



# Shared Guidebook



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A wooden signpost stands in the foreground, with five red, textured arrows pointing in various directions: left, right, up, down, and left. The background shows rolling green hills under a bright, hazy sky, with a winding path leading through the landscape.

Working With Others to Set Goals  
and Track Progress



## Finding the Right Doctor for You

**F**irst, talk with your doctor about your choices, including possibly seeing a psychiatrist or a therapist. If you do not have a doctor, see if your friends, family members or health insurance company can suggest one. You can also get in touch with your state’s mental health board to learn about any available free programs.



Please see below for other ways to find a doctor. (You can also see the “Resources” section of this guidebook for more tips.)

- American Psychiatric Association ([www.psych.org](http://www.psych.org))
- American Psychiatric Association Patient Site ([www.healthyminds.org](http://www.healthyminds.org))
- Call a mental health advocacy group

### FINDING THE RIGHT DOCTOR FOR YOU

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## Questions for a Doctor

Finding the right care is important. It can help a person get well.

It may be helpful to think about your questions. Bring a list with you to the doctor's visit. For example, think about asking:

- Are you comfortable treating depression?
- How do you like to treat it?
- How do you involve family or friends in care?
- How often will I need to see you?
- How can you be reached in case of emergency?
- Will I need medicine?

Your doctor can answer any questions you may

### Terms to know:

#### Psychiatrist:

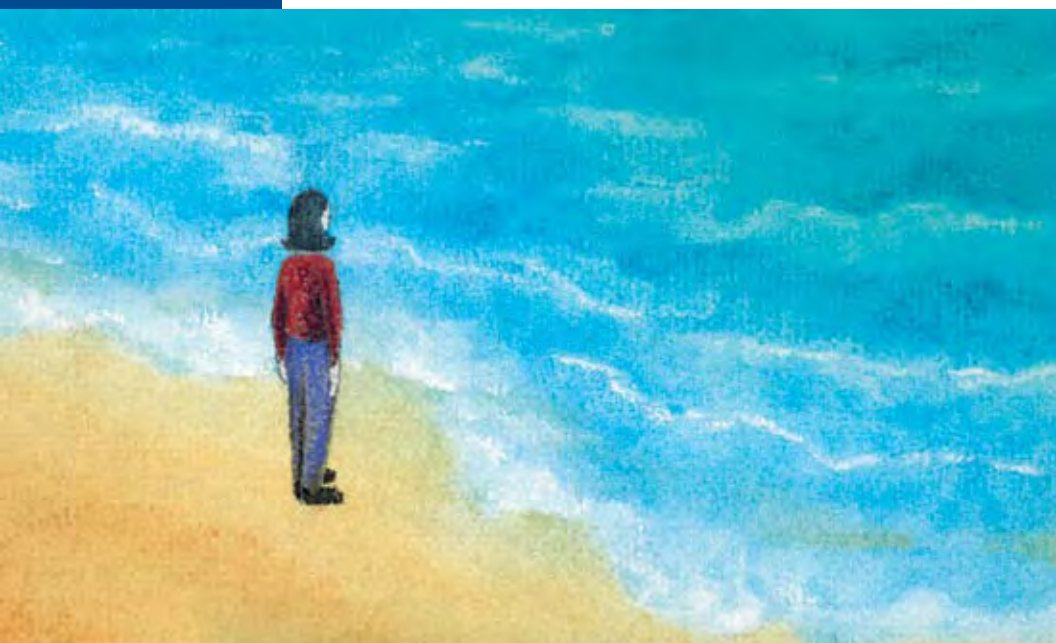
Cares for people with mental health problems. This doctor can give medicine.

#### Therapist:

Helps people understand their feelings and actions. This person cannot give medicine.

have. He can also answer questions about your care plan. For example:

- Will a care plan take care of all my signs or symptoms?
- Will the medicines change my personality?
- How will I know if talk therapy is working?
- Are there any dangers in taking drugs?
- Will I become addicted to them?
- What are the side effects I need to look for? What do I do if I have side effects?
- What are some signs that my care plan is working?
- What can I do if it does not seem to be working?



## Understanding Care Choices

**T**he goal of a care plan is to help someone feel more like they did before depression. The chance of the illness returning is higher when symptoms do not go away quickly. Nobody should settle for feeling only a little better. Most people with depression show progress with the right care.



Setting a care plan just for you with a doctor is an important step to getting well. A care plan may include talk therapy, joining a support group, medicines or a mixture of treatments.

### Talk Therapy

There are different kinds of talk therapy that can help a person with depression. Two common kinds are:

- Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) —The therapist and patient work at making changes

to negative thinking and behavior.

- Interpersonal therapy (IPT) — The patient and therapist focus on looking at problems in relationships which add to their depression.

Some people may also benefit from couples therapy, family therapy, or group therapy sessions. In group sessions people with a similar illness work together with a trained therapist. It may take some time to find the therapist or therapy that “fits.” That is okay and normal. The main thing is to find the care plan that will work best for a person’s needs.

### Support Groups

No one with depression has to feel alone.

Support groups are places where people with the illness can share their feelings, learn from

others, and offer hope to

each other. You can find support groups near you by reaching out to any of the patient groups listed in the back of this guidebook.



## Medicines

Neurotransmitters are chemicals in your brain. Depression may be caused when these are out of balance. Three of these chemicals — serotonin, norepinephrine, and dopamine — are thought to affect symptoms of depression.

There are many different kinds of depression medicines that work by balancing these chemicals.

A doctor needs to monitor any patients taking medicines. A doctor will talk about the chances of side effects of any medicines. Any side effects should be shared with your doctor right away. A Support Partner also can help track side effects and share them with your doctor.

If you are given medicine for depression, it may take between three to four weeks to feel better. If you have questions about how your medicine works, ask your doctor. Sometimes your doctor might ask you to change



to a different medicine. Your doctor might also give you a couple medicines together to help you.

As someone with depression, it is important that you understand the relationship between the illness and

suicide. Suicide is when someone takes their own life. Not all people with depression think about suicide. Also, not all suicidal thoughts lead to people taking their own life. If you ever think about ending your life, **you should seek medical help immediately.** If you can't reach your doctor, go to the nearest emergency room. You can call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Hotline, 1-800-SUICIDE. Help is available day or night.

There may be times when your symptoms get worse. These may be times when you start to think about taking your own life. Contact your doctor immediately if you see any unusual changes in your behavior or if you have other concerns. **Never wait to get in touch with your doctor if you are worried.**

# Sharing Major Health Facts

The following facts are useful for you and your Support Partner. This section will help in case of an emergency. It also will be useful in tracking improvements and any setbacks. Fill in the form, talk about it and keep it in an easy to get to place so you can find it. Examples include:

## About My Depression

I have been diagnosed by a doctor. YES  NO

I am in talk therapy and have therapist's visits on \_\_\_\_\_ each week.

Name of the medicines I am now taking:

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Doses and how often I take the medicine:

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How long I have been taking this medicine:

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## Care Plan

Below are the signs that let me know I am depressed:

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Below are the goals I want to accomplish:

Examples:

Getting more involved at work again

Visiting with friends more often

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Below are signs or events that can deepen my depression:

Examples:

Monday mornings

Family events or holidays

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Below are early warning signs that my depression could come back

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Call your doctor if you or your Support Partner see any early warning signs. Knowing warning signs can help you avoid and prepare for setbacks.

## Tracking Progress

Below are the signs that let me know I am doing well:

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Below are the things I will do to take care of myself:

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Below are the things I will do to keep mentally and physically fit:

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### MAIN CONTACT INFORMATION

This page can be cut along the dotted line and should be put in a safe place. A Support Partner also may want a copy of this section.

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

MY NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

WORK \_\_\_\_\_ HOME \_\_\_\_\_

CELL PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

MY SUPPORT PARTNER'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

WORK \_\_\_\_\_ HOME \_\_\_\_\_

CELL PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

#### EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION:

Family, friends or loved ones you would like contacted, if needed.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

### IMPORTANT HEALTH FACTS

#### DOCTORS

##### DOCTOR

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICE HOURS \_\_\_\_\_

##### PSYCHIATRIST

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICE HOURS \_\_\_\_\_

##### PSYCHOLOGIST/OTHER THERAPIST:

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICE HOURS \_\_\_\_\_

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FOLD

## Resources

### GOVERNMENT MENTAL HEALTH AGENCIES

These government Web sites often include sections about an illness, news about medicines and clinical trials, links to health articles and research, and links to groups and resources in your area. The sites most often end with “.gov.”

#### NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH (NIMH)

Office of Communications 6001 Executive Boulevard, Room 8184, MSC 9663 Bethesda, MD 20892-9663  
 Phone: 866-615-6464 or 301-443-4513  
 TTY: 301-443-8431  
 E-mail: [nimhinfo@nih.gov](mailto:nimhinfo@nih.gov)  
[www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)

An information-rich source dedicated to mental health issues. Offers some easy-to-read government publications about depression in English and Spanish.

#### SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (SAMHSA)

SAMHSA's National Mental Health Information Center  
 P.O. Box 42557  
 Washington, DC 20015  
 Phone: 800-789-2647  
 TDD: 866-889-2647  
[www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov)

A wealth of online mental health information and resources. The site also has a tool that lets you find mental health services in your area.

### MAIN DRUG INFORMATION

#### LOCAL PHARMACY CONTACT

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE NUMBER

EMAIL

PHARMACY HOURS

#### MEDICATIONS AND ILLNESS

NAME

ILLNESS

NAME

ILLNESS

NAME

ILLNESS

#### MEDICATIONS I AM ALLERGIC TO

NAME

NAME

NAME

NAME

### IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

#### HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

##### HEALTH INSURANCE PROVIDER

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE NUMBER

POLICY NUMBER

#### MENTAL HEALTH COVERAGE

My insurance company will pay for \_\_\_\_\_ therapy sessions.

My insurance will cover the following medicines \_\_\_\_\_

My co-pay for medicines is \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

#### OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

List contacts such as your childcare providers, your building's superintendent, & your neighbors, etc.

NAME PHONE

NAME PHONE

NAME PHONE

NAME PHONE

FOLD

FOLD

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

This section offers many choices on where to learn more about depression, how to take care of the illness and treatment choices.

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### AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION

1000 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 1825  
Arlington, VA 22209-3901  
Phone: 888-357-7924  
E-mail: [apa@psych.org](mailto:apa@psych.org)  
[www.psych.org](http://www.psych.org)

Fact sheets, brochures, tips on choosing a psychiatrist and other resources.

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### FAMILIES FOR DEPRESSION AWARENESS

300 Fifth Avenue  
Waltham, MA 02451  
Phone: 781-890-0220  
E-mail: [info@familyaware.org](mailto:info@familyaware.org)  
[www.FamilyAware.org](http://www.FamilyAware.org)

A group that helps families spot and cope with depressive disorders.

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### NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR THE MENTALLY ILL (NAMI)

Colonial Place Three  
2107 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201  
Phone: 800-950-NAMI (6264) or 703-524-7600  
TDD: 703-516-7227  
[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

Support resources and programs for people with mental illnesses and their family and friends.

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### MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA (MHA)

2000 N. Beauregard Street, 6th Floor  
Alexandria, VA 22311  
Phone: 800-969-NMHA (6642)  
TTY: 800-433-5959  
[www.mentalhealthamerica.net](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net)

Advocacy, support and research covering many aspects of mental health and mental illness.

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### MISSING PIECES

[www.missingpiecesprogram.com](http://www.missingpiecesprogram.com)

Missing Pieces, a Lilly sponsored program, provides information people with depression need to better understand and overcome the illness.

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### NATIONAL WOMEN'S HEALTH RESOURCE CENTER

157 Broad Street, Suite 315  
Red Bank, NJ 07701  
Phone: 877-986-9472  
[www.healthyywomen.org](http://www.healthyywomen.org)

Web site gives information about women and depression and bipolar illness. Tools such as "questions to ask your healthcare professional" and links to other sources of information about mental health are presented.

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### NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR CAREGIVING

4720 Montgomery Lane, 5th Floor  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
Phone: 301-718-8444  
E-mail: [info@caregiving.org](mailto:info@caregiving.org)  
[www.caregiving.org](http://www.caregiving.org)

Provides support to family caregivers and the professionals who help them.

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### SUICIDE PREVENTION ACTION NETWORK OF USA (SPAN USA)

1010 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 408  
Washington, DC 20005  
Phone: 202-449-3600  
[www.spanusa.org](http://www.spanusa.org)

A group for suicide-attempt survivors or people affected by suicide, dedicated to preventing suicide through public education and awareness, community action, and federal, state and local grassroots advocacy.

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### NOTES:

For more information, visit [www.SupportPartnersProgram.com](http://www.SupportPartnersProgram.com)

