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Blurt's guide on how to support someone who has depression



Contents

1. What is Depression?
2. Depression Myths
3. What You Don't See
4. How Relationships Can Be Tested
5. Friendship from a Depressed Person's Perspective
6. Ways to be Supportive
7. When You're Concerned for Someone's Safety
8. Don't Forget Your Self-Care

What is Depression?



Depression is a mental illness. According to the World Health Organisation, it's the leading cause of ill health and disability right now. It's much more common than you might think too and it's on the rise; more than 300 million people globally are now living with depression, an increase of more than 18% between 2005 and 2015.

If it's so common, why is understanding so limited?

IN A WORD - STIGMA

As with other mental illnesses, depression is steeped in stigma: the stigma means that those of us who are struggling often find it difficult to reach out and get help. They're too scared to talk about what's going on for them for fear of discrimination. Yet sometimes simply talking can be life-saving.

The stigma also means that people are often scared and disengaged with mental health problems, they think they've never interacted with someone who is struggling and that it will never happen to them. The truth is, it affects us all. We interact with people with mental health difficulties every day – they're our families, our friends, and our colleagues.

THE SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

Depression is more than simply a low mood: it causes mental anguish, impacts on our ability to carry out even



the simplest everyday tasks, and can cause us to function poorly in work, education and socially. At worst, depression can lead to suicide, now the second leading cause of death among 15-29-year olds.

The symptoms of depression develop gradually and affect different people in different ways. Some of the symptoms your friend/loved one might be struggling with are:

Low mood	Low self-esteem
Sadness	Change in sleeping habits (over sleeping or not getting any sleep)
Guilt	
No motivation	Low tolerance
No hope	Crying for no apparent reason
Anxiety	
Feeling helpless	Indecisive
Loss in interest in things you usually enjoy	Avoiding contact with friends and family
Change in appetite (over eating or no interest in food)	Lack of interest in sex
No energy	Finding difficulties at work
Irritability	suicidal thoughts
	Thoughts of harming themselves

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

The best support you can give is to come from a place of empathy and you can't really do that unless you have a grasp of what living with depression is like.

Living with depression is incredibly overwhelming, frightening and lonely. It's also quite difficult to articulate the complexities of the illness so we've cherry-picked some blog posts we feel would give you the best insight into the illness:

[Depression: Surviving Socialising](#)

[Perfectionism and Depression](#)

[Depression: On Noise, Answering the Telephone and Making Decisions](#)

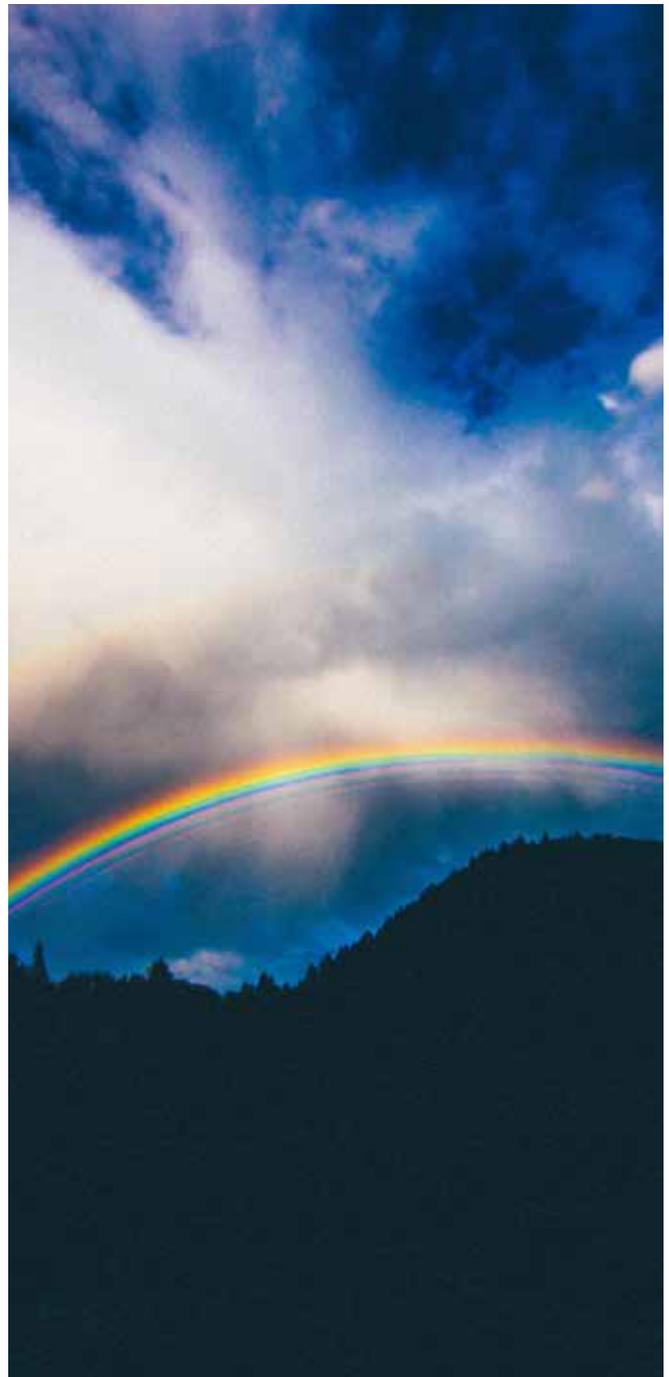
[Depression: On Feeling Like an Imposter](#)

[Depression: 10 Books Which Aid Understanding](#)

[5 Videos Which Aid Understanding of Depression](#)

[How Depression Feels For Me](#)

[I'm My Own Worst Enemy](#)



Depression Myths



When talking to others about depression, we're often greeted with a range of responses. Some of these responses are helpful and supportive, others are less so.

Unfortunately, there are a number of misconceptions and myths surrounding depression. We've had a go at 'myth-busting' them.

MYTH: DEPRESSION IS A CHOICE.

Commonly presented as: *"You can't just cry when I feel like it, you have to learn to control it"*

"You have a choice, just choose to be happy"

"Just don't be depressed? It's not that hard?"

Fact: Depression is not a choice. [It is a real illness with real symptoms.](#) We don't want to be depressed, and are unable to choose to be happy (as much as we might wish we could!).

MYTH: THERE IS ALWAYS A REASON FOR SOMEONE'S DEPRESSION.

Commonly presented as: *"Why are you depressed?"*

"You've got a roof over your head and a loving family and great friends, you have nothing to be depressed about."

"You've just got a lot going on, when things settle you'll feel better."

Fact: There is no 'one' single known cause for depression. It is thought that stressful life events, family history, personality, loneliness, alcohol or drug use, and illness [could all contribute to it](#); often it will be a combination of factors. We may not know exactly what has caused our illness – it's something that can take a lot of hard work and support to figure out and work through.



MYTH: OTHER PEOPLE HAVE IT WORSE, SO YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY HAVE DEPRESSION.

Commonly presented as: *"Think of the refugees fleeing Syria, they're far worse off than you"*
"People have it so much harder than you, be grateful; you'll feel better when you realise what you have"

Fact: Someone else's suffering doesn't alleviate or invalidate our suffering. Our pain cannot be turned off with a switch.

MYTH: YOU CAN'T WORK AND HAVE DEPRESSION.

Commonly presented as: *"But you have a career?"*
"How can you be depressed you always come into work and laugh and talk to people?"

Fact: Some people's depression will prevent them from working, but many people who have depression also work, and we work in all sorts of fields. Around **1.5% of workers** have experienced some form of work-related stress, depression, or anxiety. Sometimes we might need a little more support to help us stay in our jobs, but with the right help and support, we can have successful careers.

MYTH: YOUR FASHION CHOICES DICTATE WHETHER OR NOT YOU CAN BE DEPRESSED.

Commonly presented as: *"You dress too well to be depressed."*
"You look like you're out of a fashion magazine so you must be doing well."
"You present yourself very well for someone who claims to be depressed."

Fact: People with depression wear all sorts of different clothes. Just like the rest of the population, we will sometimes have pyjama days, sometimes live in jeans, and sometimes dress up to go out for the evening. Our illness doesn't dictate the clothes we are allowed to wear, and the clothes we wear don't show how ill we are.

MYTH: IT'S IMMEDIATELY OBVIOUS WHEN SOMEONE HAS DEPRESSION.

Commonly presented as: *"But you're such a positive person and always smiling!"*
"How can you be depressed when you make jokes all the time?"
"You don't look ill, you look fine to me"

Fact: People with depression look just like anyone else. **We don't have a special "look"** or way of acting. We can smile, laugh, wear make-up, use public transport, do a weekly food shop – we present just as people without depression do.

MYTH: MEDICATION IS A MAGIC FIX... OR SHOULDN'T BE USED AT ALL.

Commonly presented as: *"You're taking pills so you should be fine now."*
"You are hooked on antidepressants, why don't you come off them"
"Medication doesn't work at all"

Fact: Medication is a tool that can be used to help manage depression. For some of us it's helpful, for others it isn't. Often we will need some form of talking therapy alongside our medication. Some of us might choose not to take medication at all and prefer alternative treatments, but the choice of whether to take medication should be down to the individual, and nobody should be shamed for their decision.

MYTH: FRESH AIR AND EXERCISE CURE DEPRESSION.

Commonly presented as: *"Get some exercise; go for a walk, it will clear your head."*
"How can you be depressed on such a beautiful day?"

Fact: Nature can help when we have depression. So can exercise. However neither are a magic cure, and everyone is unique, so something that might really help one person, might not help another at all.

MYTH: THERE IS A SIMPLE 'FIX'

Commonly presented as: *"It's because you're not busy enough!"*
"Drink lemon water"
"Have you tried baking a cake?"

Fact: As much as baking a cake is a lovely idea, and might be a nice way to spend an afternoon, it's unlikely to cure depression. There are many things that could help depression, such as talking therapies, medication, or time, but there is no magic cure and different people will need different treatments at different levels.

MYTH: A RELATIONSHIP WILL CURE YOUR DEPRESSION...SO WILL BEING SINGLE.

Commonly presented as: *"You need a get a boyfriend, that'll make you happy."*
"You're engaged, you should be happy."
"You're single you have no husband, kids and mortgage to worry about."

Fact: People in relationships can be incredibly supportive of one another, which could help with alleviating certain depressive symptoms, but depression doesn't only affect single people, or only target people in relationships.

MYTH: YOU CAN'T BE DEPRESSED IF YOU'RE YOUNG... OR IF YOU'RE OLD.

Commonly presented as: *"You're too young to know what mental illness is, let alone have it."*
"We didn't have therapy in my day, talking is for your generation."
"You're too old for this."

Fact: Depression can happen to anyone at any age. Around 1.4% of 11-16 year olds are seriously depressed, as are around 2% of adults aged 75+ have diagnosed depression.

MYTH: IF YOU HAVE DEPRESSION, YOU CAN'T HAVE ANY FRIENDS.

Commonly presented as: *"How can you be depressed when you have so many lovely friends?"*
"How can you be depressed when you're so sociable and extroverted?"

Fact: It can be much **harder to maintain friendships** when we have depression, because it can result in lack of energy, and also in memory problems which can mean that we sometimes forget to reply to texts or messages, but that doesn't mean that having depression and having friends are mutually exclusive; friends can be incredibly important in helping us to stumble our way through depression.

MYTH: IF YOU HAVE DEPRESSION, IT MEANS YOU'RE SELFISH, UNGRATEFUL OR ATTENTION SEEKING.

Commonly presented as: *"You're being ungrateful"*
"Just stop being so selfish and you might feel better."
"I bet you're just pretending for attention"

Fact: People with depression may well ask for help, but that doesn't mean that they're attention seeking – they're usually care seeking. We may sometimes come across as being selfish or ungrateful, but that's likely to be our illness, not us.

MYTH: PEOPLE WITH DEPRESSION JUST NEED TO 'BE MORE POSITIVE'

Commonly presented as: *"You just need to think about happy things."*
"Smile, that will make you feel better"
"Just stop dwelling on it and you'll be fine"

Fact: Doing enjoyable things, or putting positive messages up on our walls or fridge might help us to feel better, but though there are a **number of things** which can help depression, it's unlikely to be cured through the power of positive thinking alone.

MYTH: DEPRESSION HAS A SHELF LIFE.

Commonly presented as: *"How can you still be depressed. Surely you must be better by now?"*
"You are always ill! How can you still be ill?"

Fact: For some of us, the length of time we live with depression might be a few months, for others of us it might be a few years, or even longer. The average length of a depressive episode is 6-8 months, but around 80% of us will have a depression recurrence at some point in our lifetime.

MYTH: DEPRESSION ISN'T SERIOUS.

Commonly presented as: *"Depression is the mental health equivalent of a mild cold."*
"Depression isn't cancer, it's not going to kill you."
"It can't be that bad, everyone gets sad sometimes."

Fact: Depression is serious, and can be **life-threatening**; the highest rates of **suicide** are associated with depressive disorders. Those of us living with depression deserve help and support. These 'myths' are unhelpful (and dangerous) because they invalidate what is a very serious illness and prevent those in need from reaching out for the help they so desperately need and deserve.

What You Don't See

When you have depression, it's like there's a war raging in your brain, but because depression is a mental illness, it's not always obvious that you're struggling. There's so much that you just don't see.

Depression can hit anyone, at any time, regardless of age, gender, and personal circumstance. It's an invisible illness: you can't tell from the outside who is suffering.

During Depression Awareness Week 2016, we ran a campaign '#whatyoudontsee'. It unexpectedly went viral. We asked people to share their insights and experiences of depression – we wanted to highlight the reality of depression, the impact depression has had on our lives, and give people a chance to share 'what you don't see'.

You can search [#whatyoudontsee](#) on Twitter still. Here are just a few of the contributions:



Amie Louise Bailey
@amiebailey

Following

Laughing/smiling/having fun doesn't mean someone "can't possibly" be depressed. Depression doesn't have a facial expression.
#WhatYouDontSee

RETWEETS
21

LIKES
31



Ben Gazur
@BenTheEpicure

Following

#WhatYouDontSee is the terror that someone might notice something is wrong, and the pain when no one does.

RETWEETS
349

LIKES
507



6:48 AM - 18 Apr 2016



erin lidia
@erinlidia

Following

#WhatYouDontSee is that **#depression** isn't just one emotion. It can be a million agonizing feelings, or it can be feeling nothing at all.

RETWEETS 141
LIKES 274



6:13 AM - 18 Apr 2016



Missy Moody Richmond
@StargardtEyes

Following

#WhatYouDontSee is the intense guilt I feel when I can't even answer my phone, let alone go out. **#depression #mentalillness #mh**

RETWEETS 22
LIKES 33



8:42 AM - 20 Apr 2016



Gemma Riddikulus
@Riddellio

Following

Smiling, laughing and being strong every day. Feeling physically and mentally exhausted when I get home. **#WhatYouDontSee**

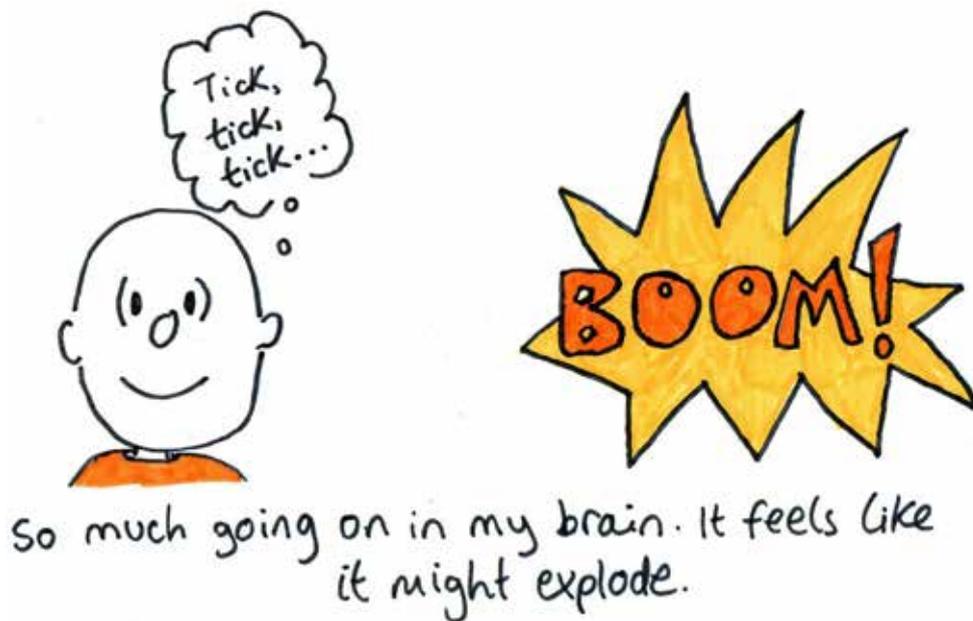
RETWEETS 60
LIKES 52



6:18 AM - 20 Apr 2016

These six doodles were inspired by the campaign and illustrate some of the things a depressed person might be feeling.

OVERWHELMING THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS



Sometimes we feel like our heads are going to explode. There's such a lot of noise going on in there, we can't bear it. Our thoughts and feelings overwhelm us.

MENACED BY ANXIETY



Depression, and its partner in crime, anxiety, don't care where we are or what we're doing. We can be somewhere familiar, doing something we would normally enjoy, yet still be menaced by them.

MISLEADING SMILES



We can still smile and laugh when we have depression. But you don't see what goes on in our heads when we're alone with our thoughts.

DEPRESSION LIES LOUDLY



Depression finds words and phrases that hurt us, and beats us up with them, over and over again. We believe what it says.

AFRAID OF THE FUTURE



Depression sucks the joy from us. We can't find anything to look forward to – we're too worried about everything.

CONFIDENCE IS AT ROCK BOTTOM



Our confidence and self-esteem take a battering from depression. Getting them back can feel impossible.

How Relationships Can Be Tested

In the midst of a depression fog, **friendships can become hard** and complicated. They morph into an unrecognisable version of you and those closest to you – a plateau of hot coals, haunted by how things used to be, exacerbated by heart-wrenching change that none of you quite understand. It's an awful feeling. It's also quite normal.

Depression can magnify negative thoughts and feelings. On bad days, these can unintentionally become entangled in our friendships. This confuses communication, gets hard to navigate through the fog, and leaves those of us with depression feeling helpless. Sometimes even unworthy of the friendships we're seemingly 'ruining'. We often find ourselves questioning every exchange (or lack of), beating ourselves up needlessly. We wanted to address some of the common thoughts those with depression have about relationships, it might help give you an understand between their perspective and the probable reality of the situation.

PARANOIA

Depression makes it feel like: Your friend is seeing other friends. Without you. So they've forgotten all about you, left you to it and are probably conspiring about you right now.

Reality: Think back and see if you can remember a time when your friend saw this particular person/people without you there. If it's happened before, then nothing has changed. It's ok. Life goes on as normal and your friend has not abandoned you, much less talked about you behind your back. If you'd normally meet up with this person as a group that includes you, that's ok too. Your friend may well be sharing their worries and trying to rally you some help. Good friends do that, whether you want them to or not. And that's pretty amazing.

Try not to punish them for getting support – it makes sure they're strong enough for you to lean on. Paranoia is a difficult and evil emotion to deal with, but stopping to reason out events can help.

SECRETS

Depression makes it feel like: Your friend doesn't see you as a reliable source of support any more. They're going through their own bad times, and despite how much you want to help they just aren't opening up. Depression has made you a terrible friend.

Reality: Your friend is protecting you. No, we know it doesn't feel like it, but they are. What kind of friend would watch you go through this, then start laying their own problems on you too? It's not your fault and it's not theirs, it's just bad timing. It isn't forever. They'll tell you everything when the time is right.

If you have the energy, pop them the following text to let them know you're still around and love them:

Hello you! I wanted to check in to say I love you millions. I know you're having a time of it at the moment too. I just wanted to let you know that no matter what's happening with me, I'm always here to chat if you need to and when you're ready.

FRUSTRATION

Depression makes it feel like: Your friend is really hard to talk to and it's weird. Sometimes they badger you with texts, sometimes there's nothing for ages. Other times they're snippy. You've really annoyed them and you are falling out.

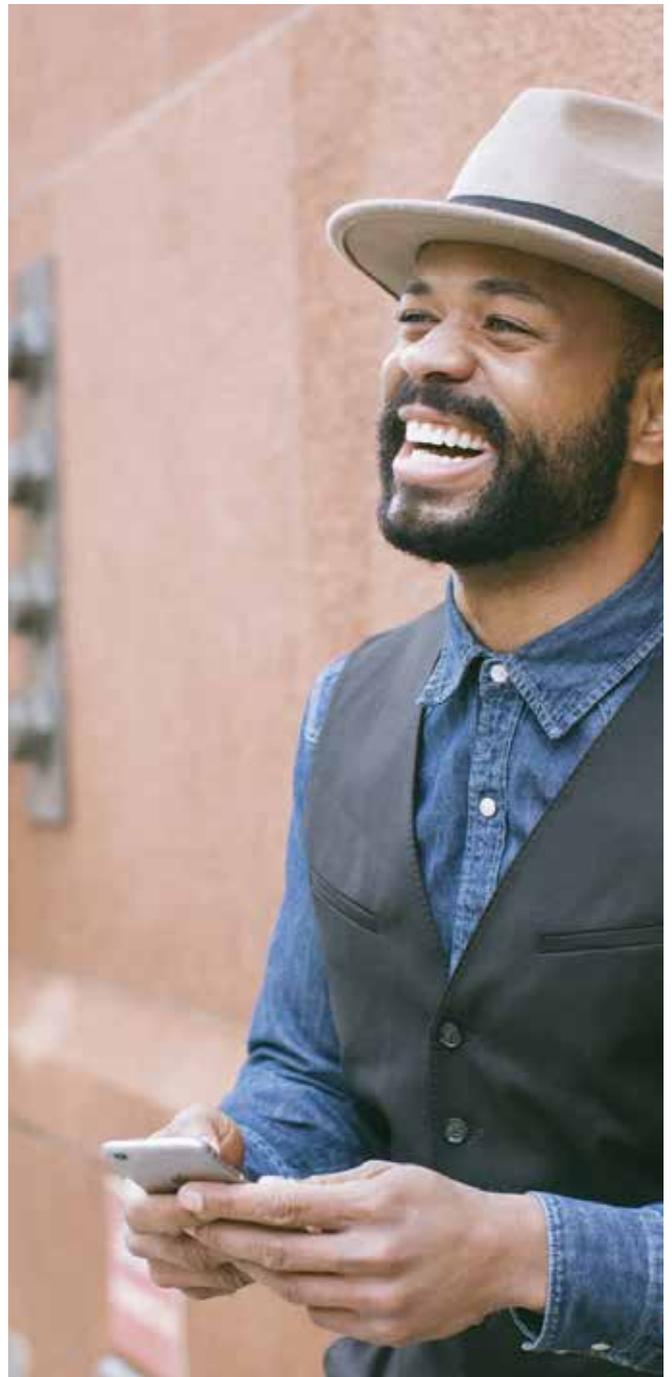
Reality: Depression is so difficult to understand and manage that you get frustrated dealing with it, so it stands to reason it'll confuse others a little too. 100% normal.

Texts can be misconstrued very easily. The likelihood is that your friend is dealing with something completely unrelated whilst texting you – like a work issue – and was accidentally short instead of efficient. If things start going that way, don't be afraid to put your phone away and revisit the conversation when you feel ready. A little break is much better than firing off frustrated messages.

GUILT

Depression makes it feel like: Your friend is giving you so much time and attention, but every time you don't feel up to answering a text or think you're making them sad just by being alive, you want the world to swallow you up. It's better if you just cut everyone off because you don't deserve them. You can't be helpful to them in return.

Reality: If your friends' communication has intensified, or even quietened right down, try not to panic. Both behaviours, more often than not, are a sign that they



want to help but don't really know how. There are few practical things someone can do to ease depression, and that's quite hard for a caring friend to accept.

If their communication is overwhelming, keep your phone on silent and just respond when you're good and ready – there is no rush. Nothing terrible will happen if you don't respond in three seconds. If they're quiet, remind them you appreciate them now and again – send them the odd picture or memory that lets them know the good times are in your thoughts.

FORGETFULNESS

Depression makes it feel like: You are hands-down the worst friend ever. You forgot to ask how that important thing went yesterday because you were so wrapped up in yourself. How could you forget such a big thing?!

Reality: Short-term memory really suffers when you're depressed, and it's not helped by the onset of tunnel vision. In other words, you barely remember anything and find it very hard to notice stuff going on outside of your own spiral. It's so horrible. But be as honest as you can about it, and your friends will bear with you.

If anyone mentions anything – like a job interview or a birthday – that you know you'll want to reach out to them for, note it down there and then and stick it somewhere visible, like the fridge, to jog your memory. Already missed something important? Don't worry – pop them a message like this:

Oh my gosh I am so sorry, my memory is shot at the moment – please tell me how everything went yesterday? I want to know every detail

Friendship rollercoasters are hard and isolating. Feeling like a burden is horrible. But if the tables were turned, would you just walk away? We thought not.

Real, important friendships will withstand this illness. Sometimes a friend will be there every waking minute. Sometimes you'll just have a break from each other entirely. Neither of those things are a death sentence on your relationship. Be as honest as you can, and appreciate the people who stick with you through thick and thin. That's all anyone is asking of you.

“A friend is one that knows you as you are, understands where you have been, accepts what you have become, and still, gently allows you to grow.”

Elbert Hubbard

Friendship From a Depressed Person's Perspective

When you're supporting someone with depression, the relationship can feel one-sided; you might feel pushed aside, as though you're no longer needed, nor matter. What you probably don't realise is that there is a raging war in your friend/loved one's head – they don't want to burden you, may have put you on a pedestal and feel as though they have absolutely nothing to bring to the relationship. Here's an insight into what their perspective on your friendship might be:

Dear Friend (is it still okay to call you that?)

I have been a lousy friend to you and I'm sorry.

I miss you.

Years ago, depression came out of nowhere and knocked me to my knees. It felt as though overnight, I turned from a lifelong member of our friendship circle into someone who felt so incredibly unworthy of your friendship.

And ashamed.

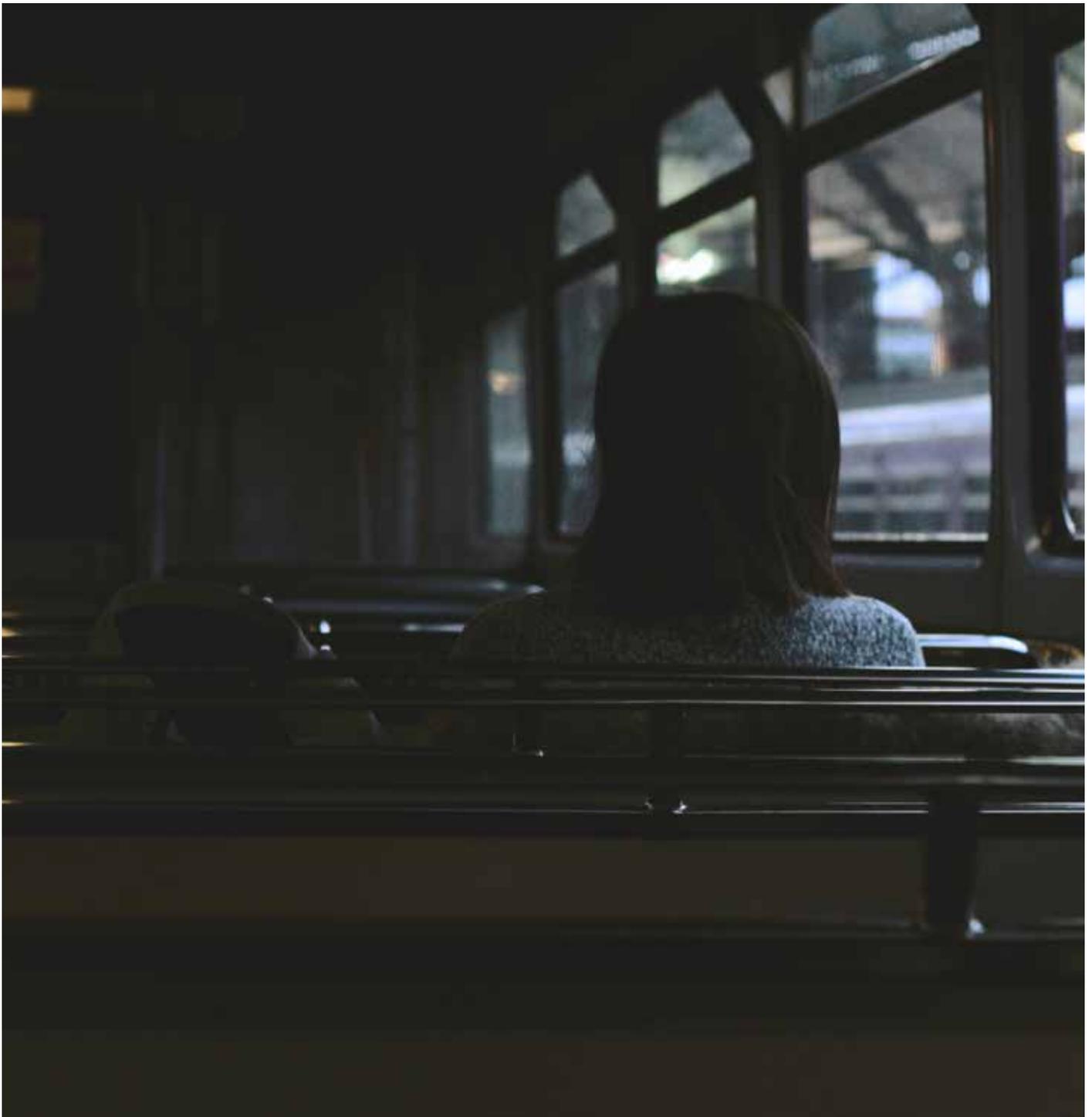
So very ashamed of my illness. And also ashamed of the way it made me feel and then how those feelings ruled my behaviour.

Not understanding enough about what I was going through, it simply felt easier to decline invitations, to hide away and to spare you all the trouble, the trouble that I felt I was. I didn't want to be a burden to you, to ruin the fun times, to be a source of worry.

As time passed and I became more poorly, I felt as though I'd set you free from it all. As though, in my depression-warped mind, I was being a good friend in saving you from this new lacklustre version of me, from the awkwardness of navigating this new frightening landscape and the negativity that had invaded my mind and was bound to seep out into all that I would do. It felt safer to withdraw from our friendship, from many other friendships and well, life really. As my self-confidence took a battering, you became higher up on the pedestal you were already on. Why on earth would you want to be my friend? The fear of rejection was so acute, it gave depression power and became its own self-fulfilling prophecy. I see photos of you all, celebrating marriages, christenings, school reunions and landmark birthdays and I know I should be there. I yearn to be there.

Many years have now passed. Ironically, my actions which served to protect you, did the exact opposite. My understanding of depression has increased and I realise too, that I didn't consider how hurtful my actions might be. How hurt you'd feel that I'd cut our friendship off, that I'd "checked out". How confusing that must have been for you, that your loyal friend became prickly and flaky. How I wasn't giving you a chance to care, to be a friend. How my many excuses must have felt as though I was fobbing you off. How you must have felt you'd done something wrong.

If I could turn back the clock, I would probably write you a letter to explain what I was going through at the time. I would hope that might have sparked a conversation between us and that we could navigate the hell of depression between us, as a team. We'd still be friends, perhaps even stronger than before because by opening the door of vulnerability to you, it would have allowed you to do the same. I'm so sorry.



ways to be supportive



When you support someone with depression it isn't about 'fixing them', it's about being supportive, listening and doing what you can to make life a little easier for them.

There's a great disparity in the way people react when you tell them you are unwell with depression, compared to being unwell with something like a cold or a broken leg. You might feel a bit lost, a bit useless, a bit like a spare peg but you're none of those things. We promise.

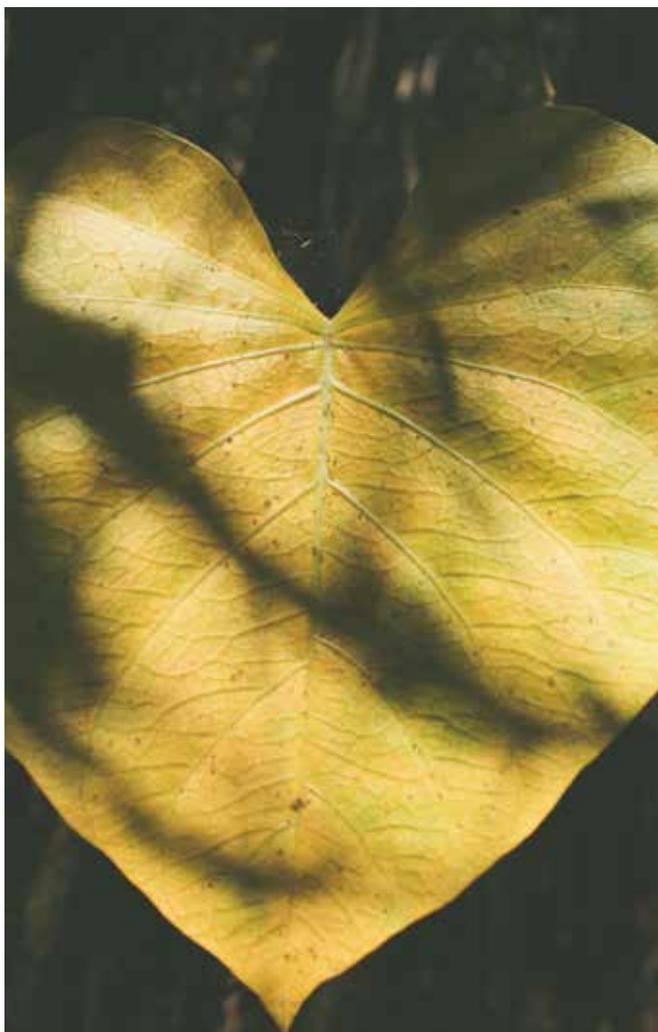
There are practical things you can do to support someone with depression. We asked our [Peer Support Group](#) to provide some examples to help you feel as though you're helping your loved one.

STAY IN TOUCH

When your mind is feeling unsafe, the rest of the world just amplifies that unsafe feeling. You may have invited your friend to various events to be turned down, time after time. Please don't take this personally, it's really not a reflection on how that person feels about you – it's about how they feel about themselves and the world at large.

Keep in contact regularly, to remind them you care and also to remind them how highly you think of them. When the voice in your head is on repeat, telling you how hopeless, helpless and horrible you are, your words make a difference to the voice in their head and how horrible they feel.

Send them a wee message regularly to let them know you haven't forgotten about them and you care about them. Remind them of their strengths and abilities whenever you can. Let them know that you believe that they have it within them to get through. Depression destroys my self confidence and self worth so hearing that someone genuinely still believes in me can be very powerful.



A card or note in the post is particularly special. You can look at it over and over and remember the person who cared enough to send it.

I know out of sight is out of mind for some people but please try to keep in touch with friends who have withdrawn. Doesn't have to be some grand gesture, may be just a quick "Hi" on FB or a quick friendly call or a simple saying hello card. The loss of friends to a depressive person is devastating.

So many good ideas above that I totally agree with but right now what would help me most is being reminded of my strengths, skills etc and help with completing job applications and preparing for interviews. It's so hard to get motivated anyway but trying to sell yourself when confidence is at a low is pretty impossible.

Remember to keep inviting them to things even if they're hardly ever able to come out because then they won't feel left out and abandoned.

What's helped me is getting real postcards and cards from people in the post. I've still been isolated, but it's helped me not to feel completely forgotten about.

Write them a letter or buy them a nice card and write what they mean to you and some encouraging things in it for them to look at. Reminding them how special they are

OFFER TO HELP WITH CHORES

The exhaustion that comes with depression is difficult to put into words. When you expend energy fighting the negative thoughts every single second of every single day (yup, they invade our dreams too), there's little energy left for anything else.

When we're well, we operate on autopilot a lot of the time. Things like having a shower, brushing our teeth and answering the telephone, are seemingly little they require little thought and little energy.

Those tasks for someone with depression can be insurmountable. It's not laziness either, it's a level of exhaustion that makes your body feel as though it's made of lead.

Make meals in portion sizes to freeze.

Help to declutter a space in their house, bedrooms are good cuz that might be where they spend all their time!

Clean their bed linen? Or at least change for fresh sheets.

Remember their normal is different from yours.

Doing small jobs for them helps, they are small jobs for you but hugely stressful ones for them, like taking the bins out.

Helping with ANY chore, no matter how small WITHOUT them asking would be a huge help. My friend comes grocery shopping with me to make sure I remember everything and make healthy choices and also takes away the anxiety of going.

Offer to go along to doctor's appointments with them. Perhaps you can help them write down everything they want to talk about beforehand too, so that nothing is missed out.

HELP THEM PRIORITISE SELF-CARE

Self-care can feel icky at the best of times. It feels like a luxury and the very act of it is so at odds with how we feel about ourselves, that it often loses the battle of resistance.

If you can remove some of the physical barriers to self-care, that can help enormously.

Babysit so they can have some self care.

Remind them of the beauty and importance of self care, anything from having a bubble bath to a nice cuppa.

I would love someone to come and say "you go upstairs and lie down for a bit" and entertain the kids and cook food without expecting much from me!

YOUR PRESENCE (AND LISTENING SKILLS) ARE VALUED

Sometimes, depression can be the elephant in the room. *You know it's the reason things have changed.* Your loved one is aware that it's the reason things have changed. This is uncharted territory for the both of you. You want so badly to help that you might sometimes come across as a bit 'problem solver-y'. We know your intentions are good, there's no doubt about that, but your just being there, and willing to listen, speaks volumes.

Set aside time to visit and just 'be' with them. This might mean making a cuppa, chatting -or not; watching a DVD together, making a duvet fort etc.

Be accepting when they don't know what's wrong and offer hugs. Sometimes just the physical closeness of somebody and knowing they accept how you're feeling can really make a difference (it's what my OH does that really means a lot.)

I know what is most helpful to me is when someone just listens and doesn't try to provide solutions, no matter what I say. And don't freak out if I discuss suicidal thoughts – because they are thoughts, it doesn't mean I'll act on them. But it helps to speak about it without judgement.

Let them have as many hugs as they need, and let them spend time in your company without making them feel like they have to entertain you. Depression is very lonely, but sometimes it takes too much energy to socialise, so finding in between is really comforting.

Listen properly and give me time to explain.

When You're Concerned for Someone's Safety

The more supported a person with depression feels, the better. Having a squad of people who are rooting for you, supporting you, and believing in you is worth its weight in gold. It truly does make a difference.

The best port of call is always a doctor. They'll be able to provide information and support about local organisations who might be able to help and make referrals.

On our website, we have page dedicated to national organisations who provide information and support to those who are suffering with depression. Quite often these organisations also provide guidance for those who are in a supportive role. You can find their information here:

<https://www.blurtitout.org/get-support/>

If your friend or loved one is in crisis, feeling suicidal, having thoughts of self-harm or you're worried about their safety, it might help to:

1. Encourage them to talk to someone over the telephone. Sane Charity provide crisis support between 6pm and 11pm, 365 days a year on 0845 767 8000.
The Samaritans provide 24 hour confidential emotional support. It is also free to call them and their number won't appear on your telephone bill 116 123.
NHS 111 provides 24 hour health advice and information on 111. Calls are free from landline and mobile phones.
If talking is difficult, [IMAlive](#) offer an online crisis intervention service.
2. Make contact with the Community Mental Health Team or Crisis Team. If they do not receive support from local mental health services, they can contact their GP.
3. Ask to be seen by the duty psychiatrist at the local A&E who will then be able to make an assessment and provide the appropriate help.
4. If you're worried about an immediate risk of harm, then please either call 999 and ask for the police or ambulance service.

There's some extremely useful information on [Mind's website](#) about what a Mental Health Crisis is, how to plan for and deal with one.

We're a UK based organisation and as such, these details are applicable to those who live in the UK.

Don't Forget Your Self-Care



Self-care is essential for our well-being, yet typically it's something that many of us find difficult to prioritise especially if we're worried about someone else. There's a tendency to give so much of ourselves in support of others, that we aren't left with any energy, headspace, nor inclination to take care of ourselves. This is when our own mental health becomes at risk.

Self-care is one of the key tools in our armoury against mental ill health, so it's important we make it a priority.

WHAT IS SELF-CARE?

Self-care is the actions we undertake to look after ourselves, physically, emotionally and mentally.

It incorporates the essential acts of care that we all need to focus on – like eating well, keeping ourselves clean and getting enough sleep.

On top of that though, self-care is what nourishes us personally: the things we do that comfort us, calm us, and make us feel good. These will vary from person to person – you might be drawn to creative activities, physical pursuits, mindfulness techniques, a combination of all three or something different altogether.

If you need inspiration about what self-care might look like for you, have a look at our post on self-care ideas.

WHY IS SELF-CARE SO IMPORTANT?

Everyone can benefit from self-care, here are five reasons why:

IT'S GOOD FOR OUR HEALTH

Some self-care activities have physical benefits that can help our wellbeing. Exercise, for example, instantly triggers endorphins, and taken regularly can offer a whole host of mood-boosting benefits.

IT'S GOOD FOR OUR HEARTS

Self-care can also positively impact on our emotional wellness.

Some self-care activities can directly impact on the stuff that brings us down. For example, decluttering our surroundings can leave us feeling lighter. Practising self-compassion can boost our self-esteem.

It sounds basic, but doing things that make us feel good, makes us feel good. Even if we can only do the tiniest thing, and even if that tiniest thing only opens the teeniest-tiniest chink of light within the black fag of our depression, we've still made progress.

IT REMINDS US WE ARE WORTHY

It's fantastic that you want to be so supportive but your needs still matter, they really, really do. By prioritising self-care – taking time out to do something just for us – we counter those negative thoughts that tell us that we're not important, that we don't matter at the moment.

And though initially we may feel some resistance to this (sadly, self-worth sadly can't be magicked out of the air), the more we practice self-care, the more we'll believe in our worth too.

IT ALLOWS US TO BE MORE SUPPORTIVE

If we have a full 'tank' we've more to give. The more rested, nourished and energised we feel, the more supportive we can be to others. It's natural to feel frustrated, concerned and a little helpless when you see someone you love in so much pain but it's no good putting your own mental health under strain too. It's not selfish to make sure your needs are met, it's good common sense. Self-care equips us to deal with stress, it helps us to become more resilient, to make better decisions and to communicate more effectively

“In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.”

Martin Luther King Jr.