

caring for yourself when you're caring for others



Supporting and taking care of someone who is experiencing thoughts or feelings of suicide can be physically and emotionally stressful. You might experience a range of emotions (such as anger, sadness, helplessness). **So, it is important to look after yourself too, and ensure you are taking care of yourself in order to offer support to your loved one.**

SOME STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF:

1. Take care of your physical and mental health

Make sure you are getting enough sleep, eating healthy meals regularly, and doing things you find relaxing (such as going for a walk, meditation, listening to music, etc.).

2. Take time out for yourself

You don't have to feel guilty for not being able to give all your time to support your loved one. You need to take care of your needs as well. Look for ways to include activities you enjoy in your daily life.

3. Stay connected

Catch up regularly with friends, family, and other loved ones. Engage in activities that help you stay connected to others and make you feel loved.

4. Set boundaries

Be clear about what support you can provide and for

how long. If it starts to feel overwhelming, you could seek support from other people in the person's support network.

5. Be kind to yourself

Sometimes, despite doing our best or providing support, a person's condition may not improve or they may even die by suicide. In such situations one may feel guilty or blame themselves. There is no right or wrong way to feel, but it is important to not blame oneself for what is happening.

Remember, you are not responsible for a person's life or their decisions.

6. Talk about your feelings

It may help to talk about your feelings with a health professional (doctor, counselor, therapist) and work out ways to move forward. You can also join a peer support group and connect with others who have similar experiences.

(Outlive is a suicide prevention programme for young people by Sangath, The Centre for Mental Health Law & Policy, and Quicksand. Learn more at www.outlive.in.)

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