

I can let go

One day at a time: It can be hard to have a loved one who is sick. To maintain a bit of calm, it can be helpful to concentrate on the present moment and tackle challenges one by one.

Prioritize your efforts: To avoid getting exhausted, focus on things you can control.

What you can and can't control:

No control: You can't change your loved one's thoughts or actions, or the course of their illness.

Partial control: You have some influence over the atmosphere at home and your relationship with your loved one.

What you control: You can choose your own actions, like calling friends or going to bed earlier to take care of yourself.

Preparing to act in case of crisis

- » **Communicate clearly:** Ask the person what they need, listen to them carefully and use simple, short sentences. Stay calm and open, without judgement.
- » **Reassure them:** Let them know they aren't alone and that you're there to help. Ask if they would accept physical contact, such as a hug or a hand on the shoulder.
- » **Protect them:** If the situation gets dangerous, go with them to the hospital. If there is a risk to them or others, **call 911**. Even though it's hard, remember that you're doing it for their well-being.



I get the help I need

If you or a loved one have been feeling the symptoms listed in this brochure for over two weeks, get in touch with a resource that can help.

811: Info-Social (Choose option 2)

24/7 phone assistance

A psychosocial professional will analyze your needs and refer you to the right resource for your circumstance.

1-866-277-3553 (Suicide prevention)

Text (SMS): 535353
Chat and information: suicide.ca

24/7 assistance

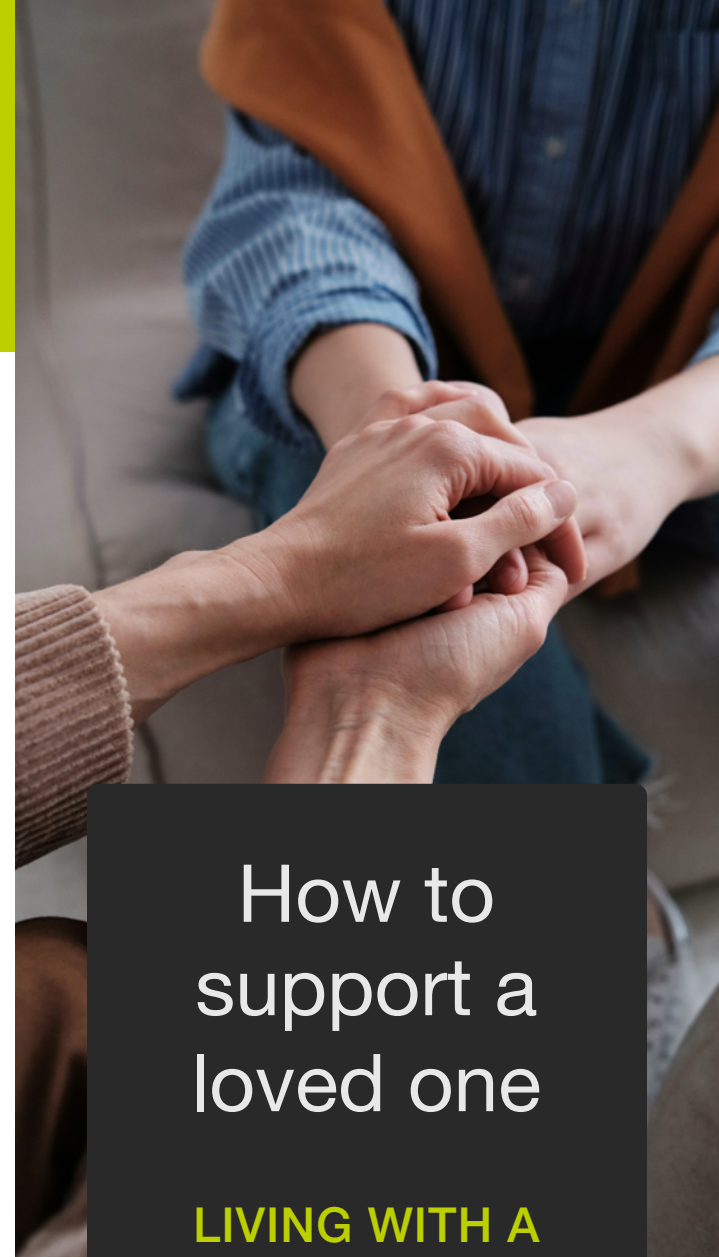
This intervention service is available to people who are suicidal, their loved ones who need guidance and support, as well as people grieving a suicide. When you call, you will automatically be directed to the suicide prevention resource for your region.

Visit: <https://quebec.acsm.ca/en/>
or contact your local CMHA.

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Content adapted from the Good Vibes strategy



How to support a loved one

LIVING WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Quebec Division
Mental health for all

Understanding my loved one

Separate the person from their illness

Remember that your loved one is first and foremost a person with qualities, a history and their own tastes. Mental illness can affect their behaviour and mood, but it doesn't define them.

By focusing on what you appreciate about your loved one and sharing moments of pleasure, you'll preserve the quality of your relationship.

Use the right words



Avoid: They are mentally ill, they are bipolar



Use instead: They have a mental health problem or are living with bipolar disorder.

Get informed to better support them

- » **Give effective help:** The more you know about your loved one's mental illness, the better you can understand what they're feeling and why they're acting the way they are. This will help you better respond and know when to ask for help.
- » **Break down prejudice:** By learning about their illness, you can:
 - Correct any incorrect ideas your loved one may have about their own condition.
 - Help them deal with judgement or prejudice they may encounter from others.



Supporting my loved one daily

Keep listening

Living with a mental illness can bring up difficult emotions, such as anger and sadness, which can affect your loved one's mental health. The illness can also disrupt their daily life and aggravate their condition.

Staying attentive to their emotions helps you help them. Listen to them without judgement, and let them express what they're feeling, without rushing in to give advice or telling them what you would do in their place. If they don't want to talk, remind them that you love them and that they can count on you when they need help or to talk to someone.

Helping your loved one address their illness

Encourage autonomy: Even though your loved one has a mental illness, it's important not to do everything for them or doubt their abilities. Treating them like a child can reduce their self-confidence. Remember they know their own strengths and limitations.

Help them stay motivated in their treatment: Dips in motivation are normal during recovery. Encourage your loved one to talk through their doubts and questions with the professionals who are helping them. Perseverance is essential for recovery.

I take care of myself every day

Protecting your mental health

Recognizing your emotions: Living with a person who is ill can bring up all sorts of emotions, such as worry, sadness, anger, frustration or even guilt. Caregivers often think they are somewhat responsible for their loved one's condition. Take time to regularly take stock of your own mental well-being.

Here's a short quiz to see how your mental health is doing



Be kind to yourself: It's normal that you can't manage everything on your own. Give yourself permission for moments of vulnerability; it will help you bounce back better. Don't forget that you're human and have good intentions, and that there are no "perfect reactions."

Take a break

Take time for yourself: Try to take moments to rest, have some fun or get some exercise. This will help you recharge your batteries, be more available for your loved one and prevent exhaustion.

Build a support network: Like your loved one, you need help. Talk to those around you about what you're going through, join a support group or consult a health care professional.

Stay hopeful: Relapses and changes in treatment can be hard, but they are part of the recovery process, which takes time.