

How I deal with my mum's depression

My mother suffers from the black dog of depression in the form of bipolar. She changes in front of me at times. Jumping seemingly out of nowhere into a miserable state. She may feel upset thinking the world is out to get her, or she might feel frustrated and angry with the pressures of life.

When she is in this state it is impossible to change her mood or her opinion, so I don't try to. Instead I try to encourage the good things that are happening, trying to spot the silver lining in the cloud.

I tell her that no matter what anyone else thinks, I will always love her and that she will always have me to confide in. At the time it may not mean much because she is suffering from her illness. But I know that later when she is feeling better she can look back at what I said and appreciate it.

Naturally I worry sometimes, when she may be crying or yelling. This is because it scares me to see my mum like that. I am only fourteen and so I don't really understand much of what is going on. It confuses me that someone who is my greatest role-model can just break down sometimes. But I know that if I get depressed it will only make things worse for her.

So I try to act calm, I ignore mum when she yells at me or when she starts putting herself down. I can't let those things affect me, it's the one thing I do remember from the brochures and articles she has given to me. I know that all I have to do is support her through the bad times and not to try to take it out on myself.

Sometimes mum's bipolar becomes so bad she has to go to hospital. I feel she is safe there because there are doctors who can help her better than I possibly can. The only time when this has been a concern to me was when some doctors actually came to my house to see how mum was going. I felt something serious must have been going on for them to come into our house.

Mum sometimes tells me that I shouldn't have to carry the burden of her depression. Sometimes she will get confused and tell me that I shouldn't have to deal with it and that I am better off living with another family member. To me she is not a burden, she is my mum and I love her even when she is bipolar. I know that sometimes I have to make decisions for myself to do the best thing for her. And I know that living with her is the best thing.

She always tells me that her kids are her life. So what would happen if I were to live with someone else? I know it would only make her depression worse and I know that it would probably ruin my life at the same time.

As long as I am the best son I can be and help mum through her sickness, I know that I will not break into depression and I can make my mum feel proud of me.

<http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/media/eventscal/index.cfm>

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