**How to Help Others Who Are Depressed**

If you have friends or family who are suffering from depression, there are ways that you can help them without feeling as if you are walking on eggshells. Depression is a horrible illness that can be fatal if left untreated, and it can ruin relationships.

Hopefully, if you can understand that no one wants to be depressed and that they can’t just fix it on their own, you’ll find it easier to be supportive.

* **Listen** – When someone who is depressed is venting to you, just listen. You don’t need to give advice of fix their problem. Let them talk; show them that you’re listening by paraphrasing back to them what they’ve said or by looking them in the eyes or kindly touching their hand or shoulder.
* **Show You Care** – It’s okay to show emotion when someone is being emotional around you or is demonstrating dangerous symptoms of depression. Sometimes you may have to show you care by calling in a professional if your friend is suicidal. Be willing for them to hate you to get them the help they need.
* **Don’t Criticize** – The worst thing you can do is criticize someone who is depressed. You can bet they already have low self-worth. This is not the time for tough love or that type of honesty. Just be there for them without judgment.
* **Don’t Give Ultimatums** – It might be tempting, especially when it’s a spouse or a child, to threaten and give ultimatums. But doing so could make things worse.   
    
  People who suffer from depression don’t make good decisions, so they’re not going to do what you want just because they’re going to lose you. In fact, they’re more likely to push you away.
* **Understand That Their Pain is Real** – Depression sufferers are no different from anyone suffering from another disease such as diabetes or cancer. Their pain is real. Their feelings are real. They cannot just stop this from happening to them. If they could, they would.
* **Do Not Give Advice** – You’re not an experienced therapist, so keep your advice to yourself about what to do about the depression. While some things might work well such as exercise, eating right, and so forth, instead of giving advice help them do that by inviting them to exercise with you.
* **Don’t Say That You Understand** – Even if you’ve suffered from depression yourself, you don’t know how they feel so don’t say that you do. Don’t turn things around to be about you, because they’re not going to be ready to hear it until they’re in therapy.
* **Educate Yourself on Depression** – Read books and watch documentaries about depression to help learn what you can, so that you’re aware of the danger signs and can get outside help for your friend or family member if necessary.

Finally, if you fear for your loved one’s life, ensure that you have the numbers to call at your fingertips to get your person help from a professional if needed.