

Depression

Say this, Not that



Talking to someone with depression can seem like you are walking on eggshells. Although you may have the best of intentions, the words you use may not express exactly what you mean. Here are some common statements to avoid and some tips on what to say instead:

Say this: “Whenever you feel like talking about what’s going on, I am here to listen.”

Not That: “What do you have to be depressed about?” *Clinical depression is a serious medical condition, it is not a choice.*

Say this: “No one is rushing you to feel better, take as long as you need.”

Not That: “Hurry up and get over it!” *A person with depression can’t just get over it. They have to learn the skills to effectively manage their depression.*

Say this: “You are not alone in struggling with depression.”

Not That: “There’s someone worse off than you!” *When you compare other problems with depression, you run the risk of minimizing the person’s struggle with depression.*

Say this: “I can help you get whatever help you may need.”

Not That: “Stay away from therapy and drugs.” *Many people are scared of asking for help because of the stigma of mental illness. They may come from a culture that shames them for talking about personal problems with a stranger. The use of medications is also scary, because of stories of addiction and dangerous side effects.*

Say this: “I may not know exactly how you feel, but I know it must be hard.”

Not That: “It can’t be that bad?” *Depression is a complex condition.*