

SELF HELP FOR DEPRESSION



Two examples relating to family members of prisoners who are suffering with depression

"I just feel terrible, I thought we were in a perfect little bubble then Bam !! out of nowhere he disappeared and was put on remand, It's been 7 months now and im struggling to put on that happy face and keep him positive, My mom says its normal and will pass but each day is getting harder"

"He's just like his dad, I did everything possible to prevent him ending up this way, and i mean everything, i just don't know what I did wrong, I constantly worry, i feel like I've let him down, he says i let him down, i feel a complete failure and have no idea what to do".

There is no manual on how to support a loved one in such a crisis as imprisonment, you may have experienced the above examples or have your own struggles dealing with it in your own personal way but It's important to understand that depression is an illness, not a sign of weakness. The magnitude of coping with a loved one inside and managing your own personal affairs such as bills, work, children, or even illness can be overwhelming. You really don't have to struggle with depression – Safer Landings can help. Self help doesn't have to be fancy activities weekend spas for massages, self help is a collection of little things you can do daily to improve your mood.

Below we have put together some suggestions you can do to self help against the symptoms of depression:

Join a Safer landings support group for depression . Speaking with others dealing with depression can help in reducing your sense of isolation or loneliness. Our support groups offer you the opportunity to meet people, you can also encourage each other, give and receive support on how to cope, and share all your lived experiences.

Join a Facebook or online support group. There are heaps of online or social media groups you can join and meet other people and talk about how you feel.

Create a support group. It's nice to receive support, but research shows you get an even bigger mood boost from providing support yourself. How you feel and how you cope may be very useful to someone. Think of ways to help someone, be a listening ear for a family member, loved one or friend, volunteer do something nice for somebody else.



Stay connected

You may always hear people say “just talk to someone it really helps” but may not want too or have the confidence to express how your feeling but there are plenty of ways to stay connected

10 tips for staying connected

- Take a pet for a walk, or consider having a pet, such company can lift your mood
- Have coffee or a snack in the park with a family member or friend.
- Tell your partner, friend or family member to check in on you, tell them you need support.
- Attend a small get-together.
- Reach out to an old friend via email or Facebook
- Help someone else by volunteering, join a local charity
- Get out, walk and breathe some fresh air
- Schedule a weekly visit with your partner or loved one
- Meet new people by taking a class or joining a club.
- Keep a journal and share your thoughts and feelings.

Prepare a mood booster list

What are the little things you enjoy ? try and do a couple each and every day, make a list the more you have the better, below are some examples.

10 Mood boosting ideas

- List everything you like about you
- List everything you like about your loved one in prison, remind yourself of why your together
- Watch a series that makes you laugh.
- Take a long, hot soak in the bath
- Draw or paint or write your mood
- Take a pet for a walk or take yourself somewhere local and scenic and enjoy a little nature.
- Talk to friends or family face-to-face.
- Listen to uplifting music.
- Do something spontaneous, such as a youtube exercise video or meditation or yoga only has to be for 10 minutes

Keep healthy.



When we feel low all the unhealthy aspects of life seem the easier choice, a takeaway instead of home cooked nutritious food, stay in bed instead of getting up and out, stay up late "as there's nothing to get up for " and disrupt our sleeping patterns. All these choices influence our mood and can cause symptoms of depression to exist.

Tips on staying healthy

Don't eat when you feel like it.. Going too long between meals can cause you to feel irritable and tired, so aim to eat something small every two hours or eat at least three meals a day.

Boost your vitamins intake. We always know how the lack of vitamins affects our physical health , it's no different with mental health. Deficiencies in folic acid and B-12 can trigger depression. To get more, take a vitamin supplement or eat more fruit, greens, chicken, beans and eggs.

Reduce sugar and carbs. Feeling low may increase the craving for sugary snacks, Greggs bakery, or comfort foods such as Mcdonalds French fries, but these "feel-good" foods quickly lead to a crash in mood and energy. Aim to have these as a treat at the end of the week for staying connected or applying your mood boost daily.

Try to get a good night's sleep. Aim for at least eight hours, keep a note of nights you have so you can try and understand what you did right that day. Depression typically disrupts sleep which exacerbates problems; whether you're sleeping a lot or having lots of little nana naps in the day your mood will suffer. Don't read from your phone before bed. Bright screens keep our brain awake, drinking less caffeine in the evening helps us to relax more. Try and get into a routine that provides a healthy sleeping habit.

Exercise. A ten minute walk can do wonders for lifting a mood. Try to at least do one activity a day that gets you out of the house and into open space. Try stretching or think of exercise and find ways to add small amounts of physical activity throughout your day.

Here at Safer Landings we have extensive lived experience of being in prison and having a loved one in prison. We get it. Contacting us can help you to feel less alone in dealing with the challenges that you face, so please do get in touch if you feel you need help.

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