

INTERACTING WITH PROVIDERS



Not all providers are as familiar with the cognitive issues of depression as they are with other symptoms, such as mood, isolation, and changes with eating or sleep. You can support your loved one at clinical appointments by helping to explain the symptoms and their effect on day-to-day functioning and by making sure the treatment plan addresses these concerns.

It may not be clear whether the cognitive symptoms are a side effect of medication, a result of depression, a combination of both, or some other cause altogether.

You can help the provider by noting when symptoms began; whether they have gotten better, worse, or stayed the same; and whether any strategies are effective in supporting better functioning. Use the symptoms chart to note your observations and concerns.

Here are some questions that may be appropriate for helping your loved one discuss diagnosis and treatment with the healthcare provider. Selecting the treatment should be a collaborative process with the provider.

What do you believe is the cause of these symptoms and for what reasons?

- What conditions (e.g., ADD/ADHD, dementia, etc.) are you able to rule out? Why?

If these symptoms are related to depression, what can be done about them?

- Are these suggested approaches evidence-based?
- Do you know what my insurance will cover? Would you be willing to request authorization for this treatment, if not ordinarily covered?
- What kind of therapy would be useful?
- Are there clinicians you would recommend? If not, what kinds of training and experience would be most appropriate?
- Are there medications that we should consider? What are the benefits and risks of each?
- How long will it take to see effects?

If successful, what will my loved one's daily functioning be like?

- What should I be watching for, whether for improvement or for worsening symptoms?

How soon should the next appointment be?

- Under what circumstances should we call you before then?

