

## Sharing information with older siblings

### Choose the right time and place

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- It is crucial that you respect your child's comfort level on when they are ready to talk to others
- Consider your child's preferences. Do they want to share the information or do they want you as a parent/caregiver to share it for them?

*You can say:* "Hey everyone, can we all sit down together for a few minutes? I wanted to talk to you about something important."

### Define the diagnosis

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- At this age, it is likely that your child has heard about mental health disorders

*You can say:* "Depression is a mental health disorder that affects a person's mood, thinking, and behavior. It can happen to anyone, anywhere, and it's not the person's fault. There isn't one reason why people have depression. It does get better and there are treatments and support available"

"It's a feeling of sadness that will not go away. It can look like sleeping too much or not sleeping at all, not being able to, or wanting to join or enjoy activities. I can also look like not eating enough or overeating. It feels like losing joy in something you used to enjoy and love"

### Describe what you are going through

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- Be honest and open about your symptoms and how they affect your daily life

*You can say:* "It's been difficult to deal with depression, and I've been struggling with (describe your experience]"

"Depression feels like you are not yourself. It feels like you are alone even when you are surrounded with people. It is a feeling you have every day. (Add other ways you feel you can describe your depression"

### Talk about treatment

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- If comfortable, share what your child's treatment is so that they can understand what is happening in the home.

*You can say:* "There are mental health professionals that help with depression. I'm working with a therapist and/or taking medication to help manage my mental health. I'm also doing things like exercising, eating healthy, and getting enough sleep to take care of myself"

### Share how they can help in this process

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- Ask your siblings for their support in your journey towards recovery. Be specific about the type of support you need from them, whether it's emotional support, help with daily tasks, or simply being there to talk to when you need it.
- Be open to questions and encourage siblings to talk about what they don't understand

*You can say:* "If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to ask me. I want you to know that this is not your fault and your support means a lot to me"