

WHAT IF MY LOVED ONE HAS MIGRAINE?

Remember that migraine is a disease and is nobody's fault. Individuals with migraine do not bring their migraine attacks upon themselves, and sometimes there is nothing they can predict about their pain. It is easy to feel rejected or disappointed if they turn down spending time together when they are not feeling well. Don't take it personally, though. It is likely they would prefer to spend time with you but simply don't have a choice when they are feeling the symptoms of a migraine attack.

1.

Ask what may trigger your loved one's migraine attacks.

Try to avoid having conversations in the midst of an attack, but later, when they are not in pain, you might ask questions like:

- Did you feel that migraine attack coming on?
- Do you think anything triggered that attack?
- Was there anything I could have done to be more helpful in managing your pain?

2.

Consider their triggers. Does your loved one have a sensitivity to smell? Sounds? Light? Certain foods? Try to remember what may bring on their migraine attacks and help minimizing these activities. This might mean not wearing cologne, finding new restaurants, or spending time indoors instead of out.

3.

Encourage open-ended communication about what migraine feels like. Let them know you are open to talking whenever they feel up to it. If they do want to share, you can ask questions such as:

- What does it feel like before, during, and after an attack?
- What kind of emotions do you experience related to migraine?
- What can I do to be supportive of you during these experiences?

4.

Learn how to help when an attack is coming on. It may be helpful to get them water and a snack, to find a quiet, dark space, or to help them take their medications. Creating a "migraine plan" with your loved one will make sure you both know what to do when they begin to experience symptoms.

5.

Share in their health care appointments and treatment plan.

To the best of your abilities, offer support in attending health care appointments. Presenting a united front can make it feel like a team effort, as opposed to a challenge your loved one must face alone. Ask if you can help with picking up medications, keeping track of a treatment schedule, or processing the outcomes of health care appointments.

6.

Focus on the good. It can be easy to feel defeated, frustrated, or sad when you see your loved one suffering. Practicing gratitude and focusing on the things they are able to do instead of the things they can't will help remind both of you that there is life outside of migraine.

7.

Seek your own support. Even caregivers need a support system. If you are the support system for your loved one, you may be wondering where you can turn when you need validation and reassurance. Finding other family members or friends with whom you can share your struggles is important for your own mental health. Similarly, you may be able to find support with other caregivers or find a support group of your own.