

Depression

Have you ever felt depressed for a long period of time? Do you know anyone who suffers from clinical depression? In this lesson you will learn 10 ways to support a friend with depression. *What can a loved one do right? What can a loved one do wrong?*



Pre-Reading

A. Discuss

Discuss the following quote with your class:

“I used to think that the worst thing in life was to end up alone. It’s not. The worst thing in life is to end up with people who make you feel alone.” —Robin Williams

B. Warm-Up Questions

1. What are some warning signs or symptoms of depression?
2. Why is it difficult to break free from depression?
3. What can trigger depression?
4. What’s the difference between feeling sad or down and being clinically depressed?
5. What’s a good definition of depression?

C. Defining Depression

Place a ✓ in the boxes beside the statements that describe “depression.” Place an ✗ beside statements that describe typical sadness or feeling down. Compare your answers to a partner’s answers.

- I can’t get out of bed because I feel guilty that I’m a bad parent.
- I never feel like eating anymore. I’m not interested in food.
- My dog died last week and I don’t want to go out this weekend.
- I did poorly on an exam, so I don’t feel like talking to my parents.
- I can never hold down a job and life doesn’t seem worth living.

Reading

10 WAYS TO SUPPORT FRIENDS WITH DEPRESSION

1. *Be Aware*

Pay attention to mood swings. If your friend is **withdrawing** from social interaction, he may be suffering from depression. Major life changes, such as a new baby or a divorce, can **trigger** depression.

2. *Be Informed*

Clinical depression is a real condition that requires medical attention. Read books and articles about the signs and symptoms of depression, and pass on what you know.

3. *Be Active*

Your friend may feel like lying in bed or on the couch all day. Offer to make a doctor's appointment for your friend and go with your friend if she feels nervous about going alone.

4. *Be Present*

Let your friend know that you will **be there** for her no matter what. Listen **attentively** when she is ready to talk, but avoid giving too much advice.

5. *Be Encouraging*

Depressed people are often concerned about the future. Remind your friend of his importance in your life and in the lives of others.

6. *Be Sensitive*

Don't ask your friend to "**snap out of it.**" Tell your friend that you understand that depression is real. Try not to compare your life or experience to hers.

7. *Be Available*

Being around a depressed person can be depressing. Do your best not to **isolate** your friend, even though he may not be the best company.

8. *Be Ready for an Emergency*

Severe depression can lead to suicidal thoughts. In most cases, a person gives a warning sign to a friend before she takes her own life. Take your depressed friend seriously.

9. *Be the Voice of Reason*

Depression can lead a person to become addicted to drugs, including **antidepressants** or alcohol. Support your loved one by being **the voice of reason** when it comes to decision-making.

10. *Be Patient*

Realize that depression is a disease that a friend may battle with his whole life. Some seasons and stages may be more difficult than others. Never **give up on** a loved one who suffers from depression.

Did you know?

The verb "depress" has two meanings:

- to feel very sad or depressed
Back-to-school ads depress me.
- to push down (a lever or a button)
You must depress the brake pedal.

Comprehension

Listen to your teacher read some statements about the text. If the statement is true, write T beside the sentence. If it is false, write F and correct the information on the line. If it is not mentioned, write NM.

_____	1.	_____
_____	2.	_____
_____	3.	_____
_____	4.	_____
_____	5.	_____
_____	6.	_____

Vocabulary Review

A. Word Forms

Look at the words in the chart and find them in the reading. Identify the word form in context (noun/verb/adjective). Then write an example sentence to demonstrate your understanding of the vocabulary.

#	Word	Word Form	Example Sentence
1	pay attention	<i>verb</i>	<i>You should pay attention in class.</i>
2	withdraw		
3	be there		
4	trigger		
5	give up on		
6	antidepressant		
7	snap out of it		
8	attentively		
9	the voice of reason		
10	isolate		

Vocabulary Review

B. Depress, Depressed, or Depressing?

Complete the sentences with an appropriate form of the word “depress.”

1. This weather _____ me. I never want to go outside.
2. I’ve been feeling _____ these days. I think I should go and see a doctor.
3. What is the title of this _____ song? It always makes me cry.
4. My teacher is on stress leave. I heard that he is suffering from _____ .
5. I stay away from _____ movies. I prefer comedies.
6. _____ the handle. That turns on the machine.

Writing

Complete one of the lists below. You can use the information you learned on page 2 to come up with a list of 10 things NOT to say to someone who is suffering from depression, or alternatively, you could come up with a list of 10 helpful things to say to a person who is suffering from depression.

10 Things NOT to Say to a Person Who Is Suffering from Depression

- Ex. *Snap out of it!* _____
1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
 6. _____
 7. _____
 8. _____
 9. _____
 10. _____

10 Helpful Things to Say to a Person Who Is Suffering from Depression

- Ex. *I’m here for you when you need me.* _____
1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
 6. _____
 7. _____
 8. _____
 9. _____
 10. _____

Role-Play

DOCTOR'S ORDERS

Get together with a partner. Create a dialogue between a doctor and a patient whose husband or wife is suffering from depression. The patient describes his/her partner's symptoms and the doctor offers suggestions for being a supportive spouse.

Discussion

1. What mistakes do many people make when dealing with a person who is suffering from depression?
2. Why do we find it surprising when wealthy people or celebrities suffer from depression?
3. What should the government do to help support people with mental illnesses?
4. How is depression different from anxiety? How is it the same?
5. Why do many women suffer from depression after having a baby? What other life stages or events do you think trigger depression?

Critical Thinking

A PASSING FEELING OR A DISEASE?

About 10% of adults in America are on antidepressants*. Do you think doctors are too quick to diagnose people with depression? Why is this number not as high in other countries?

***Note:**

To be "on antidepressants" means to be taking them regularly. A person can also be "on" other drugs, including non-prescription drugs.