

Suggestions for Coping with Depression

- Recognize that the major responsibility for alleviating your depression lies with you. It is important to acknowledge it and be open to accepting help.
- Read about depression in order to recognize the symptoms, causes, types and treatments.
- Realize that depression serves a purpose. It is best to face it and work through it, rather than avoid it.
- Talk things over with an understanding friend or loved one. It is one factor that may help you to avoid severe depression.
- Redirect energy in more constructive channels so there is more pleasure in your life. Pleasure is a source of energy. Take a break for a favorite activity, an evening out, a trip, etc.
- Exercise helps you to relax, work off bottled-up tension, and sleep better.
- Work on your sorrow. Lean into your pain. Realize and accept the death. Allow yourself to experience the many feelings you get, such as anger, guilt, etc. Express your feelings – let out anger by hitting a pillow, swimming, screaming, hitting a punching bag, crying.
- Become involved with people; do volunteer work, help others.
- Try to look at life more positively. Try not to expect that bad things will happen. Make efforts that good will happen.
- Avoid excess stress or big changes if possible.
- Practice deep breathing, which stimulates physical energy.
- Remember that good nutrition is important for mental and physical health.
- Seek professional help if depression is severe or persistent. It will not be as debilitating or as enduring as it would be if ignored or suffered alone.
- Examine your feelings to figure out what's specifically troubling you and what can be done.
- Write down negative thoughts and sort through them, looking for the ones that you might be able to solve. Dealing with problems one at a time helps.
- Consider yoga and meditation.

- Depression has its roots in hopelessness. Hold on to hope – grief and depression management take time.
- Acceptance of the loss and resultant depression makes it less painful.
- Attempt thinking pleasant thoughts for one minute. This may take practice, but it is a helpful habit to cultivate.
- For someone in depression, it is important to remember that alcohol itself is a depressant.
- Replenish self-esteem. Try harder to like yourself. Treat yourself as you would a good friend. Be patient, encouraging, forgiving. Pamper and be gentle with yourself.
- Be kind to yourself. Do something you do well, such as hobbies or special activities. Little accomplishments help you to rediscover your self-confidence.
- Remember, you generally have a choice. Depression can be managed. It doesn't have to ruin your life.

~ Reprinted with permission from "Hope for Bereaved"