

Taking Care of Yourself with Depression

When you are depressed, it is important to...

Pace yourself. Do not expect to do all of the things you were able to do in the past. Set a schedule that is realistic for you.

Think positive. Remember that negative thinking (blaming yourself, feeling hopeless, expecting failure, and other such thoughts) is part of a depression. As the depression lifts, the negative thinking will go away, too.

Avoid making major life decisions. If you must make a major decision about your life while you are depressed, ask your clinician or someone you trust to help you.

Avoid drugs and alcohol. Research shows that drinking too much alcohol or using drugs can cause or worsen a depression. It can also lower the effectiveness of antidepressant medicines or cause dangerous side effects.

Be Patient. Understand that it took time for the depression to develop and it will take time for it to go away.

Ask for Support. Your friends and family can be very supportive and helpful, especially if they have received education about depression. Keep the name and phone number of people that you can talk to and to ask to help you. Ask your friends and family members for their understanding and patience. Talk to them about your feelings and treatment. Spend time with them in social activities.

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Some people find it difficult, almost a burden, to interact with others during this time. If you feel this way, don't force yourself to get out among people. However, if you find yourself alone and unable to interact with others, tell your clinician.

(based on Clinical Practice Guideline on Depression in Primary Care, by the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research)