

## Guided Self-Help – Advice for Family & Friends

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You have been given this leaflet by a guide who is helping your friend or family member to tackle their stress, anxiety or depression, using guided self-help.

Why won't they talk to me about their problems?

When people are having problems with anxiety and depression, it can be hard for them to see a way forward. They may not want to talk about their problems because they don't want to worry you, or because they feel a failure.

What can I do to help?

Friends and family can feel upset because they don't know how to help, but their support is very important. For example, if you have been through anxiety or depression, you can talk to the person about what it was like. Talking to someone who understands could help them feel less isolated and alone. Just bear in mind that everyone is different, and has to solve their problems in their own way.

It can help to remind the person to remember the 'three Ps':

- ➔ Patience – It may take a while before things get much better.
- ➔ Practice – Don't give up, keep trying.
- ➔ Praise – Give praise for effort, and try not to criticise during bad patches.

How does self-help work?

The guide may invite you to some of the guided self-help sessions, so that everyone involved understands the problem and what can be done about it. The person may be given some self-help leaflets to read, and they may be asked to try to change the way they think and behave. They might ask you to help them make these changes, or they may want to do everything on their own.

It can be hard for friends and family to understand why someone who is depressed or anxious behaves and thinks in the way they do. Remember that their feelings and fears are very real to them, and it takes a lot of courage to face them and try and change them. Try not to force them to talk about the way they feel or to make changes before they are ready.

The changes will take time and energy, so try to help your friend or relative to keep their stress levels low.

I don't feel I'm doing enough to help

Giving support takes time and can be stressful, so don't be too hard on yourself.

No one can get everything right all the time, but the most important thing to do is to be there when your friend or relative needs you, and to encourage them to work on their goals.

And, if you feel you need some support yourself, ask the guide for advice.

FOR MORE LEAFLETS IN THIS SERIES GO TO [www.primarycare-selfhelp.co.uk](http://www.primarycare-selfhelp.co.uk)