

How to Support a Loved One Experiencing Mental Illness

- Learn about mental disorders so you can understand what the person with the disorder is experiencing
- Engage in dialogue and not debates; focus on listening to them and supporting them
- Ask what you could do to be helpful to them and how best to support them, but be honest with yourself about the amount you can take on and only do what is doable
- Encourage a loved one to seek help and take advantage of a variety of resources, such as support groups or psychotherapy
- Offer emotional support, understanding, patience, and encouragement; it will make more of an impact than you think
- Praise your loved one's strengths and progress
- Help build a support system for your loved one to support them
- Avoid trying to be the 'fixer' or 'saver'; you need to let your loved one control their own recovery process
- Know the recovery process takes time
- Seek counseling for yourself from to support your needs, mental health, and learn/practice self-care behaviors