

Sharing information with family and caregivers

Choose the right time and place

01

- 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? We want to talk to you about something important"

Define the diagnosis

02

- You might need to have some additional educational resources for your family to understand your child's diagnosis

You can say: "I've been diagnosed with depression. Depression is a common yet serious mental health disorder that affects how we feel, think, and act. It is treatable and it can happen to anyone"

Describe what you are going through

- Describe your child's experience and how it has affected them or have them share it themselves

03

You can say: "Depression can bring feelings of sadness and loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed. It can affect your ability to function at school or work. For example (child's name) has had a difficult time with (describe personal experiences here)"

"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. It can also look like not eating enough or overeating. It feels like losing joy in something you used to enjoy and love"

Talk about treatment

04

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

You can say: "I'm working with my doctor to find the best treatment plan for me. I'm currently (taking medication/seeing a therapist/doing self-care activities), and I'm hopeful that I'll be able to manage my symptoms."

Share how they can help in this process

05

- Let your family members know how they can support you. Be honest and clear about your needs and feelings. They might have suggestions or ideas, share your comfort in listening to their input.

You can say: "I would really appreciate your support during this time. It would mean a lot to me if you could (fill in your needs). I'm feeling (describe your feelings), but I'm hopeful that with your support, I can get through this."

Sharing information with older siblings

Choose the right time and place

01

- 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

02

- 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

03

- 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

04

- 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

05

- 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"

Sharing information with young siblings

Choose the right time and place

01

- It is crucial that you respect your child's comfort level on when they are ready to talk to their siblings
- 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?
- Consider the language you will use with younger siblings. The goal is for them to understand as clearly as possible what is happening in their siblings' lives

You can say: "Hey (sibling name) can we all sit down together for a few minutes? (Child's name) wants to talk to you about something important."

"I've been feeling really overwhelmed and I wanted to share this with you. I'm struggling with my mental health and I know this might be a bit confusing or scary, but I think it's important that we talk about it so you can understand what's going on"

Explain the diagnosis

02

- Use simple and age-appropriate language

You can say: "You have felt sad before, right? Normally, we find things to make us happy again. Like when we left the playground, you were crying, but then we went home to have cookies and you were smiling again. For some people, this feeling of being sad never goes away, and it's called depression"

"I have been diagnosed with depression. This means that sometimes I feel very sad, anxious, or overwhelmed, and I might need some extra help and support to feel better."

Describe how you are feeling

03

- Use age-appropriate language that young children can relate to

You can say: "Lots of people have depression. It feels like a dark rainy cloud is following you everywhere you go all the time. This is why your brother/sister sometimes may not want to talk, play, get out of their room, or seem upset"

Talk about treatment

04

- Talk about how you're getting help

You can say: "Just like there are doctors for when you get hurt or sick with there are doctors that help with how we feel"

"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 be a supportive member of the family

05

- 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 you don't have to do anything special to make me feel better. Just being here for me is enough."