



NAVIGATING THE JOURNEY AS A CAREGIVER

Your **loved one** has a diagnosis of **Major Depressive Disorder (MDD)**.

What's next?

Behaviors and Challenges You May Recognize

People with Major Depressive Disorder (or simply Depression) experience periods where their mind, emotions and body are in a painful or low-energy state. The emotional struggle, defeating thoughts, and physical pain or lethargy brought on by depression may make it challenging for your loved one to go about life as normal. They may be experiencing:

- Lack of interest engaging with the world
- Feelings of hopelessness or pointlessness
- Guilty thoughts and feeling like a burden
- Difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much
- Lack of authentic connecting; too busy hiding sadness
- Bodily responses such as weakness or soreness
- Suicidal thoughts and thoughts of self-harm
- Hygiene, exercise, or diet starting to slip
- Numbness, difficulty feeling enjoyment

This journey of navigating your loved one's MDD diagnosis may look daunting at first. Yet, it can help to shift that compass and look at this journey as an opportunity for GROWTH. On this journey, you can NURTURE your relationship with your loved one AND yourself.

Supporting Your Loved One

You and your loved one are embarking on a growth journey and will navigate their diagnosis TOGETHER. Be PATIENT with your loved one AND yourself as you learn which coping strategies are most helpful.

The greatest gift we can give our loved ones is ACCEPTANCE of what they are going through in the moment. To help them you can also practice boundary-setting, utilize outside help, and take care of YOU! It will empower you BOTH on this journey for you to give yourself love and rest. YOU will be more able to give the care they need and THEY will witness your self-care example.

You can also provide your loved with resources. *See the next page for ways to help manage MDD.*

If you are currently experiencing a crisis, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or contact the Crisis Text Line by texting TALK to 741-741.

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Resources for You and Your Loved One

- **The National Institute of Mental Health** on Depressive Disorder <https://bit.ly/2SC1aY3>
- **The National Alliance on Mental Illness** on Depression <https://bit.ly/3iSleQv>
- Depression information from **Mental Health America** <https://bit.ly/3gBXEpG>
- **The Anxiety and Depression Association of America's** therapy search engine <http://bit.ly/ADAAtherapyoptions>
- Free program for managing sadness from **MoodTools** <http://bit.ly/moodtools>
- **SAMHSA's National Helpline** information center <http://bit.ly/callSAMHSA>
- Youth support page by **Students Against Depression** <http://bit.ly/studentsdep>
- A Parent's Guide to Teen Depression from **HelpGuide** <http://bit.ly/parentsdep>
- Support group options from the **Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)** <http://bit.ly/DBPsupport>
- Depression resources for youth by **ReachOut** <http://bit.ly/reachoutdep>
- Info on DNA tests for medication matching (also **DBSA**) <http://bit.ly/pharmatesting>
- A self-guide on coping with current feelings by **Mental Health is Health** <http://bit.ly/currentemotions>
- Workbook PDF by the **Self-Care Depression Program** <http://bit.ly/antidepworkbook>
- **Insight Timer**: free, comprehensive meditation app <https://bit.ly/calminisight>
- A word for caregivers from **Families for Depression Awareness** <http://bit.ly/depcaregiver>
- **5 best mood-tracking apps** by **Resources to Recover** <http://bit.ly/moodtrackingapps>

Preventing Caregiver Burnout

We give our BEST care when we are also taking care of ourselves! Make time to recharge, even with a short moment that's just for YOU. Connecting with other caregivers is another powerful form of self-care. Learn more about our One-to-One Caregiver Peer Support program on [our website](#).

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