



How to Help Someone Who's Depressed

The most important thing to do for someone who may be depressed is to help her or him get help. Here are some suggestions:

- Ask the person if they've had thoughts about hurting themselves. Asking lets them know that it's okay to talk about it.
- Offer understanding, patience, and encouragement.
- Listen carefully. It is best not to judge or mock what the person is going through; it is better to point out the positive, but realistic, aspects of their situation and offer hope that things will improve.
- Let the person know that even though he or she may have a strong urge to be alone, confiding in someone or being with other people is better than being alone and secretive.
- Let the person know that her or his mood will improve with help, that getting better takes time and patience, and he or she can feel better day-by-day.
- Help the person stay in treatment until he or she gets better. If improvement is not evident, encourage the person to seek treatment from other sources.
- Help the person follow a treatment plan, such as going to appointments and taking any prescribed medication. Offer to go with the person to her or his appointments.
- Help the person stop drinking alcohol or using drugs that aren't prescribed. Alcohol and non-prescribed drugs may interact with prescribed medication and can make depression worse.
- Encourage the person to go out for walks and pleasant outings (going to the movies or lunch), and other healthy activities (exercise). If he or she refuses, gently insist.
- Encourage the person to do things he or she once found fun, like hobbies or sports, or religious or cultural activities. Don't push him or her to take on too much too soon. The person needs company, but too many demands can increase stress and thoughts of failure.
- ***DON'T ignore talk about suicide.*** Call 911 or any of the national suicide prevention hotlines: **1-800-273-TALK** (1-800-273-8255) or **1-800-SUICIDE** (1-800-784-2433).





What To Do If Someone Says They are Thinking about Suicide

When someone is at risk for suicide, take immediate action by doing the following:

1. Never promise to keep thoughts about suicide a secret. Reach out for help immediately, and make sure the person you're helping knows that you're doing this.
2. If there is a serious risk of suicide:
 - a. Take the person's concerns seriously, and listen without judging.
 - b. Tell the person what will be done to help, such as not discussing the issue with co-workers unless it's on a need-to-know basis. Someone with a need to know might include Command or someone else who can help.
 - c. Limit the person's access to firearms or any other means to inflict self harm (you may need help with this).
 - d. Get whatever help you need to keep the person alive. This may mean calling military law enforcement, 911, or others.
3. Help the person get to a healthcare professional. Give her or him the number to a mental health professional, chaplain, or a counselor in your installation, or to the national suicide prevention hotlines at:
 - **1-800-273-TALK** (1-800-273-8255) or **1-800-SUICIDE**, or (1-800-784-2433).
 - MilitaryOneSource (1-800-342-9647; www.militaryonesource.com) is another resource. Stay with the person until he or she has contacted help.
4. If the person refuses to get help, don't keep their talk of suicide a secret. Tell a friend, family member, professional, or supportive leader who can find the person help.



If someone you know is thinking about suicide — get help.