

**HOW DO I SUPPORT
SOMEONE WHO IS
STRUGGLING?**

how to help people struggling with their mental health

by mellow doodles



Check in frequently

Call or text them from time to time just to ask how things are going. A simple reminder that someone cares can often go a long way.

Make time to listen

Practise listening actively without judgment. It is not necessary to offer advice or solutions to their problems, paying attention is often all that's needed.

Offer to help with daily tasks

Simple day-to-day tasks can sometimes become overwhelming for those suffering from mental illnesses. Look for practical ways of helping out, e.g. ordering groceries for them online.

Encourage them to seek professional help

Many therapists are now offering their services online, through text or audio/video calls. Prepare a list of helplines and services in your area to share with your loved one who is struggling.

Care for yourself first

It is difficult to care for someone else if your own mental or physical health is suffering. Make time to disconnect, rest, and restore your energies.

Spend time together

Watch movies together online, or discuss your hobbies or mutual interests. Such conversations on neutral topics can be very helpful to you both.



How To Support Someone Struggling With Mental Health Issues:

Step 1: Ask "Would you like to talk about it?"

Yes

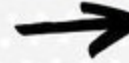


Sit and listen without judgement or criticism

No ↓

Step 2: Ask "Would you like to go out and do an activity together?"

Yes



Do an activity. E.g. go for a walk in a park, to a cafe, the movies etc.

No ↓

Step 3: Ask "Can I do anything to comfort you?"

Yes



E.g. bring a cup of tea, a blanket, hug them etc.

No ↓

Step 4: Ask "Would you like me to sit next to you or leave you alone?"

Sit



Sit without expectation, just being present helps.

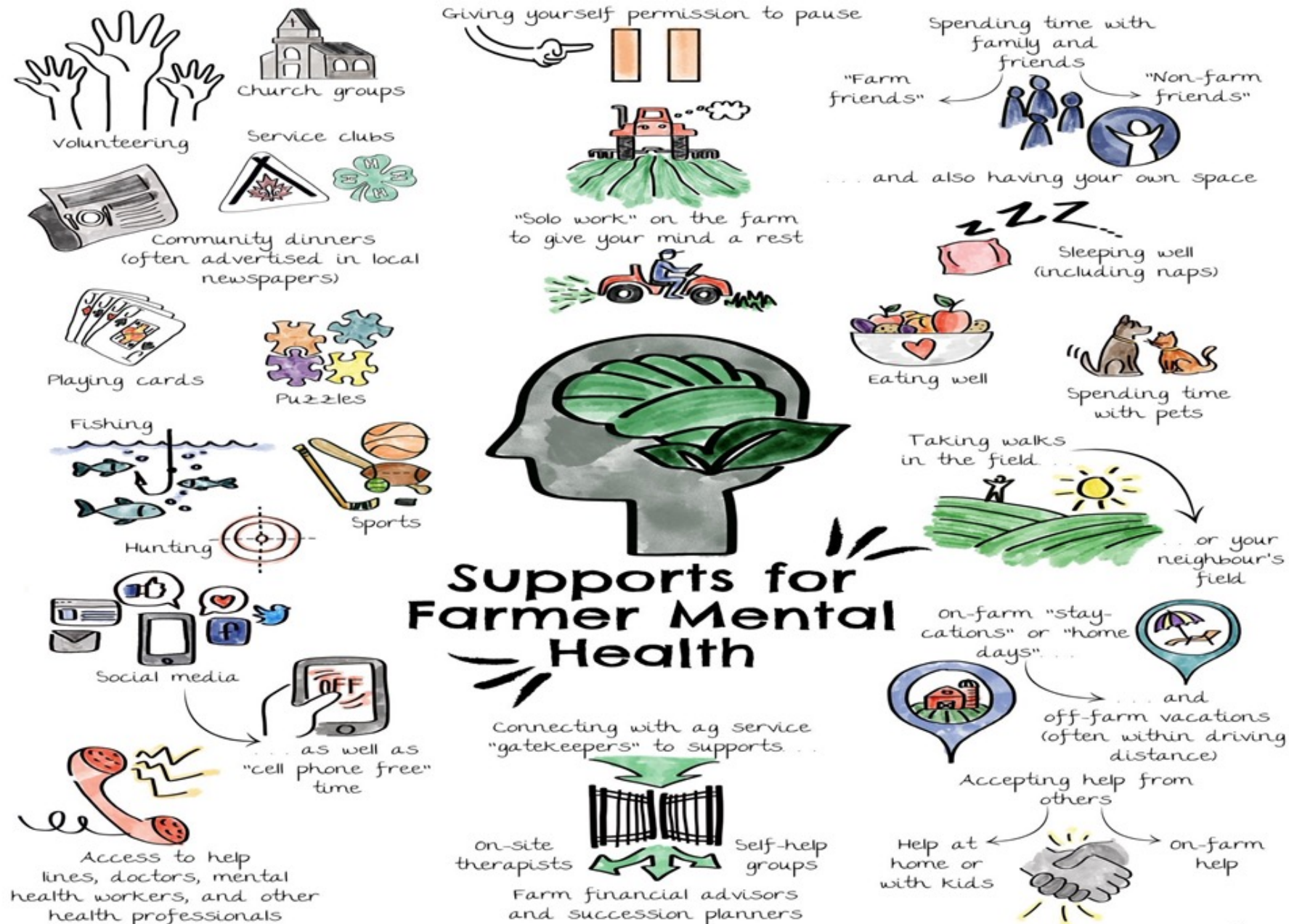
Leave



Leave but don't take it personally, they just need to recharge.



@RealDepressionProject



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Dos & Don'ts of Helping Your Addicted Loved One



Address the Issue

Know that ignoring the issue won't make it go away.



Don't Look Down on Them

Avoid blaming them for their addiction or looking down on them for using drugs or alcohol.



Research Treatments

The more informed you are, the more prepared you will be for they are ready to get better.



Don't Ignore the Problem

No one ever imagines that addiction will happen to someone they know.



Set Boundaries

Setting boundaries does not always come easily, but these will help you draw healthy lines.



Don't Force Them to Quit

When it comes to addiction, tough love rarely works.



Practice Self-Care

When a loved one is struggling with drugs or alcohol, the last thing on your mind is your own well-being.



Don't Give Up

Remember, battling addiction is hard but not impossible, and having a strong support system can make all the difference.

NAVIGATING

a mental health

CRISIS



WHAT TO DO if you suspect someone is thinking about suicide

If you notice warning signs or if you're concerned someone is thinking about suicide, don't be afraid to talk to them about it.



START the Conversation by sharing specific signs you've noticed, like:

"I've noticed lately that you [haven't been sleeping, aren't interested in soccer anymore, which you used to love, are posting a lot of sad song lyrics online, etc.]..."



Then say something like:

- ✓ "Are you thinking about suicide?"
- ✓ "Do you have a plan? Do you know how you would do it?"
- ✓ "When was the last time you thought about suicide?"

If the answer is "Yes" or if you think they might be at risk of suicide, you need to seek help immediately.

- Call a therapist or psychiatrist/physician or other healthcare professional who has been working with the person
- Remove potential means such as weapons and medications to reduce risk
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Line at 1-800-273-8255 or call 911

LISTEN, EXPRESS CONCERN, REASSURE.

Focus on being understanding, caring and nonjudgmental, saying something like:

"You are not alone. I'm here for you."

"I may not be able to understand exactly how you feel, but I care about you and want to help."

"I'm concerned about you and I want you to know there is help available to get you through this."

Please remember, a suicide threat or attempt is a medical emergency requiring professional help as soon as possible.

"You are important to me; we will get through this together."





Do's

- ✓ Let the person talk and **LISTEN** to them without judgement
- ✓ Reassure them that treatment and help is available
- ✓ Tell them what they are experiencing is treatable and that suicidal feelings are temporary




Don'ts

- ✗ Don't try to minimize problems or shame a person into changing their mind
- ✗ Don't try to convince a person who is suicidal that "it's not that bad"
- ✗ Don't preach about suicide being right or wrong

GET HELP!

A suicidal person should see a doctor or mental health professional immediately.

A silhouette of a hand reaching upwards, palm open, against a bright, cloudy sky. The hand is positioned on the right side of the image, with the arm extending from the bottom right towards the top center. The background is a mix of dark blue and light yellow/gold clouds.

**It isn't that you didn't
reach for them.
It's just that it was too
hard to see your hand
in the blackness.**

By Jennifer Betts

Self Care Tips after a Suicide Loss



Suicide Loss Survival

If *you* or a *loved one* has recently experienced a *suicide loss*, the reality probably came as a shock to you and you are trying to find a means by which to *cope with the loss*.

It is essential that during this coping process that you remember a few things:

- **You are not alone**—you have a support network of friends, family, and/or a professional community to listen, help, and offer their services.



**You are important.
You matter.**

- **You can take care of yourself**—begin the whole-body healing process physically, mentally, psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually. Don't wipe away tears if you are not yet ready.
- **You can get through this**—find a positive path to manage grief and move on with your life to survive this loss.

Survivor Coping

- You will feel a **great deal** of emotions from anxiety to sadness to grief to self-blaming. This is normal and part of the **complicated grieving** process.
- Research has shown that the grieving process is **similar** for those experiencing suicide loss than other means of death but suicide loss survivors face additional challenges of **grief, shame, and self-blaming**.
- You need time to work through the feelings of guilt, shame, and self-blaming and find the support you need—it is not **"irrational"** to feel guilty.
- Let those emotions out and **cry** if you need to—let yourself find **relief** from emotional pain.
- Many suicide survivors find comfort **sharing** the truth about their loved one's death by suicide.
- By sharing the truth with your loved ones, you open the door for them to help you and for you to **tell them what you need**.
- If necessary, **reduce** your interactions with those whom make you **feel worse**. Be honest and say "I know you mean well, but what you are saying right now is not helpful."
- If you or your mourning loved one begin to find themselves **unable** to handle the grieving process, consider going to a **survivor support group** or seek professional help.
- If you are the parent of a child or teen, tell them the **truth** in plain words, encourage questions, and offer **loving reassurance**. Let them express their emotions and talk when they need to.
- **Be Kind to Yourself**. When you feel ready to begin the next chapter in your life, enjoy life! Remember your loved one however it feels right to you and know that you are on the path to healing.

For more resources: www.vtspc.org
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