Importance of Spousal Support for Depression

by NEWLIFEOUTLOOK TEAM

Spouse With Depression

Those who suffer from depression often isolate themselves. Although this may be intentional at times, this isolation may occur as a secondary result of symptoms of depression such as the inability to perform daily functions or lack of interest in formerly enjoyable activities. It is especially important that a spouse with depression receive support from their significant others or close family members.

Depression Affects the Family

Depression affects the entire family. When one person suffers from the debilitating symptoms of depression, the whole family unit feels the strain as a result. This can be especially frustrating for the spouse of the one who suffers from depression. The significant other may feel neglected or that their loved one is losing feelings for them. They may feel frustrated or like there is nothing that they can do to help.

The spouse may also feel resentful at having to cover for their partner and pick up any slack around the house. While it is important for the spouse of a depressed loved one to get the support of their own, it is also necessary that the spouse be there to support their depressed loved one.

Helping a Depressed Spouse

First of all, it is important to understand that depression is a real illness and to recognize symptoms that can signal depression in an affected spouse. It is important to know that depression is not the fault of anyone and it is important not to place blame in these situations.

Encourage the depressed loved one to seek treatment or to maintain any current treatment recommendations. Learn all you can about depression and its effects on the affected individual and those around them. Be open and encourage conversations with your depressed partner.

Be an active participant in your spouse's treatment plan. Be supportive and nurturing while providing hope and care for your spouse. Provide gentle encouragement when necessary to help your partner to get back into family activities and those individual activities that once brought enjoyment.

Not only is it important to reach out to your spouse to help encourage them, but it is also just as important to know when they need moments to themselves to deal with this disabling condition.

Care for the Non-Depressed Spouse

It is difficult for everyone in the family when one of the members suffers from depression. The non-depressed spouse must engage in more of a caregiving role than before the illness. In addition to any home responsibilities, the non-depressed spouse must take on additional at-home responsibilities as well as offer care and support to

the depressed spouse. This can take a toll on the caregiving spouse in these situations.

The non-depressed spouse must have someone outside of the situation to talk with objectively about the situation without placing blame. Whether it is a friend or a counselor, the caregiving partner may also need support during this period.

Allow yourself to have whatever feelings you must regard your spouse's illness without taking out any anger or aggression on your spouse. Get help with house cleaning or child care to give yourself much-needed breaks. Find time for yourself and use this time to help reduce stress or get some time to relax. Taking care of yourself is an important step in being able to help give support to your depressed spouse and your family.