in danger, don't hesitate to call 911, take them to an emergency room, or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 for free and confidential support available 24/7.



Make time for self-care.

Supporting someone with depression can be frustrating, tiring, and emotionally draining. It's okay to take a break just for you. Make sure you are getting adequate sleep, eating properly, exercising, and taking time to relax.



You are not responsible for curing your loved one.

Your love and support are valuable, but ultimately, you cannot make them better. It is unfair to yourself to take responsibility for another person's depression, or their recovery.