

PLEASE TEAR OUT AND PHOTOCOPY FOR YOUR PATIENTS!!



PATIENTS AS PARTNERS

Brought to you by The South African Depression and Anxiety Group

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SELF HELP FOR DEPRESSION

1. Trying to deal with your pain on your own can only serve to add to your feelings of aloneness. Share your feelings with others rather than bottling them up.
2. Increase positive contact. Although you may want to be alone, you may feel better if you try to take part in some activities you previously enjoyed with your family and friends. Try and avoid situations that may result in negative feelings.
3. Set yourself a daily routine and try as much as possible to maintain that routine. You may not be able to do all your usual activities, so be sure to set a routine that is realistic.
4. Learn to make small goals that are attainable. Once achieved, use positive self-talk to make yourself feel good about your achievement. Self-criticism must be minimised.
5. Avoid making life-changing decisions, such as changing jobs or ending a relationship, until you are feeling better.
6. Change your lifestyle: most people suffering from depression have been found to be perfectionists and drive themselves much too hard. You may need to learn to lower impossible standards. Try and reduce your workload in order to live your life at a slower pace.
7. Exercise: Depression often leads to exhaustion and lack of motivation. Despite this, research has proved that any form of physical exercise, however small, will often have beneficial results. If some exercise can be taken in the fresh air, this can add to the benefit. Walk the dog!
8. Diet is important. Under or over eating is a symptom of depression. It is essential to have a well balanced diet that prevents tiredness and feeling run down.
9. Relaxation: You may become irritable and ultra-sensitive. Relaxation techniques such as yoga, meditation, aromatherapy, breathing exercises, audiotapes, massage, etc. are all effective ways of allaying anxiety and tension that may accompany your depression.
10. Read books: learning about and understanding the nature of the condition and its possible causes will help to remove much of the fear, guilt and misconception which many people have. Get a broader picture by reading as many books as possible. Give them to relatives and friends to read. This will help them to understand the illness. SADAG has free brochures available.
11. Avoid 'props' such as illicit drugs and dependency on alcohol. Alcohol in particular is a depressant and despite giving a temporary lift, it can worsen your depression.
12. Join a support group. A support group is the first place you can go where everyone understands and no one judges. Knowing that someone else truly understands by having 'been there' brings a sense of relief.
13. Remember: seeking treatment is a sign of strength, and is the first step to feeling better.
14. Don't expect too much from yourself right away. Feeling better takes time. Keep your expectations realistic. It is usually not possible to resolve an issue or change a long life pattern overnight.
15. Contact the South African Depression and Anxiety Group on (011) 783-1474 or visit their website www.anxiety.org.za.

WHAT TO DO IF A FAMILY MEMBER HAS AN ANXIETY DISORDER

- Don't make assumptions about what the effected person needs – ASK them
- Let the person with the disorder set the pace for recovery
- Find something positive in every experience. If the affected person is only able to go partway to a particular goal, such as a movie theatre or party – consider than an achievement rather than a failure
- Don't encourage avoidance: Negotiate with the person with panic disorder to take one step forward when he or she wants to avoid something.
- Don't sacrifice your own life and build up resentment
- Don't panic when the disorder panics
- Remember that it is all right to be anxious yourself, it is natural for you to be concerned and even worried about the person with panic disorder
- Be patient and accepting, but don't settle for the effected person being permanently disabled
- Say "You can do it no matter how you feel. I am proud of you. Tell me what you need now. Breathe slow and low. Stay in the present. It is not the place that is bothering you, it is the thought. I know that what you feeling are painful, but it is not dangerous. You are courageous". "I am proud of you".
- DON'T SAY: "Relax. Calm down. Don't be anxious. Let us if you can do this (i.e. setting up a test for the person with panic disorder). You can fight this. What should we do next? Don't be ridiculous. You have to stay. Don't crowd".