

Emotion and mood

Depression and feelings of sadness and hopelessness can affect both a person with a brain injury and their loved ones. These feelings are common, especially due to the stress people and their families often experience during the brain injury journey. However, if you or your loved one experiences these feelings for weeks, months, or longer, it is important to talk with a mental health professional. Mental health professionals have treatments that can help.

Tips

for families

Watch for ongoing and worsening symptoms of depression

- ✓ Call 988 and seek medical care right away if you or your loved one has thoughts of suicide, or plans or attempts suicide.
- ✓ Seek help from a mental health professional if you experience or notice the following symptoms of depression in your loved one:
 - Changes in appetite, including eating or drinking too much or having no appetite.
 - Fatigue or lack of energy.
 - Feeling sad, hopeless, and having trouble getting through the day.
 - Feelings of worthlessness, guilt, or that you are a failure.
 - Difficulty concentrating.
 - Loss of pleasure in activities that were once enjoyable.
 - Sleep problems, like sleeping too much or being unable to sleep.

Explore social and physical activities

- ✓ Join a support group.
- ✓ Do things that provide comfort, such as spending time in nature or with animals.
- ✓ Schedule time for yourself and your loved one to be with family and friends.
- ✓ Participate in hobbies that you both enjoy and consider exploring new hobbies.
- ✓ Do activities outside, like taking walks (if approved by the medical team).

Keep to a regular sleep routine

- ✓ Sleep in a dark, cool room.
- ✓ Keep to a set bedtime routine with fixed sleep and wake up times as much as possible.
- ✓ Create a relaxing bedtime routine.
- ✓ Avoid screen time, loud music, large meals, and caffeine right before bed.

Encourage your loved one to express their emotions

- ✓ Acknowledge their feelings.
- ✓ Let them share their feelings without judgment.
- ✓ Look for opportunities for them to express their feelings through activities, like art, writing, and music.
- ✓ Remind them that it is normal to have ups and downs during their brain injury journey.