



Self-Care for Family Members and Friends

It can be very difficult to live with or care for someone who is seriously depressed. In many respects, it's like being with a different person. So much about the individual you have known and enjoyed seems to have disappeared. And it's not unusual to feel personally rejected when your loved one says absolutely nothing in life is good. It can be especially painful when depression affects intimate relationships, as it often does. Also, it's easy for family members to blame themselves for the problems their loved one is experiencing, even though they are doing their best to support the person. This is why it is important for people living with or caring for those who are depressed to make a special effort to also care for themselves.

- Develop your support system. This is the time to contact a good friend who can help you with a “reality check” when your loved one says or does hurtful things.
- Consider joining a support group, such as the ones offered by the National Alliance on Mental Illness for people who have a loved one with a mental health condition.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle, including balanced meals, regular physical activities or exercise, and enough sleep.
- Set aside time for yourself as much as possible, and continue with some of the activities you find rewarding and renewing.

Remember, if you do not take good care of yourself, you will not be able to take good care of anyone else.