

Depression

Treat it as if your life depended on it.

Fact Sheet

How to talk to someone about depression...

- **Show concern.** Tell him or her that you are concerned and want to help. You can say that you've noticed symptoms that might indicate depression, and ask if they have noticed these or other symptoms also.
- **Encourage him or her to see a doctor.** Emphasize that depression is a medical illness. Make it clear that it isn't their fault and that treatment is available. Tell them that they need to see a doctor for a depression screening and offer to go with them to the appointment. Do whatever you can to persuade them to get medical help.
- **Ask about suicidal thoughts.** They need to be asked, either by you or a medical professional, if they have had any suicidal thoughts. If yes, a comprehensive suicide risk assessment needs to be completed.

Remember that the best help you can give someone who may have depression is encouragement to seek professional help.

Things to keep in mind if someone you know or love has depression...

- **Be understanding.** Realize that depression is an illness that can affect moods and behavior. Effective treatment can change problem behaviors.
- **Don't blame yourself.** You are not responsible for a loved one's depression anymore than you are responsible for someone's cancer or heart disease.
- **Be supportive.** Offer to help during the treatment process. Accompany them to appointments and be available to listen if/when they feel like talking. Learn more about depression and its treatment.

Remember that being a good spouse, daughter, son, friend or co-worker cannot cure a loved one's depression, but that your support can make getting treatment easier.