# How to Help Someone with Depression

## Seven Gentle Steps When Someone Is Withdrawing or Shutting Down

When someone is shutting everyone out, the first aim is not to change how they feel. It is to help them feel safe, supported and less alone.

**1. Remove pressure** Do not force them to talk, go out or cheer up. Give them space while letting them know you care.

**2. Keep in touch gently** Send a short message: “Thinking of you. You don’t need to reply.”

**3. Listen without trying to fix things** If they open up, listen calmly. Avoid judging, correcting or rushing to give advice.

**4. Offer small, practical help** Offer something specific, such as bringing food, making a drink or helping with a household task.

**5. Be patient and consistent** Check in from time to time without expecting a response. Let them know you are still there.

**6. Suggest one small step** If they seem ready, offer to sit together, open a window or take a short walk. It is okay if they say no.

**7. Help them reach professional support** Gently offer to help them contact their GP or another mental health professional. You could offer to go with them.

**Important:** Severe depression may need professional treatment. If you are worried about their safety, seek help promptly. In England, call NHS 111 and choose the mental health option. Call 999 if there is immediate danger.

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