

WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK A COWORKER IS DEPRESSED

By Nora Mork at NAMI

Trying to decide what to do when you suspect someone in your life has depression can be very difficult. It becomes even more difficult when it's a coworker, where the relationship you have with them is likely a blend of professional and personal. However, despite any awkwardness, you have the opportunity to intervene and make a difference in their lives. It's important to understand what you can do to help under certain limitations of your professional relationship. Here are some tips for what to do.



1. Try And Establish What's Happening

It's easy to develop a hunch, but it's important to be sure of what's happening before acting. This can take time as people's demeanors vary constantly, and changes can be caused by anything from personal challenges to the seasonal changes. The main things to look for are the warning signs of depression, such as isolating themselves from typical activities. If they were once a bit more involved in things and they now avoid social interaction, that's a warning sign.

Note: If you ask them about it, they may brush it off. That doesn't mean you should let it go or stop reaching out to them.

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Each day comes bearing its own gifts. Untie the ribbon.

- Ruth Ann Schabacker

Quotes sourced from Self By Design

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Book of the Month Recommendation

The Self Care Prescription Journal

by
Robyn Gobin PhD

*With the right tools, you can make self care a daily habit rather than an occasional luxury. The perfect companion to *The Self-Care Prescription*, this journal is filled with reflective writing prompts that empower you to attend to your needs, create space to slow down and breathe, and take inspired actions to improve your life.*

2. Don't Sit Back

People with depression are unlikely to volunteer their feelings and the truth of their mental state to you. In fact, many people don't realize they are depressed. If you think something is wrong and want to reach out to someone, don't sit back and wait for the conversation to occur naturally. Unless you are proactive "the moment" for conversation will likely never come.

3. Be Mindful Of Your Approach

Don't approach your coworker directly about their "depression." Asking them if they're depressed or, worse, telling them that they might be, is unlikely to draw results. To start, try just asking them how they are. If they don't engage, try asking more questions and show interest in their life while also respecting their privacy. Most importantly—be compassionate toward them.

4. Try And Get Involved With Them

Look for a way to socialize with them (in a non-intrusive and inoffensive manner) and be persistent. Having someone reach out can help a person feel less alone and social interaction is an important step towards feeling better. Even if they cancel plans with you because they aren't feeling up to it, it might help them realize the extent that they are struggling. Additionally, if they are cancelling plans with you, it provides context to check-in with how they are doing and even suggest that they seek help.

5. Realize You Can't "Fix" Them

It can be disheartening, especially if you are close with your coworker, but it's important to know that you can't solve their depression. It can be tempting to think that your intervention will make them better. Usually recovery from depression involves a combination of therapy and medication, but it's different for everyone.

The most beneficial things you can do for your coworker is to help them realize that they need proper care; to validate them and help them understand they're not alone in their struggle; and most importantly, to be someone they can turn to if they need it.

For more information or advice, contact eni online at:

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