

Communicating to Someone with Bipolar

by NEWLIFEOUTLOOK TEAM

What Helps and What Hurts

If there's someone in your life with bipolar disorder, you may not know what to say to someone. It's difficult to understand what it's like to live with bipolar. We all have our ups and downs but not nearly to the extent of bipolar. So, coping skills such as finding the silver lining won't be enough for someone with bipolar. When you communicate, you should try to be supportive. Let the person with bipolar know that you're here to help and be sure to stress how much you appreciate that person in your life.

What Helps and What Hurts

When Someone You Care about has Depression

when someone to our care about has Depression or Bipolar Disorder People living with depression or hipolar disorder (manic depression) often cope with symptoms like feelings of hopelessness, emptiness or worthlessness You probably want to say something to help the person feel better. But what can you say? Why does it seem like many well-meant comments hurt more than they help?

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Here is a basic list to use as guidelines when you talk to a friend who has symptoms of depression. Put the statements into your own words. What's most important is that your freed understands your support. You didn't cause your loved one is illness and you can't control the person's feelings. You can only do your best to offer help.



What helps	What hurts
I understand you have a real illness and that's what causes these thoughts and feelings.	It's all in your head.
I may not be able to understand exactly how you feel but I care about you and want to help.	We all go through times like this.
When you want to give up, tell yourself you will hold on for just one more day, hour minute - whatever you can manage.	Look on the bright side.
You are important to me. Your life is important to me.	You have so much to live for - why do you want to die
Tell me what I can do now to help you.	What do you want me to do? I can't change your situation.
You might not believe it now, but the way you're feeling will change.	Just snap out of it.
You are not alone in this. I'm here for you.	You'll be fine. Stop worrying.

Talking to Others

- Choose a time that is relatively calm and free of distractions. You may need to make an appointment to sit down with family members and talk about something important.

 Tiell them what they can say or do that will help you. This includes practical things like helping with housework or taking you somewhere.
- Begin your statements with yourself: "I feel," or "I need."
 Avoid 'you' statements like "You always criticize me,"
 which can make a person feel blamed or defensive.

DBSA does not endorse or recommend the use of any specific treatments or medications for mood disorders. For advice about specific treatments or medications, individuals should consult their physicians and/or mental health professionals.

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance • www.DBSAlliance.org

Please help us continue our education efforts.

Yes, I want to make a difference. Enclosed is my gift of:

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Questions? Call (800) 826-3632 or (512) 642-0049 Credit card payments may be faxed to (312) 642-7243.

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