

How can one help carry the burden of someone who has a mental illness?

1. Be there!!! Show up!!!
2. Listen without a judgmental attitude.
3. Communicate. Listen as a person, not as a learned religious figure. Share your thoughts and feelings.
4. Recognize your own limitations and honor your concerns. Seek information, advice and support from people familiar with mental illness. If you have questions, find someone who is qualified to give you helpful answers.
5. Empower by demonstrating that you believe in him or her.
6. Ask what you can do to make a difference. Ask, "What can I do to help?"
7. Learn about serious mental illness in order that you can have some understanding of what it is like to "walk in his or her shoes."
8. If it seems indicated, refer him or her to persons specially trained to help with mental illness issues. If necessary, make the appointment and/or provide transportation.
9. If medication has been prescribed, reassure him or her that it is almost always necessary for those with a serious mental illness and that it can enable one to function very well.
10. Reassure your friend that God is constantly with him or her, even if he or she can't sense it at that moment.
11. Follow through and come back to see your friend when he or she is feeling well.

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