

Make a Plan

Together with your loved one, create a plan of action in case of emergency. This will help your friend/loved one continue to have a say in their treatment while continuing to stay safe, even in a crisis. Plan for episodes of mania, depression and suicidal thoughts or actions.

- Have a list of doctors' names and numbers.
- Have a hospital name, number and address.
- Keep a list of other friends or family members that can be called for additional support such as transportation or childcare.
- Keep all records readily available, including medications currently taking, allergies, mood tracker and doctors' information.
- Learn relaxation techniques such as breathing and stretching to help calm you and your loved one.
- Stick to the agreed upon plan.

How Our re:MIND Support Groups Can Help

- Groups are free and confidential.
- Better understand yourself or a loved one.
- Discover yourself while feeling accepted.
- Interested families with adolescents (13-17yr) may apply for the group by calling 713-600-1131

A Family & Friend's Perspective on Hope

Group members have given me strength and ideas for alternative ways of coping. Within the group, we share websites, articles and books. My daughter has received proper medical treatment and is now stable, but I continue to feel an overwhelming sense of powerlessness over this illness. The reason I continue to attend meetings is for emotional support, to exchange resources with others, to continue to learn about her illness and to prepare myself to deal with future episodes.

-Anonymous



“I believe this group is very beneficial for me as a caregiver.”

-Participant

Family & Friend's Guide

re:
MIND

DEPRESSION & BIPOLAR SUPPORT



Helping a Loved One

You are a family member or friend of someone who lives with depression or bipolar disorder and you want to know how to help. You might be feeling helpless, scared, frustrated or even angry. These feelings are all normal. This brochure will give you some ideas on how to help you and your loved one manage a mental disorder.

Educate Yourself

In order to better understand your loved one's disorder and provide more support in the management process, you can educate yourself on mental disorders. You will learn that depression and bipolar disorder are no one's fault. These are physical, treatable illnesses that affect the person's brain chemistry.

You can read books, brochures, research articles or even attend doctor visits with your loved one to learn more about their disorder and how you can be supportive. Not only will this help you to be more understanding and compassionate, but it may help your loved one to feel less alone and more supported.

Creating a Safety Plan

It is important for your loved one to feel that they still have autonomy or a right to choose things in their life. Sit down and create a safety plan with your friend or family member. Some things to consider may include:

Show Mutual Respect

You will respect your friend/family member and they will respect you. Explain you are there to help throughout the process and be part of the wellness plan. This includes the safety of you and your loved one.

Be Honest

It is important for both people to be honest. Encourage your loved one to be honest about their symptoms, triggers, moods and reactions to medication.

See a Doctor/Therapist

Encourage your loved one to seek out health care professionals. Offer to attend doctors' appointments and possibly assist in journaling or using a mood tracker provided by re:MIND to help your loved one get the most of their medical appointments.

Help Yourself

As a family member/friend, provide yourself with emotional care. Know when you need a break or find time for yourself.

Care without Understanding

As a family member/friend you may not always understand your loved one's mood and agree to be loving and supportive without judgment or pressure.

Listen

Sometimes the greatest help a caregiver can provide is to listen. Support is an important component of the wellness management process. Learning to accept and manage a mental disorder can be a difficult process and your friend/family member might just need someone to listen.

Attend a re:MIND Support Group

You can also attend support groups by yourself or with your loved one. These groups can help you and your loved one know that neither of you are alone in managing a mental disorder.

If you are currently feeling suicidal:

- Call 911
- Go to a hospital
- Call Harris Center Hotline - 713.970.7000

Emergency Numbers

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1.800.273.TALK (8255)

Harris Center Hotline
713.970.7000

Crisis Outreach Team
713.970.7520

Houston Police Department
713.884.3131

Gay and Lesbian Switchboard Houston
713.529.3211

Helpful Resources

Mental Health America (MHA)-Houston
713.523.8963
www.mhahouston.org

National Alliance Mental Illness (NAMI)
713. 970.4419
www.namimetropolitanhouston.org

Families for Depression Awareness
www.familyaware.org/education/links/

Family Caregiver Alliance
www.caregiver.org

www.remindsupport.org
713.600.1131

