

Important Ways to Take Care of Yourself

Suggestions from other who've been there

- Be gentle with yourself. Remember to take deep, full breaths, particularly during times of stress.
- Recognize your limits and let go of the need for everything to go right. Remember there is only so much you can do.
- Try not to take things personally. Separate the mental illness from the person. Your loved one may say and do things that seem aimed at you, but remember that it is the illness talking.
- Ordinary things, like getting out of bed in the morning, going to work, cleaning the house, cooking and eating may seem incredibly difficult right now. This is normal. Just take one thing at a time.
- Ask for and accept help. Get as much help as you can: delegate chores, go to support groups, get counseling when you need it, and talk to trusted friends.
- Try to focus on the little things that are going well. Gratitude can help ease your pain.

Tips for Caring for Loved Ones

- Don't argue with them. If it's for real, it's real.
- Remember they're recovering from a serious illness – keep expectations realistic. As with any major illness healing takes time. Take it one day at a time. Be patient and allow them time to heal.
- Be kind to them as well.
- Keep the environment as free from sensory overload as possible. For example, don't have the TV, radio, dishwasher and vacuum all going at the same time.

*Be calm. Be non-judgmental. Learn when to walk away.
De-escalation is the goal, safety is first.*

Things to remember during this difficult time:

- You are not alone, others have been through this and support is available.
- Recovery is possible.
- Remember: there is help. There is hope.