

# Helping a friend or partner with depression

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## Helpful advice

- Keep in mind that depression is an illness and that they cannot help experiencing it.
- Encourage them to consult their GP and consider seeing a counsellor. (Person centred and cognitive behavioural both show good results)
- Talk with them about the things on this list and what they think will help. Listen to them.
- Encourage them to take exercise - perhaps offer to arrange something with them as initiating things is harder when depressed.
- Encourage them to eat a balanced diet.
- Listen to what they have to say and be there for them - maybe at short agreed times.
- Don't feel you have to listen to everything all the time - sitting and really listening for 30 minutes may be more helpful than half listening for 4 hours.
- Tell them every day that you care about them.
- Encourage them to do things - small steps are fine. Praise them. Even making a pot of tea is a triumph when in clinical depression. Help build self-esteem by praising any success.
- Share the support with friends.
- Find out about [other support services](#).
- DO NOT tell them to snap out of it and cheer up. If they could they would.
- Do not tell them about all the things they should be glad about.
- Encourage them to do things that help them to relax but do not include alcohol in this as it is a depressant and will make it worse.

## Take care of yourself

- Remember that you are not responsible **for** them and you cannot cure them.
- You can be responsible **to** them by offering some of your time and by looking after yourself too.
- Continue to live your own life. It is **essential** that you carry on going out and doing things that you enjoy.
- Where possible share the contact with the depressed person, with a network of friends who can take turns.
- Depression can be extremely draining so do not try to empathise with the depressed person all the time. If you are moved by their sadness continually you will become exhausted and low yourself. (Most therapists offer a 50 minute 'hour' because they also need a break after that). It is vital to have space to switch off / listen to your own music / go out / chat to a friend etc.
- Be yourself - don't try to be relentlessly cheerful either!
- The depressed person may say things that are hurtful because they do not believe they have any significance and they feel so powerless. Keep this in mind if you start to feel upset.
- Make sure you have a good friend to confide in for your own support or a counsellor / chaplain etc.

## Useful contacts

### [Students Against Depression](#)

This is a brilliant website with lots of good information. See also their situation on 'food and mood'.

[Depression Alliance](#): 0845 123 2320

35 Westminster Bridge Rd, London, SE1 7JB.

[Depression UK](#): 0870 774 4320.

Depression UK, Self Help Nottingham, Ormiston House, 32 - 36 Pelham Street, Nottingham, NG1 2EG.

[Samaritans](#) (24hr): 116 123

[jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

### [Mental Health Foundation](#)

### [NHS Student Mental Health](#)

[NHS Choices](#): 111

### [Big White Wall](#)

Online community for help with Depression and Anxiety. Free for University Students.

**Sane:** 08457 678000 - 6pm-11pm daily  
For info & advice on all aspects of mental health.

**Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity team:** 01509 228338  
[studentwellbeing@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:studentwellbeing@lboro.ac.uk)

To book an appointment with any of our services within Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity (including the Counselling Team, Mental Health Support Team and the Wellbeing Advisers), please complete [the referral form](#).