

Steps for Families to Follow to Help a Loved one with Mental Illness

Hearing a family member has a mental illness can be devastating. It can change a family forever. Here are some steps to follow to help.

Step 1

Mental illness is not a joke, It effects many people in society but no one has a harder time dealing with mental illness than the person themselves and their families. Mental illness can come in many forms. It is one of those topics that unless you know someone personally people avoid talking about it. Which is logical. It isn't a pleasant topic to talk about or think about. We all just hope that we will never have to go through it or watch other we love do so. However, many do.

The first and probably the most important aspect to remember when dealing with mental illness is that we must be patient and always practice sensitivity. You cannot blame that person for the way they behave or the things they do. The saying, actions speak louder than words does not apply to this situation. They are not aware or in control of their actions.

Step 2

The hardest part to deal with, in trying to live with mental illness is the fact that you cannot communicate with them in the same way you would with others. They are not always in touch with reality so reasoning with them is going to get you nowhere. Instead make sure your listening. Make sure your voice is always calm and soothing. Ask a lot of questions but don't try and give them advice. They probably won't take it or will get angry with you. Also don't take their anger to heart. It stems from something that is probably in most cases not your fault and has nothing to do with you.

Step 3

Remember the good times. Remember them and bring them up whenever possible. Sometimes this will calm them down or bring them back to reality. Don't get frustrated when they don't get better either, because the sad reality is, a lot of times they won't. They might for a while but medications only works for some cases and treatments are experimental in the beginning stages.

Most of all, remember that they are humans just like you and I. They may sound different, act different and look different but deep down they are just like you. In that respect try and remember what you would want if you were sick. Always ask yourself what would help me, if I was panicking or feeling depressed. Where would I want to go, what would make me feel better, because you never know, it might help.

Try and find out as much as you can about the illness and go to more than one doctor. Second opinions are always helpful, even third and fourth opinions.