



Nurturing Our Loved Ones

A Toolkit for Families & Caregivers

Understanding · Supporting · Caring for Yourself

What's Inside This Toolkit?



1

Understand the Condition

Learn what mental health & substance use look like, why they happen, and what treatments can help.



2

Support Strategies

Practical tips on how to talk, listen, and respond — including what to do in a crisis.



3

Caregiver Self-Care

You matter too! Resources and tips to protect your own well-being while caring for someone else.



Part 1

Understanding the Condition

*Knowledge is the
first step to helping.*

What Are We Talking About?

🧠 **Mental Health Conditions**

These include depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and more. They affect how a person thinks, feels, and acts every day.

🍷 **Substance Use Disorders**

This happens when someone becomes dependent on alcohol, drugs, or other substances — often as a way to cope with pain.

⚡ **What Causes These Conditions?**

A mix of biology (genes), environment (stress, trauma), and life experiences. It's NOT a sign of weakness or bad character.

💚 **Treatment Options Exist**

Therapy, medication, support groups, and community care all work. Recovery takes time — but it IS possible.



Signs to Look Out For

If you notice these signs in your loved one, they may need help:



Withdrawing from family and friends



Feeling very sad, hopeless, or empty



Sleeping too much or too little



Losing interest in things they used to enjoy



Having trouble concentrating



Drinking alcohol more than usual



Using drugs or needing more to feel normal



Mood swings or extreme behavior changes



Not eating well or ignoring hygiene



Talking about hurting themselves

 If your loved one talks about hurting themselves — seek help immediately. Call a mental health helpline.



Part 2: How to Support Your Loved One



Listen Without Judging

- Give them space to speak
- Don't try to 'fix' everything
- Say: 'I hear you. I'm here.'



Create a Safe Space

- Keep things calm at home
- Avoid arguments or blame
- Let them know they are loved



Learn About Their Treatment

- Go to appointments if invited
- Ask their doctor questions
- Support their medication routine



Know the Crisis Plan

- Have a helpline number ready
- Know nearest mental health facility
- Have a trusted contact on speed dial

How to Talk to Your Loved One

Words have power. Use them with care and love.

✓ SAY THIS

"I love you and I'm worried about you."

"You don't have to go through this alone."

"How can I help you right now?"

"I believe in your ability to get better."

"It's okay to ask for help."

✗ AVOID THIS

"Just snap out of it!"

"You're being weak / dramatic."

"I'm embarrassed by your behavior."

"Why can't you be normal?"

"You're ruining this family."



What To Do in a Crisis

A crisis can feel overwhelming — but you CAN help. Here's what to do:

1 Stay Calm — Speak slowly and softly. Your calm energy helps calm them too.

2 Listen and Don't Leave — Stay with them. Ask 'Are you thinking about hurting yourself?' — asking does NOT make things worse.

3 Remove Dangers — Quietly put away sharp objects, medicines, or other things that could cause harm.

4 Call for Help — Contact a mental health helpline, their doctor, or take them to a hospital if needed.

5 Follow Up — After the crisis, check in regularly. Show them they are not alone.

 **Keep a crisis line number saved in your phone NOW — before you need it.**



Part 3: Taking Care of YOU

You cannot pour from an empty cup. Your well-being matters too.

⚠️ Caregiver burnout is REAL. It happens when you give too much for too long. Signs include: exhaustion, feeling resentful, withdrawing, neglecting your own health.



Physical Care

- Sleep 7–8 hours
- Eat regular meals
- Walk or move daily
- See your own doctor



Emotional Care

- Talk to someone you trust
- Let yourself cry & grieve
- Celebrate small wins
- Join a caregiver group



Mental Rest

- Take breaks from caregiving
- Do things you enjoy
- Limit news and phone time
- Practice deep breathing



Ask for Help

- Share duties with family
- Contact social services
- Explore respite care
- Accept help when offered

Caregiver Weekly Self-Care Checklist

Print this out and check off each one as you go! You deserve care too. 🍷

I slept for at least 7 hours

I asked for help when I needed it

I ate a proper meal today

I said something kind to myself

I went outside or exercised

I checked in with my own doctor

I talked to someone I trust

I set a boundary with my loved one

I took a break from caregiving

I called or texted a friend

I did something I enjoy

I rested without feeling guilty

Remember: Caring for yourself is part of caring for your loved one. 🌸



You Are Not Alone

Reach out. Ask for help. And keep going — one day at a time.

EviHealth Nkabom:

nkabomforall.org

WHO Mental Health:

who.int/health-topics/mental-health

Crisis Helpline (GH):

0800-111-222 (Ghana)

SAMHSA (Substance Use):

1-800-662-HELP (US)