

AlongNow

How to Accompany a Person Living With Depression

Professional Human Companionship • Educational Guide

A practical guide for AlongNow Professional Companions. Your role is human presence: listening, respectful conversation, gentle practical support, and connection. You are not providing psychotherapy, diagnosis, medication advice, or medical treatment.

Understand the Person, Not Just the Label

Depression can affect mood, energy, sleep, concentration, motivation, appetite, and interest in everyday activities. A person may speak less, cancel plans, move slowly, or have difficulty making decisions. Do not interpret these behaviors as laziness or rejection.

Helpful Companion Practices

- Ask what kind of company would feel helpful today: talking, walking, sitting quietly, getting a simple meal, or doing one small activity.
- Listen without rushing to fix the problem. Use short responses such as “I’m here with you” or “That sounds very hard.”
- Offer choices rather than commands. Keep plans small and realistic.
- Respect treatment plans and encourage professional care when the person wants or needs it.
- Notice strengths and effort without demanding cheerfulness.

What to Avoid

- Do not say “cheer up,” “think positive,” or compare their suffering with someone else’s.
- Do not diagnose, recommend medication changes, or promise that companionship will cure depression.
- Do not pressure the person to disclose private experiences.

A Helpful Phrase

“Would you rather talk, take a short walk, or just have some quiet company for a while?”

Safety and Scope

AlongNow companionship is non-clinical. A companion should not diagnose, provide psychotherapy, prescribe or change medication, or replace professional medical or mental-health care. If the person appears to be in immediate danger, has suicidal thoughts, or may harm themselves or someone else, contact appropriate emergency/crisis services. In the United States, call or text 988 for the Suicide & Crisis

Lifeline; call 911 for an immediate life-threatening emergency.

Educational basis: National Institute of Mental Health guidance on depression, autism and ADHD; National Institute on Aging principles for dementia care and communication. This AlongNow guide is educational and is not medical advice.

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