

Parents Facing Depression

The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. Therefore my heart celebrates, and I give thanks to him with my song. *Psalm 28:7*

It takes great courage to face our struggles and even greater strength to share them with those we love. Your willingness to open up about your own battle with depression is a testament to the authenticity of your relationship with your teens. Your vulnerability not only fosters understanding but also provides an opportunity for connection. Approach the conversation with the assurance that even in your vulnerability, God's grace is sufficient, and your openness may serve as a beacon of hope. You are not alone in this journey, and your courage to share your struggles can be a powerful testimony of faith.

➤ conversation starter

I've been going through a tough time lately, and I wanted to share this with you because I value our relationship. It's okay not to be okay, and I believe that sharing our struggles can bring us closer. Have you faced any challenges that you'd like to talk about, or is there anything on your mind?

Lately, I've been dealing with some difficult emotions, and I want you to know that it's okay to talk about these things. How are you feeling, and is there anything you'd like to share?

➤ navigating the conversation:

- **Pray for Guidance:** Before initiating the conversation, spend time in prayer. Ask God for wisdom, discernment, and the courage to share your struggles. Invite the Holy Spirit to guide the conversation and provide comfort to both you and your teens.
- **Share Your Faith:** Integrate your faith into the conversation by expressing how your relationship with God has been a source of strength and hope during difficult times. Share relevant Bible verses that have provided comfort and encouragement for you.
- **Emphasize God's Love and Grace:** Reinforce the message that God's love is unconditional. Remind teens that struggles, including mental health challenges, do not diminish God's love for them. Share examples of how you have experienced God's grace and presence in your journey.
- **Normalize Struggles:** Assure teens that everyone faces challenges, and it's okay to seek help and share our burdens.
- **Encourage Open Communication:** Let teens know that you are there to listen without judgment. Encourage them to share their thoughts and feelings, emphasizing that you value their perspective.
- **Express the Importance of Professional Help:** While relying on our faith is crucial, convey the importance of seeking professional help. Mental health professionals can offer valuable support, and seeking their assistance is a courageous step toward healing.
- **Reinforce Family Support:** Emphasize that your family is a unit and supporting one another is an integral part of your shared journey. Encourage open dialogue within the family, and express your commitment to walking through challenges together.
- **Offer Hope and Updates:** As you take steps toward improvement, provide teens with updates on how you are improving and explain that healing is a process. Remind them that our hope is in God.

