



Helping a Teammate With Depression



Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide, so there's a good chance you will manage someone with the disorder during your career. It is also likely that your Airman will come directly to you to request accommodations rather than going elsewhere. To prepare, learn what you can about the condition. If you understand the symptoms, you'll be able to better anticipate your Airman's needs. You can proactively help in several ways:

1. **Allow flexible hours.** Research shows flexible work hours actually increase productivity, commitment to the organization, and retention.
2. **Reinforce the Airman's successes.** Repeated victories over time create positive work experiences and increase confidence.
3. **Break down large projects into parts.** Shorter-term deadlines allow employees to see large projects as smaller, more manageable tasks.
4. **Play to the Airman's strengths.** If they feel like tasks are designed for them, they'll be more likely to view the tasks as important, complete them more quickly, and feel validated.
5. **Familiarize yourself with available resources** (not only for your Airmen, but also for yourself as you navigate these conversations). The DoD and Air Force have free Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) or other forms of assistance. Proactively sharing these resources with your team might make them more likely to approach you before any problems seriously compromise their work performance.

These tips are adapted from "[How to Manage an Employee with Depression](#)," by Kristen Bell DeTienne, Jill M. Hooley, Cristian Larrocha, and Annsheri Reay
