

# Talking to Your Family and Friends About Your Depression



Talking with your friends and family about your depression symptoms is not easy. Use this worksheet to help plan the discussion.

## 1. Decide who to talk to.

List the family and friends that you will tell. Bold or underline the person you will tell first.

## 2. Decide when and where to talk.

My talking plan:

I will talk with (insert name) \_\_\_\_\_

on (date and time) \_\_\_\_\_

at (location) \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. Share your experience with depression.

Sample depression history: *I first noticed last May that I was feeling irritable and less interested in spending time with people. At the worst point, I felt like there was no point in getting out of bed. I decided to get treatment when my wife said that she was worried.*

**My depression history:**

## 4. Share your understanding of depression.

Sample Overview: *Depression is a condition that affects how I feel, act and think. It is different than a feeling of sadness and includes a major change in mood and behavior. This major change in mood and behavior can last for weeks or months. It can include low or irritable mood and a loss of interest or pleasure in usual activities. It interferes with normal functioning and often includes physical symptoms. Depression is treatable, usually using medications and/or psychotherapy.*

**My Overview:**

Please refer to *Depression: Facts for Families* and talk to your mental health provider about additional information to share with your family.

## 5. Explain your depression symptoms and behaviors related to depression.

When I am depressed, I feel: \_\_\_\_\_

You may notice that I: \_\_\_\_\_

When I am depressed, I feel: \_\_\_\_\_

You may notice that I: \_\_\_\_\_

My symptoms and behaviors: When I am depressed, I feel: \_\_\_\_\_

You may notice that I: \_\_\_\_\_

When I am depressed, I feel: \_\_\_\_\_

You may notice that I: \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. Share your recovery plan.

Sample Recovery Plan: *I am currently taking medication and getting more sleep and more exercise. I am beginning to feel a little better. My provider says that I may have some side effects, but should expect to feel better in about six weeks. I am hoping to feel less sad and more interested in spending time with other people.*

**My Recovery Plan:**

## 7. Check the questions you think your family member or friend might ask. Then fill in your responses.

How long has this been going on? \_\_\_\_\_

Why didn't you tell me before? \_\_\_\_\_

Everyone feels bad sometimes. How is this different? \_\_\_\_\_

What are you doing to help yourself feel better? \_\_\_\_\_

Does therapy/medication really work? \_\_\_\_\_

What can I do to help? \_\_\_\_\_

(Add your own question) \_\_\_\_\_

## 8. Prepare for unexpected responses.

Sample Plan: *If things become too overwhelming, I will say "Thank you for talking with me. Let's take a break and talk some more later."*

Your plan: *If things become too overwhelming, I will say*

## 9. Explain how your family member or friend can help.

Check three ways that you would like your family member or friend to help you.

### Educational Support

- Learn more about depression

### Treatment Support

- Assist you with getting the appropriate treatment
- Accompany you to your health care provider's office
- Encourage you to continue your treatment as directed by your health care provider
- Attend individual and/or group therapy sessions with you

### Recovery Support

- Learn and help you carry out your health care provider's recommendations for lifestyle changes and any medication-related dietary restrictions
- Help to monitor your progress and stay on treatment
- Attend group meetings with you

### Emotional Support

- Provide emotional support by listening when you need to talk
- Encourage you to participate in activities that once brought you pleasure
- Participate in activities with you to keep you engaged

### Emergency Support

- Contact your health care provider if your symptoms worsen

## 10. Plan a follow-up conversation.

My Follow-Up Plan: *I will talk with* (insert name) \_\_\_\_\_

again in (time period) \_\_\_\_\_