
BREAKING
DEPRESSION
PLAN YOUR
WAY OUT OF
DEPRESSION

BREAKING DEPRESSION

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This booklet has been developed by Johnson & Johnson in partnership with GAMIAN-Europe (Global Alliance of Mental Illness Advocacy Networks-Europe) and EUFAMI (European Federation of Associations of Families of People with Mental Illness).
The advice included in this booklet is based on insights gathered from people living with depression, family caregivers and psychiatrists.



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01 FINDING YOUR WAY

CHAPTER ONE

Finding your way

Most people who seek help successfully find ways to cope with their depression.[1] With the right support, you could also find a way to prevent depression from limiting your enjoyment of everyday life.

This guide contains practical tips to support anyone living with the symptoms of depression or Major Depressive Disorder (MDD), whether you're managing your own condition or want to help someone you care about.

This guide is designed to help you:

- Understand how your route out of depression might differ from other people's ✓
- Give the right support to those you care for ✓
- Get the most out of the support you receive ✓
- Appreciate the need for perseverance to get where you want to be ✓ 4/4



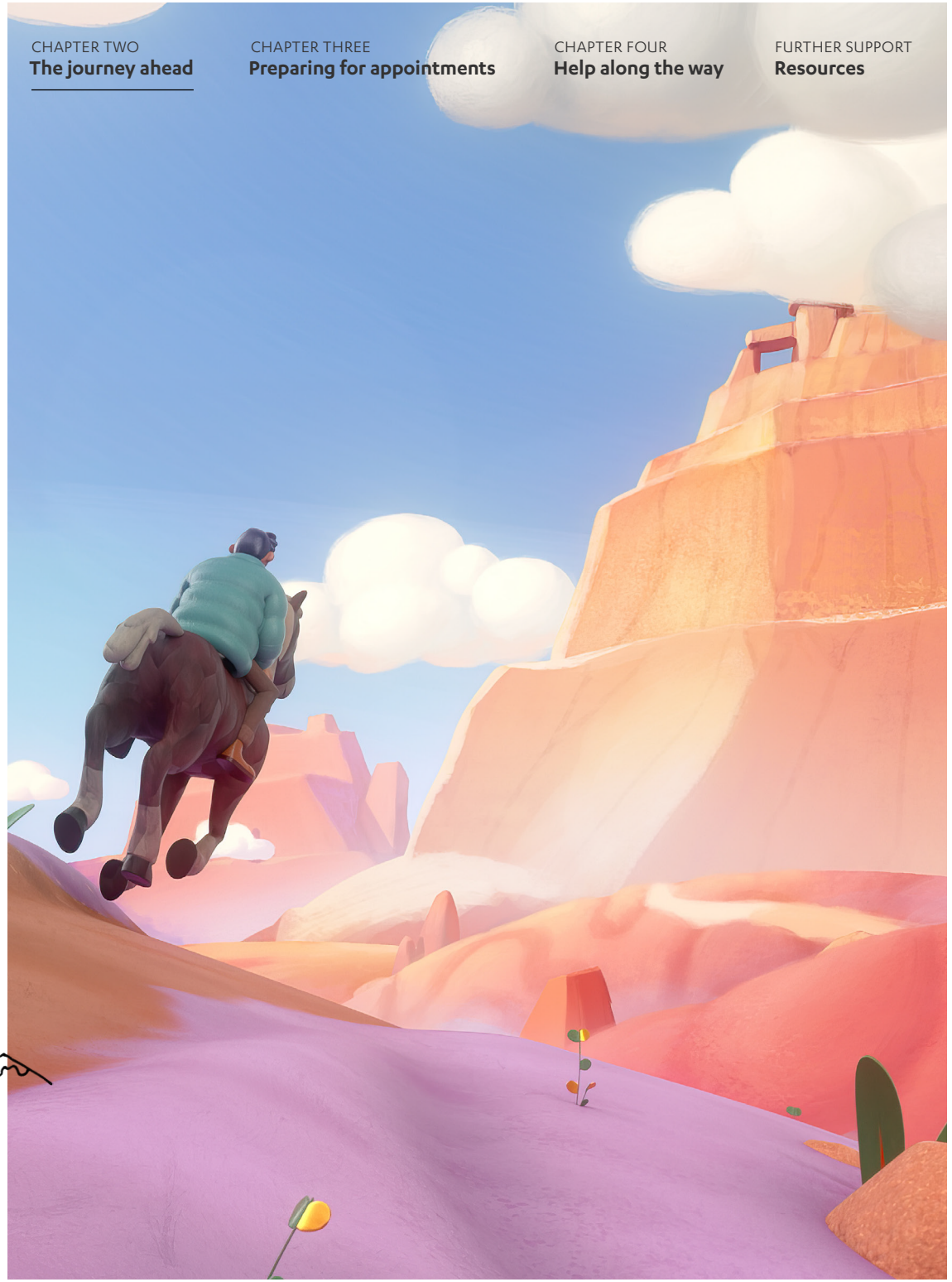




02

THE JOURNEY AHEAD











THERE ISN'T ONE SET WAY OUT OF DEPRESSION.

CHAPTER TWO

The journey ahead

Getting started

It is easy to think that a single solution can solve the challenges you face. However, depression is often complex[2] and as unique as you are.

Everyone's approach is different but, in many cases, having supportive conversations with your doctor or another healthcare professional (HCP) is a crucial step.[3]

Diagnosis is an important first step to get the help you need. By speaking to a HCP about your depression, you give yourself the best opportunity to connect with the right support.[4]

IF SOMETHING DOESN'T WORK FOR YOU, REMEMBER THERE'S NO RIGHT OR WRONG — IT'S JUST ANOTHER STEP TOWARDS FINDING YOUR OWN WAY OUT OF DEPRESSION.

Understanding your journey

You or your loved one's way out of depression might be longer or shorter depending on different factors:

- the type of depression
- any contributing health conditions
- the type of treatment prescribed

You might find that some things work, and others might not. This can feel frustrating at times, but each step forward brings you closer to managing your condition.

Providing honest feedback to your medical team about your successes or challenges should help to move your care forward

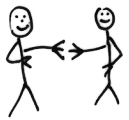
Staying on track

Obstacles or complications may temporarily prevent you from making the progress you had planned. You might experience a bad day when your symptoms return, or need to talk to your doctor about changing medications. Whatever the day brings, try to remain focussed on making positive progress.

When you care for someone living with depression, being present, supportive, and patient can really help. Some people living with depression benefit from talking about how they're feeling, so try to encourage these conversations. This can seem daunting but remember that depression is no one's fault.

Keeping this in mind can help to avoid feelings of judgement or blame.

Remember, the next step you take could unlock the help you need



There are no wrong turns

Everyone is affected by depression differently and what works for one person might not work for another. In fact, multiple steps are often needed before people living with depression start to notice a substantial improvement in their symptoms.

People regularly need to attend several medical appointments to get a diagnosis, or try multiple treatments or medications at different doses before finding the one that works for them. As this process can take time, you will need to stay committed to getting better. Always talk openly with HCPs about how you feel, flagging any potential issues as early as possible.

If something doesn't work for you, remember there's no right or wrong – it's just another step towards finding your own way out of depression.







03

PREPARING FOR APPOINTMENTS





CHAPTER THREE

Preparing for appointments

Being prepared for medical appointments makes the most of the time you have with different HCPs.

Here are a few things to keep in mind:

1 — Be ready to ask questions

It's a good idea to write down what you would like to talk about before your meeting. This might feel strange at first, but it can help as it's easy to forget things in the moment. Take a few minutes before your appointment to write a list of things you want to discuss, such as:

- How you are feeling
- How your mood affects your daily life and activities
- Any unusual events that have bothered you and how they make you feel
- Key medical information, including your medical history, other physical or mental health conditions, and the names and amounts of medications, herbal remedies or supplements you take
- Anything that was unclear after previous meetings with them or other HCPs

If you are supporting someone who lives with depression, be proactive by helping them to prepare for their appointments. For example, you could help them to create an overview of their medical history or list any questions they want to ask.

Depending on the stage of your journey, you might also want to discuss

Your diagnosis:

- What is my diagnosis and what does it mean?
- What kind of depression do I have?
- What are the immediate next steps?
- What is the ultimate aim of my treatment plan?

Treatment options:

- What treatment options are there?
- Will my treatment involve medication, psychotherapy, or a combination of both?
- Can I have more information about the different options, how they work, and the potential impact they will have so I can compare and consider them?
- What are the potential benefits?
- What are the potential downsides?

When it comes to treatments, it's important to be involved in the decision-making process. Be clear and honest about your goals, priorities and how you feel your treatment is working for you. Everyone is affected by depression differently and what works for one person might not work for another.

Ongoing support:

- What has been beneficial to other people in my situation?
- Are there any recommended books, groups or resources?
- What kind of lifestyle changes will help with my symptoms of depression?
- What should I do in an emergency if I feel like I can't cope any more?





2 — Go as a team

Let a family member or friend know in advance if you would like them to join you at your appointments and explain what you hope to achieve during your visit.

If you care for someone who is living with depression, offer to accompany them to support with their discussions with HCPs.

3 — Take notes

To help you to remember what the HCP said and review their advice in more detail, it can help to take notes during your conversations. You can also ask your HCP if they are willing to let you use the sound recorder on your mobile phone instead. You can then listen back to information in your own time, but be sure to ask first as a courtesy.

4 — Always ask 'What's Next'

Always ask 'What's next' at the end of each appointment and try to take ownership of any follow-up visits. If your HCP doesn't schedule a follow-up appointment shortly after you begin treatment, you may need to ask for this. Feel free to request copies of the clinic letters that will be produced after each appointment. These can be useful to keep and refer back to when reflecting on your progress.

5 — Do your homework

Doing your own research on your condition can make you feel more confident when discussing potential treatment options with your HCP. It can also help you to understand how other people with similar symptoms manage their condition. You might find it helpful to:

- Research the specific type of depression you live with based on your diagnosis
- Stay informed of your treatment options through reliable sources like the World Health Organisation (WHO) and GAMIAN-Europe websites

Virtual medical appointments

Some of your medical appointments might be conducted virtually rather than in-person. You will still speak to the same HCP for the same amount of time as you would at an in-person consultation. It helps to follow the same preparation advice as you would when attending an in-person appointment.

Ahead of these meetings, you might also need to think about:

- **finding a quiet place to join the call where you won't be disturbed and can have the privacy you need**
- **making sure you have a good network or internet connection for the call**
- **checking that your digital device is fully charged, or connected to a charger**

04

HELP ALONG THE WAY

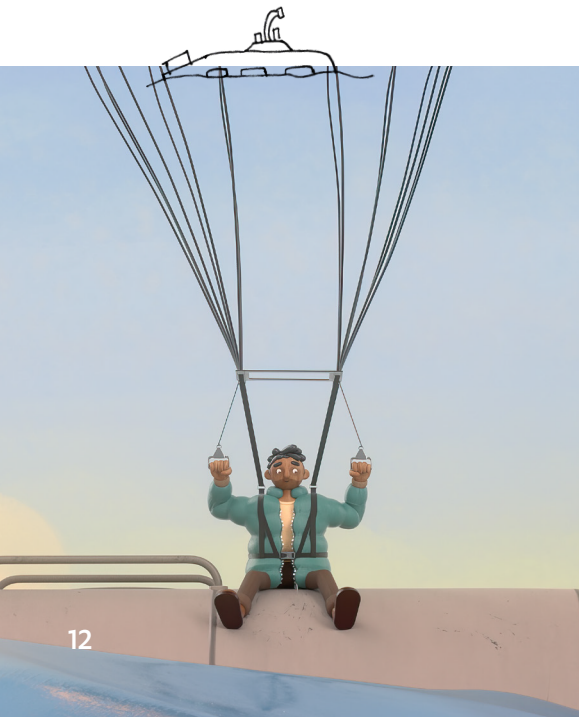


CHAPTER FOUR

Help along the way

Depression is an individual experience but that doesn't mean you need to face it alone. Building a support network can help you to get the care you need.

ULTIMATELY, YOU NEED TO FIND PEOPLE WHO YOU'RE COMFORTABLE TALKING WITH AND WHOSE APPROACH TO DEPRESSION IS ALIGNED TO YOUR NEEDS





Finding healthcare professionals (HCPs)

There are different types of HCPs who can provide support at different stages including general practitioners (GPs), psychologists, psychiatrists, counsellors, social workers, and psychiatric nurses.

HCPs are usually the first point of contact for any concerns about depression. They will be the person who can help you to identify 'what's wrong' and what you can do together to manage your condition.

Ultimately, you need to find people who you're comfortable talking with and whose approach to depression is aligned to your needs. There are different approaches to depression management so don't be afraid to ask for a second opinion or switch doctors if you feel you're not getting support that works for you.

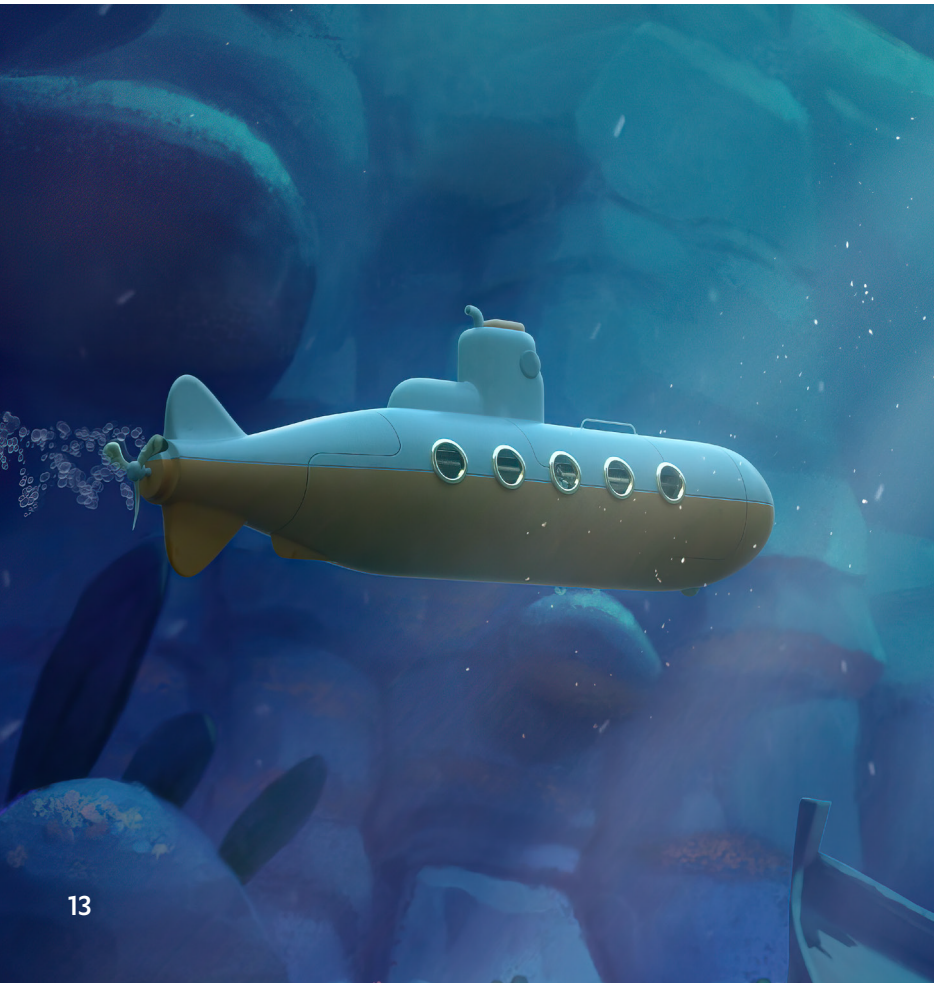
No matter which HCP you end up discussing your concerns with, the sooner you reach out the better

Shared experience

Although your experience of depression might differ from other people's, you might find it useful to connect with someone who knows what you're going through. Many patient organisations provide peer support.

Patient advocacy groups (PAGs) can help you to find advice from like-minded people who can relate to your experience. The Global Alliance of Mental Illness Advocacy Networks-Europe is a good place to start (GAMIAN).

If you care for someone living with depression, it's important that you also have a support network to lean on and other people to talk to. There are networks available, like European Federation of Associations of Families of People with Mental Illness (EUFAMI).





FURTHER SUPPORT

Resources

If you are worried about your own mental health, or someone else's, please visit GAMIAN-Europe's website for information: **www.gamian.eu/wp-content/uploads/ GAMIAN-Europe-Mental-Health-Support.pdf**

If you are caring for someone living with a mental health disorder and would like additional support, you can find more resources on the EUFAMI website: **www.eufami.org/resources**

In an emergency situation, get help immediately by calling the emergency services or your local mental health helpline.

About Breaking Depression

Breaking Depression is a health awareness campaign created by the pharmaceutical company Johnson & Johnson – with support from GAMIAN-Europe and EUFAMI.



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