

Not Sure What to Say to Someone with Depression? Here Are 7 Ways to Show Support



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Major depression is one of the most common mental health disorders in the world, so it's likely someone you know or love has been affected. Knowing how to talk to someone living with depression can be a great way to support them.

While reaching out to someone with depression can't cure them, social support can remind them they're not alone. This can be hard to believe when depressed, but can also be incredibly helpful in a crisis.

Even science has backed up the importance of social support. Research has shown that the likelihood of depression in the past year [has reduced](#) [Trusted Source](#) with high-quality social connection. Social support, particularly

family support, has a [protective factor](#)^{Trusted Source} for both depression and anxiety.

So, what should you say to someone who has depression? Here are seven things to say to let them know you care.

What to say to someone who has depression

1. Do you want to talk about it? I'm here when you're ready.

You can't force someone to talk, but knowing you're available can really help them feel supported.

If they haven't been forward with you about their depression, you may want to mention you've noticed they're having a hard time and you're there if they want to talk. If you simply ask "Are you OK?" they may be used to pretending and reply "I'm fine."

If they're not ready to talk now, remind them you're here for them when they're ready. When they're having a hard time and need someone to talk to, they may remember your offer and come to you.

2. What can I do to help today?

Depression often causes fatigue, trouble sleeping, and a lack of motivation. Sometimes just [getting out of bed can be hard](#).

Asking what you can do can really help them through their day.

Maybe they're not eating well and you can pick up dinner. Maybe they need a morning call or text to ensure they get to work on time.

Sometimes you just need to listen. Helping doesn't have to be a huge, drastic effort. It can be as simple as picking up a phone, sharing a meal, or driving them to an appointment.

what Not to say

Just remember: Advice isn't the same as asking for help. If they ask for your advice, give it if you so choose. But don't offer them "helpful" solutions or statements that seem like a cure for their depression. This can feel judgmental or not empathetic.

DON'T say:

- "Just think happy thoughts. I don't understand what you have to be so sad about."
- "Everything will be OK, I promise."
- "I cut out sugar and I was cured! You should try it."
- "You just need to snap out of this."
- "So many people out there are worse off than you."

3. How are you managing? How is your depression?

This can give you some insight into how their [treatment](#) is going or if they need help getting professional assistance.

Depression is a medical condition. It's not a flaw or weakness. If someone you love has depression, encourage them to seek professional help if they haven't already done so. Remind them that asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Asking how their treatment is going can also encourage them to stick with their treatment plan. You may also tell them when you've noticed improvements. This can help validate it's working, even if they don't always feel like it is.

4. You're not alone. I may not understand exactly how you feel, but you're not alone.

Depression is incredibly common. It's estimated that from 2013 to 2016, [8.1 percent](#)^{Trusted Source} of U.S. adults experienced depression at least once.

This is from the data we have. Many people don't seek help.

Depression can make many people feel alone and like they should isolate. Tell them they're not alone. Be there for them, even if you don't have a similar personal experience.

If you've had depression, you can share that you know what they're going through. This can help them relate. However, keep the focus on them. Remember to listen first.

5. You're important to me.

It's always nice to know you're loved or wanted. When someone's depressed, they may feel the exact opposite.

That's why telling someone that they're important to you, that you need them in their life, and that they matter can be so comforting. You can also be more specific to what you love about them or how you appreciate them for something they do.

6. That sounds like it's really hard. How are you coping?

The purpose of this is to simply acknowledge that you realize how hard it is for them. Acknowledging how hard depression and its symptoms can be can help them feel seen.

It's a good reminder that you're listening, you see them, and you're here to help them cope.

7. I'm really sorry you're going through this. I'm here for you if you need me.

The fact is, there's no perfect thing to say to someone living with depression. Your words won't cure them. But they *can* help.

Reminding someone that you're there for them whenever they need you — whether that's in the form of help with a small task or someone to call in a crisis — can be so essential to saving a life.

Know the warning signs for suicide

According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, there are three categories of suicide warning signs to look out for:

Talk

What a person says can be an important indicator of [suicidal ideations](#). If someone talks about killing themselves, feeling hopeless, being a burden, having no reason to live, or feeling trapped, be concerned.

Behavior

A person's behavior, especially when related to a big event, loss, or change, can be an indicator of suicide risk. Behaviors to watch for include:

- increased use or misuse of substances
- looking for a way to end their life, such as searching online for methods
- withdrawing from activities and isolating from family and friends
- visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- giving away prized possessions or acting reckless
- other symptoms of depression, such as aggression, fatigue, and sleeping too much or too little

Mood

Depression is the most common condition that's associated with suicide.

Depression, anxiety, loss of interest, or irritability are all moods that can indicate someone is considering suicide. They may display one or more of these moods in varying degrees.

Depression, if left untreated or undiagnosed, is especially dangerous.

What to do if you think a friend is considering suicide

CALL the NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION HOTLINE at 800-273-8255

If you or someone you know is contemplating suicide, help is out there. Reach out to the [National Suicide Prevention Hotline](https://www.suicidepreventionhotline.org/) at 800-273-8255 for free, confidential support 24/7.

Suicide isn't inevitable. We can all help prevent suicide.

The National Suicide Prevention Hotline offers you [a toolkit for supporting people on social media](#), down to specific platforms like Facebook and Twitter. They help you determine how to identify someone in need of support and who to contact within the social media community if you're worried about their safety.

BEZZY COMMUNITY

Meet Bezzie for Depression, a community that cares

Find encouragement and support through 1-1 messaging and advice from others dealing with major depressive disorder.

The bottom line

Support — both social support and professional — is important. Following up with your loved ones, especially if they've shown [signs of depression](#) or

suicidal thinking, is just one way we can help each other.

Encourage your loved ones and friends to seek help for their depression or suicidal thoughts. Know the warning signs to help prevent suicide, and use these seven ways to help you start talking to someone with depression.