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Helping Someone with Depression

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Whenever we're faced with someone else's problems, our first instinct is to give advice. However, that's not always the best solution.

Since depression is a serious condition that may transform a person's life, advice is simply not enough. Sure, a few tips and trick may be of use, but above all, people who struggle with this condition need our unconditional love and support. They want someone who will listen and understand without passing judgement or trying to solve their problems. In short, when we are trying to help a loved one, who is struggling with depression, compassion is a key skill.

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Quiz Time!

Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2

Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2

Quiz: Flags in Europe

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Practice Empathy

You've already learned about the importance of empathy and how to boost your skill to empathize with others.

Being able to put yourself in someone else's shoes is a sign of emotional intelligence. It requires a lot of patience and a profound respect for life, especially when it comes to someone who is dealing with depression.

Put your personal opinions, and natural tendency to judge, aside and try to focus all of your attention on how that person feels. It's difficult, we know, but that's the only way you can truly be there and support a friend or family member.

Unconditional Love and Support

Providing unconditional love and support can have immense benefits for the receiver - it can mend a broken heart, help heal trauma, boost confidence and motivation.

Unconditional support means being there for someone, despite how tired, annoyed or frustrated you might feel. Same goes for unconditional love. This may sometimes be difficult to do with someone, who struggles with depression, because it may seem like your efforts are not achieving much.

Although someone who is depressed may not always be able to create change straight away, or show you their gratitude, your love, support, and motivation can create a safe environment for that person to cope with depression.

Don't Let Depression Overwhelm You

Living with a depressed person can be pretty exhausting sometimes. You might be put in a position where you have to take care of a lot, and that can be very strenuous. On top of that, depression can easily 'spread around the house'. In other words, the atmosphere is quiet, gloomy and full of sorrow.

As you can see, caring for someone who is struggling with depression can also have a profound effect on yourself.

A preventative measure, to keep you from being overwhelmed by negativity, is to focus on why that person is important to you, as well as their positive attributes.

Most importantly, you need to make sure that you have a life of your own, with activities and social interactions that are your own, and which you enjoy. This will keep your overall level of satisfaction high, and you will be able to both care for yourself and help your loved one.

Find Common Interests

As you already know, it is difficult for people who struggle with depression to enjoy any activity, even if it previously was their favorite pastime.

Often, staying in bed or lying on the couch may be the only thing someone with depression has the will and strength to do. If you try to force your loved one into engaging in activities, chances are you will both become frustrated and disappointed.

Instead, you can engage your loved one in fun activities, by making small steps at first. For instance, if they previously enjoyed painting, why not look at some pictures of painters, or a film about painting. You can then ask them for suggestions about painting, and so forth.

Make sure you are not being pushy and that you allow your loved one to take small steps, on the way to the final goal.

Visit a Specialist

Whatever you do, one of the most important steps to take, when struggling with depression, is to talk to an experienced, licensed psychologist. You can find one by looking up online the registered specialists in your area.

This is crucial, because a psychologist can provide you with the necessary support and evidence-based advice you need, in order to alleviate the struggle of depression.

Remember, there is nothing to be embarrassed or uncomfortable about – going to a psychologist is just like going to any other specialist.

Don't Expect to Cure Depression

Your willingness and efforts to help your loved one with their depression are admirable. Providing love, support, and care is crucial for your loved one, as it allows them to feel safe again and to start coping with depression.

However, it is extremely important to remember that you cannot cure your loved one's depression, whatever you do and however hard you may try.

The only person who can take meaningful action, towards coping with depression in a healthy way, is the one who struggles with the condition. It is neither your responsibility, nor within your capability to do that instead of your loved one.

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