

Care and Tips for Someone who May be Depressed

Victory LifeGroup leaders and members can show care and love to those who may be depressed. It is very important to know that LifeGroups do not offer counseling or therapy. Leaders and members should listen, pray, and walk alongside those suffering. Don't allow your group session to become a therapy session. Leaders should contact Pastor Craig for help with anyone who is showing signs of depression.

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Depression is a dark and oppressive mood problem that can feel unbearable to the person suffering from it. The burden of depression drags the person down as he/she tries to carry on with life as usual when life is not "as usual". Yet, there is hope. By understanding the basic symptoms and causes for depression and learning to express care in ways that people who are depressed will receive well, you can share the burden of depression with people, and he/she will begin to feel the weight of depression lifted. Look for the following symptoms if you think a person may be depressed.

Emotional Symptoms: Hopelessness, sadness, discouragement, anxiety, irritability, frequent crying, sharp and hurtful comments, a pessimistic outlook, feeling overwhelmed by life.

Physical Symptoms: Change in appetite and sleep patterns, physical complaints, taking more trips to the doctor than usual, decreased energy, tiredness, fatigue.

Cognitive Symptoms: Thinking negatively about him/herself, making self-deprecating comments, difficulty thinking clearly, difficulty concentrating, inability to make decisions, thoughts of death.

Behavioral Symptoms: Decline in personal hygiene, change in sleeping habits, inability to enjoy things he/she normally loves.

Spiritual Symptoms: Difficulty connecting with God and believing in God's goodness, difficulty praying, feeling hopeless or guilty.

HOW YOU CAN SHOW CARE?

Actively Listen.

Encouraging talk about his/her sadness which will foster understanding, which can help the person feel a sense of control over their emotions instead of feeling controlled by them.

Take the Person Seriously

Don't minimize the situation. You can validate your person's emotions by expressing understanding and care. Normalizing depression can also help the person feel less alone in the process.

Get on a Schedule

People with depression often have problems with sleeping (too much or too little) and eating (loss of appetite or overeating). Encourage sticking to a consistent bedtime every night and a healthy eating schedule. Being in a routine will help them get back on track.

Be Nonjudgmental

People with depression judge themselves every day, so the last thing they need is a LifeGroup leader who judges them, too. Communicate patience and grace. By doing this, you may help them become more patient and gracious toward themselves.

WHAT NOT TO SAY?

"You'll snap out of it."

Sometimes depression is more than just being sad and may require medical intervention. Even once a person is under a doctor's supervision, expect the person to feel better over time, not immediately.

"Just think positive."

Positive thinking is a good goal to work toward, but stating it this way can make someone feel as if all their concerns and feelings – and maybe their life itself – are invalid. Try listening without trying to fix people's problems (this is a good rule of thumb for most cases with people).

"Don't be sad. Nothing is all that bad."

Biology, psychology, and environment may all play a role in causing someone to be depressed, so circumstances alone can't always account for it. Negative thinking, including feelings of worthlessness and hopelessness, is a part of the depression and not something you can dismiss. You can, however, gently help your person see things from a different perspective.

WHAT TO SAY?

"Let's go out."

People who are depressed tend to isolate themselves from family, friends, and the world. Explain to your person that there is a link between being isolated and feeling lonely and depressed. Because of depression, your person lacks motivation and energy to get out on their own. Take the initiative to organize an outing your person has enjoyed in the past. In times of "social distancing" because of CoVid-19 or other world events encourage them to get up and make walking in the neighborhood or a local park a regular part of their routine, if it is safe to do so.

"I'm here for you."

Don't just say it – live it. Be there for your person. Listen when your person wants to talk. Hang out regularly. Initiate activities your person will enjoy. Do what it takes to demonstrate commitment to your group members. It won't always be easy to spend time with a depressed person, but you may be part of God's healing process for them. If physical contact is not possible continue to encourage them through regular and even scheduled electronic communication – phone, text or video chat.

"How can I pray for you?"

God offers hope and love. Even if the person feels like they can't pray, you can pray for them.

"It's ok to not be ok."

Due to the global pandemic and mandatory quarantines, the anxiety that you feel right now is normal. It is natural to feel overwhelmed and out of control. The key to overcoming your anxieties are to feed your faith and not your fears. You can feed your faith through talking with God through prayer, fasting, reading the Bible and limiting your exposure to social media and/or the television.

SCRIPTURE HELP

[2 Samuel 22:7](#)

[Psalms 107:13-15](#)

[Isaiah 40:27-31](#)

[Lamentations 3:21 – 26](#)

[Romans 12:12](#)

[Psalms 42:1-8](#)

[Psalms 121](#)

[Jeremiah 29:11](#)

[Romans 5:1-8](#)

[1 Peter 1:3-9](#)



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