

## **DO YOU HAVE A LOVED ONE THAT'S DEPRESSED ABOUT THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES**

*By Mayo Clinic Staff*

*Helping someone with depression can be a challenge.*

*If someone in your life has depression, you may feel helpless and wonder what to do.*

*Learn how to offer support and understanding and how to help your loved one get the resources to cope with depression.*

*Here's what you can do.*

### ***Learn the symptoms of depression***

*Depression signs and symptoms vary from person to person.*

*They can include:*

*Feelings of sadness, tearfulness, emptiness or hopelessness*

*Angry outbursts, irritability or frustration, even over small matters*

*Loss of interest or pleasure in most or all normal activities, such as sex, hobbies or sports*

*Insomnia or sleeping too much*

*Tiredness and lack of energy, so even small tasks take extra effort*

*Changes in appetite —*

*reduced appetite and weight loss or increased cravings for food and weight gain*

*Anxiety, agitation or restlessness*

*Slowed thinking, speaking or body movements*

*Feelings of worthlessness or guilt, fixating on past failures or blaming yourself for things that aren't your responsibility*

*Trouble thinking, concentrating, making decisions and remembering things*

*Frequent or recurrent mention of death, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts or suicide*

*Unexplained physical problems, such as back pain or headaches*

*For many people with depression, symptoms usually are severe enough to cause noticeable problems in day-to-day activities, such as work, school, social activities or relationships with others.*

*Other people may feel generally miserable or unhappy without knowing why.*

*Children and teens may show depression by being irritable or cranky rather than sad.*

### ***Encourage treatment***

*People with depression may not recognize or acknowledge that they're depressed.*

*They may not be aware of signs and symptoms of depression, so they may think their feelings are normal.*

*All too often, people feel ashamed about their depression and mistakenly believe they should be able to overcome it with willpower alone.*

*But depression seldom gets better without treatment and may get worse.*

*With the right treatment approach, the person you care about can get better.*

***Here's what you can do to help:***

***Talk to the person***

*about what you've noticed and why you're concerned.*

***Explain that depression is a medical condition,***

*not a personal flaw or weakness — and that it usually gets better with treatment.*

***Suggest seeking help from a professional —***

*a medical doctor or a mental health provider, such as a licensed counselor or psychologist.*

***Offer to help prepare a list of questions***

*to discuss in an initial appointment with a doctor or mental health provider.*

***Express your willingness to help***

*by setting up appointments, going along to them and attending family therapy sessions.*

*If your loved one's illness is severe or potentially life-threatening, contact a doctor, a hospital or emergency medical services.*

### ***Identify warning signs of worsening depression***

*Everyone experiences depression differently.*

*Observe your loved one.*

*Learn how depression affects your family member or friend — and learn what to do when it gets worse.*

### ***Consider these issues:***

*What are the typical signs and symptoms of depression in your relative or friend?*

*What behaviors or language do you observe when depression is worse?*

*What behaviors or language do you observe when he or she is doing well?*

*What circumstances trigger episodes of more severe depression?*

*What activities are most helpful when depression worsens?*

*Worsening depression needs to be treated as soon as possible.*

*Encourage your loved one to work with his or her doctor or mental health provider to come up with a plan for what to do when signs and symptoms reach a certain point.*

***As part of this plan, your loved one may need to:***

***Contact the doctor***

*to see about adjusting or changing medications*

***See a psychotherapist,***

*such as a licensed counselor or psychologist*

***Take self-care steps,***

*such as being sure to eat healthy meals, get an appropriate amount of sleep and be physically active*

***Understand suicide risk***

*People with depression are at an increased risk of suicide.*

*If your loved one is severely depressed, prepare yourself for the possibility that at some point he or she may feel suicidal.*

*Take all signs of suicidal behavior seriously and act immediately.*

***Take action if necessary:***

***Talk to the person about your concern.***

*Ask if he or she has been thinking about attempting suicide or has a plan for how to do it.*

*Having an actual plan indicates a higher likelihood of attempting suicide.*

***Seek help.***

*Contact the person's doctor, mental health provider or other health care professional.*

*Let other family members or close friends know what's going on.*

***Call a suicide hotline number.***

***In the United States, you can reach the toll-free, 24-hour hot line of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255) to talk to a trained counselor.***

***Use that same number and press "1" to reach the Veterans Crisis Line.***

***Make sure the person is in a safe environment.***

*If possible, eliminate things that could be used to attempt suicide.*

*For example, remove or lock up firearms, other weapons and medications.*

***Call 911 or your local emergency number immediately if the person is in danger of self-harm or suicide.***

***Make sure someone stays with that person at all times.***

***Stay alert for warning signs of suicide***

***Learn and stay alert for common warning signs of suicide or suicidal thoughts:***

*Talking about suicide —*

*for example, making statements such as "I'm going to kill myself," "I wish I were dead," or "I wish I hadn't been born"*



*Getting the means to attempt suicide, such as buying a gun or stockpiling pills*

*Withdrawing from social contact and wanting to be left alone*

*Having mood swings, such as being emotionally high one day and deeply discouraged the next*

*Being preoccupied with death, dying or violence*

*Feeling trapped or hopeless about a situation*

*Increasing use of alcohol or drugs*

*Changing normal routine, including eating or sleeping patterns*

*Doing risky or self-destructive things, such as using drugs or driving recklessly*

*Giving away belongings or getting affairs in order when there's no other logical explanation for why this is being done*

*Saying goodbye to people as if they won't be seen again*

*Developing personality changes or being severely anxious or agitated, particularly when experiencing some of the warning signs listed above*

### ***Provide support***

*Remember that your loved one's depression isn't anyone's fault.*

*You can't fix the person's depression —*

*but your support and understanding can help.*

### ***What you can do for your loved one:***

#### ***Encourage sticking with treatment.***

*If your relative or friend is in treatment for depression, help him or her remember to take prescribed medications and to keep appointments.*

#### ***Be willing to listen.***

*Let your loved one know that you want to understand how he or she feels.*

*When the person wants to talk, listen carefully, but avoid giving advice or opinions or making judgments.*

*Just listening and being understanding can be a powerful healing tool.*

***Give positive reinforcement.***

*People with depression may judge themselves harshly and find fault with everything they do.*

*Remind your loved one about his or her positive qualities and how much the person means to you and others.*

***Offer assistance.***

*Your relative or friend may not be able to take care of certain tasks well.*

*Give suggestions about specific tasks you'd be willing to do, or ask if there is a particular task that you could take on.*

***Help create a low-stress environment.***

*Creating a regular routine may help a person with depression feel more in control.*

*Offer to make a schedule for meals, medication, physical activity and sleep, and help organize household chores.*

***Locate helpful organizations.***

*A number of organizations offer support groups, counseling and other resources for depression.*

*For example, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, employee assistance programs and many faith-based organizations offer help for mental health concerns.*

***Encourage participation in spiritual practice, if appropriate.***

*For many people, faith is an important element in recovery from depression — whether it's involvement in an organized religious community or personal spiritual beliefs and practices.*

***Make plans together.***

*Ask your loved one to join you on a walk, see a movie with you, or work with you on a hobby or other activity he or she previously enjoyed.*

*But don't try to force the person into doing something.*

***What you can do for yourself:***

***Learn about depression.*** *The better you understand what causes depression, how it affects people and how it can be*

*treated, the better you'll be able to talk to and help the person you care about.*

***Take care of yourself.*** *Supporting someone with depression isn't easy.*

*Ask other relatives or friends to help, and take steps to prevent becoming frustrated or burned out.*

*Find your own time for hobbies, physical activity, friends and spiritual renewal.*

***Finally, be patient.***

*Depression symptoms do improve with treatment, but it can take time.*

*Finding the best treatment may require trying more than one type of medication or treatment approach.*

*For some people, symptoms quickly improve after starting treatment. For others, it will take longer.*

The following suggestions are from my life experiences, and the courses that I took in my undergraduate and graduate ministerial programs, in seminary.

**Ensure that the person knows that Christ Jesus Loves Them !**

**Read to them: John 3:16,**

and reassure the person, that No MATTER whatever sin, they may have committed, that all they have to do is:

**Repent and Accept -**

Christ Jesus, as their Lord and Saviour.

**Sample Prayer that you can pray with the person:**

Lord Jesus, I repent of all of my sins, and I ask you to be my Lord and Savior.

**If the person tells you, that there's No Hope for them because they've committed horrible sins, and that God won't forgive them:**

Remind them, that Moses ( The Law Giver ) who led the Israelites from Egypt Killed an Egyptian Soldier, that was beating a Jew, and God forgave him of Murder, so if God forgave Moses of Murder, HE will

forgive all of us, of whatever SINS, we have committed.

## **Exodus 2:11-15 (NIV)**

### **Moses Flees to Midian**

**11** One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor.

He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people.

**12** Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.

**13** The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting.

He asked the one in the wrong, “Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?”

**14** The man said, “Who made you ruler and judge over us?”



Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?”

Then Moses was afraid and thought, “What I did must have become known.”

**15** When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian, where he sat down by a well.

***The Bible Records that Depression has been a part of the human condition since the fall of Adam.***

***Sin has created all human brokenness.***

*Throughout the scripture, we see God’s people struggling with this reality, such as David*

*(Psalm 22:2, 42:11, 32:5), Elijah (1 Kings 19), Jeremiah (Jer. 20:1-11), Ezekiel (Ezek. 1), and Paul (2 Cor. 4:7). We know from Psalms 32 and 51 that unrepented sin can lead to depression, affecting body, soul and mind.*

*We learn from David that healing from sin-caused depression can come with confession and repentance.*

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