

Helpful Guides

How to support a family member or close friend who's dealing **with depression**

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When a family member or close friend has depression, you may be one of the first people they turn to. If you don't know what to do or feel helpless, don't worry; that's normal. However, you can play a vital role in their recovery. Here's our guide on how to help:

Understand The Symptoms

There's a wide range of symptoms of depression. These can include feelings of sadness or hopelessness, loss of interest in everyday activity, tiredness, angry outbursts or changes in appetite. Be aware of these so you have a better understanding of what's going on.

Listen And Be Patient

Often just listening to your loved one's problems is beneficial. It will help them feel less alone and isolated. However, your family member or friend may not want to talk straight away, so be patient and let them know you're there for them when they're ready.

Maintain Contact

When someone is feeling depressed, keeping in touch with others is challenging. Reaching out to them with a text or message will let them know you're there and can make a big difference in how they're feeling.

Avoid Judgement

If you're unfamiliar with depression, it can be easy to think the sufferer can just 'cheer up' or 'pull themselves together.' But depression is a complex mental health problem where no one is to blame and can't just be 'fixed'. Try not to be critical; instead, offer your understanding and support them where you can.

Help Them Seek Professional Support

People with depression may not realise or want to acknowledge their illness and may not be ready to get treatment. Reassure them that it's okay to ask for help. When they're ready, provide more practical support by helping them find the appropriate information, assisting them in writing a list of questions for their health professional or going to their appointments with them.

See how the Fircroft Trust can help you in other ways...

Visit thefircrofttrust.org and see how our Specialist Services can benefit you.

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Beware of Worsening Depression

Monitor the symptoms of your family member or friend and, if their depression is worsening, encourage them to get professional help as soon as possible. People with depression are at an increased risk of suicide, and any signs of suicidal thoughts or behaviours should be acted on immediately.

Take Care of Yourself

Looking after someone with depression can put a drain on your own mental well-being, get in touch with The Fircroft Trust. We're here if you want to talk about your situation.