

What Can YOU Do?

For yourself:

- Rather than ruminating over the endless media coverage, **be proactive. Turn off the television and social media**, and especially refrain from using them late at night. Studies show that extended exposure to television and media can influence depression, and not just because of the content. Refer to the Psych Central link below regarding the effects of screen time on the brain.
- **If you feel you are a danger to yourself or others, dial 911 and share this information with the operator.**
- Not sure about 911? **Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)**
- **Ditch the shame.** It's time we all acknowledge that the brain's malfunctioning is like any other organ. You would get help for a faulty heart or kidney, so be kind and get help for your brain. There are many methods to heal the brain, and it may take a combination of them to help you get well.
- **Find a good therapist.** As I mentioned in my article about **PTSD**, finding a therapist you can work with is key. There are many types of counseling therapy out there. See what fits for you. Make sure you share your entire history with the therapist so they can help you appropriately address your situation.
- Get a **good doctor.** Medical conditions and nutritional issues can mimic or intensify mood disorders. Examples of medical influences include (but are not limited to) Vitamin D deficiency, Vitamin B12 deficiency, hypothyroidism, and heart conditions.
- If you choose to take medication, **find a good psychiatrist.** These medical doctors specialize in brain functioning, so it's crucial you find a psychiatrist to help you find the best medicine for your body.
- **Exercise** – it stimulates the production of serotonin, the “feel good hormone” in your body. Dreading the idea of moving? Simply take a 15 minute walk, and slowly move to 30 minutes a day. Find a walking partner to help keep you accountable.
- **Meditate.** Mindfulness meditation, yoga, tai chi, and qi gong have been shown to relieve depression and anxiety symptoms. Research local yoga studios and martial arts organizations to see if they offer meditative practices.
- **Get out – don't shut yourself in.** You may feel like staying in, but doing so isolates you and can intensify depression. Take a walk outdoors, get some sun, and ask friends to make you accountable for getting out and about with others.

For others:

- Look for clues to changes in your loved one's moods and behaviors. Are they more reclusive? Have you noticed changes in their eating or sleeping patterns? Have they stopped doing hobbies and past times they used to enjoy?

- **If you see behaviors that make your friend or loved one a danger to themselves or others, call 911.**
- If you need additional guidance for someone you suspect may be suicidal, contact the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)**
- For additional ways to help, refer to [10 Ways to Help Someone Who is Depressed](#).

References and Further Reading

National Suicide Prevention Hotline. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/> Accessed 14 August 2014.

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"10 Ways to Help Someone Who's Depressed." 2010. National Institute of Mental Health. Psych Central. <http://psychcentral.com/lib/10-ways-to-help-someone-whos-depressed/0004979> Accessed 14 August 2014.

- See more at: <http://www.shirleymccormack.com/depression/#sthash.fbyENCu2.dpuf>