

You want to help? Here's how:

Step One: Identify Unhelpful Patterns in Your Behavior (do something different next time)

Most common: enabling & provoking – driven with good intentions, but contribute to problem. What motivates change. The driving force: anxiety and anger.

Step Two: Address your fears and resentments (we all have them)

What are you afraid of? What do you resent? A resentment is anger about a situation in which you felt victimized, taken advantage of, unfairly treated. The process of letting go of resentments is central to recovery, but it takes time. Your fears may be quite reasonable, or quite irrational. Get to know them.

Step Three: Begin treating your own problems (we all have these, too)

You can see what has happened to your loved one, but can you see what it's done to you? What about your own hopes and dreams? Have they been set aside, classified as hopeless? What could it take to restore you to hopefulness? We all wish certain things were different about ourselves – what would you change if you could?

Step Four: Set reasonable expectations for the near future (you don't need magic)

Recovery is an extended process. One common mistake is to hope for too much too soon. Make a list of what you think might be reasonable expectations. Check it out with others. Do they agree?

Step Five: Grow as a person (you never stopped)

Do you wish you were less depressed? Fearful? Angry? Sad? What could you do to make things better in your life?

Step Six: Consider the possibility of relapse (it's not the end)

People often backslide. No need to give up. What if problems start again – how would you handle it?

Step Seven: Learn to manage your emotions (be proactive, not reactive)

Your emotions needn't rule you. In fact, it's not good if they do. For others, or for you.

Step Eight: Learn to de-escalate conflict (don't live from crisis to crisis)

The really bad times are often avoidable. A lot depends on how you react. You can control this.

