



# Supporting Someone With Depression



When someone you care about is experiencing depression, it can be difficult to know what to say or do. Support does not require you to have all the answers.

## **LISTEN & STAY CONNECTED**

Make space for the person to talk without immediately trying to fix the problem. Regular, low-pressure contact can help reduce isolation.

## **ACKNOWLEDGE WHAT THEY ARE EXPERIENCING**

Depression can make everyday tasks feel much harder. Responses such as "That sounds really difficult" can be more helpful than trying to talk someone out of how they feel.

## **OFFER SPECIFIC, MANAGEABLE SUPPORT**

Rather than "Let me know if you need anything", consider a concrete offer: sharing a meal, going for a short walk, helping with one task or sitting together.

## **ENCOURAGE PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT**

If depression is persistent, worsening or interfering with daily life, encourage support from a GP, psychologist or other appropriate health professional.

**You can support someone without being responsible for fixing their depression.**

Your role may be to listen, stay connected, encourage appropriate help and take care of your own wellbeing too.



# What Can I Say or Do?



Support often works best when it is warm, practical and responsive to what the person needs rather than assuming what will help.

## START THE CONVERSATION

You might say: "I've noticed things seem really hard lately. How are you going?" What words would feel natural for you?

## LISTEN BEFORE PROBLEM-SOLVING

What might help you stay present and listen, rather than immediately offering solutions or reassurance?

## ASK WHAT WOULD HELP

Different people need different things. What could you ask to understand whether they want listening, company, practical help or space?

## OFFER ONE SPECIFIC THING

What is one realistic, concrete form of support you could offer?

## KEEP CONNECTION LOW-PRESSURE

If they withdraw or say no, how could you remain available without adding pressure or guilt?

## Try to avoid minimising

Comments such as "cheer up", "look on the bright side" or "others have it worse" can leave someone feeling less understood.



# Support, Safety & Looking After Yourself



Supporting someone with depression can take emotional energy. It is important to notice both their needs and your own limits.

## WHAT CHANGES AM I NOTICING?

What have you noticed in their mood, behaviour, functioning, withdrawal or communication?

## WHAT SUPPORT IS ALREADY AROUND THEM?

Consider family, friends, GP, psychologist, school, workplace or other services. Who else can appropriately share support?

## IF I AM WORRIED ABOUT THEIR SAFETY

If you are concerned they may be thinking about suicide or self-harm, ask directly and take the concern seriously. Seek urgent professional or emergency support when needed.

## WHAT ARE MY LIMITS?

What can you realistically offer? What is outside your role, capacity or responsibility?

## HOW WILL I LOOK AFTER MYSELF?

What support, rest, boundaries or connection do you need while supporting this person?

## If there is immediate danger

Call 000. For 24-hour crisis support in Australia, Lifeline is available on 13 11 14. If you are unsure what to do, seek professional advice.