

HEALING A BROKEN HEART

A broken heart requires at least as much care as a broken bone. With proper care, you can be confident that you will heal. The same powerful forces that mend a broken bone will heal your emotional pain, but a wounded heart needs time and proper care to heal.

Be with the pain. Admit you're hurting. The greater the loss, the more time you will take to heal. Don't worry about having ups and downs; these are a sign that you're healing.

You are more fragile now. There is no shame in that; so take it easy. Crying is a natural release. Remember you are not alone. You can't be a human being without suffering loss.

Here is some emotional first aid for a broken heart.

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| <i>Do</i> stay calm; treat yourself gently. | <i>Do</i> anticipate a positive outcome. |
| <i>Do</i> recognize your injury. | <i>Don't</i> panic. |
| <i>Do</i> let yourself be with the pain. | <i>Don't</i> deny the hurt. |
| <i>Do</i> take time to heal. | <i>Don't</i> dwell on the negative. |
| <i>Do</i> rest; nurture yourself. | <i>Don't</i> abuse alcohol or drugs. |
| <i>Do</i> accept comfort from friends and family. | <i>Don't</i> stay isolated. |
| <i>Do</i> stick to a routine. | <i>Don't</i> create more chaos. |
| <i>Do</i> take care in making important decisions. | <i>Don't</i> make impulsive judgments; be wary of love on the rebound. |
| <i>Do</i> accept understanding and support. | <i>Don't</i> be afraid to ask for help. |
| | <i>Don't</i> lose faith. |

SIGNS OF DEPRESSION

According to the DEPRESSION Awareness, Recognition, and Treatment (D/ART) Program of the National Institute of Mental Health, symptoms of depression can include:

- Persistent sad or "empty" mood.
- Loss of interest or pleasure in ordinary activities, including sex.
- Decreased energy, fatigue, being "slowed down."
- Sleep disturbances (insomnia, early-morning waking or oversleeping).
- Eating disturbances (loss of appetite and weight, or weight gain).
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions.
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness and helplessness.
- Thoughts of death or suicide; suicide attempts.
- Irritability.
- Excessive crying.
- Chronic aches and pains that don't respond to treatment.
- Decreased productivity.
- Safety problems; accidents.
- Alcohol or drug abuse.
- Moral problems.
- Lack of cooperation.

A thorough diagnosis is needed if four or more of these symptoms persist for more than two weeks or are interfering with work or family life. Consult a qualified mental health professional (psychologist or psychiatrist) for a thorough diagnosis.