

TIP SHEET #1

HOW TO HELP A FRIEND WHO HAS AN ANXIETY DISORDER

Having supportive and understanding friends is an essential component to recovering from an anxiety disorder. How can you help?

Educate yourself - Understanding what your friend is going through will help you better support them. It will also help alleviate frustrations that you may have about his or her behavior.

Be supportive - Encourage your friend when he or she is having a tough time and be empathetic to what he or she is going through. Be respectful but do not support avoidance of stressful situations.

Don't try to change your friend - Modify your expectations of how you want your friend to be and accept your friend for who he or she is.

Communicate - Be sure to listen with a nonjudgmental attitude. Help him or her find treatment. Sometimes it's hard to take the first step alone. Be supportive and encourage your friend to get help.

Encourage - Encourage your friend to confront stressful situations and support them through the experience, rather than avoiding anxiety-provoking situations. Avoidance can actually make the anxiety disorder worse.

Be fun - Sure it's good to have someone to talk to, but your friends need you to keep the fun going. Help make them laugh and relax.

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