

THE PMDD PROJECT

SUPPORTING LOVED ONES WITH PMDD

PMDD can profoundly impact relationships, often leading to misunderstandings and emotional turmoil.

Recognising the signs is crucial, not just for those experiencing PMDD but for their partners as well. It's important to understand the differences between the external behaviours seen in relationships and the internal struggles that define PMDD.

By understanding both perspectives, we can promote empathy, support, and healthier connections.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE VS WHAT IT IS

ACTING JEALOUS



STRUGGLING WITH DEEP INSECURITY, SELF-DOUBT AND FEELING UNWORTHY

SAYING ODD THINGS AND BEHAVING OUT OF CHARACTER



COPING WITH ANXIETY, BRAIN FOG, AND MASKING TRUE EMOTIONS BEHIND A BRAVE FACE

PICKING FIGHTS AND TALKING ABOUT BREAKING UP



A DESPERATE CRY FOR HELP, A MISCOMMUNICATION, AND FEELING LOST AND EXHAUSTED WHILE TRYING TO IDENTIFY THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM

PULLING AWAY OR NEEDING TOO MUCH TIME ALONE



TRYING TO RECHARGE, COPE WITH EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION, AND MANAGE OVERWHELMING SYMPTOMS PRIVATELY

NOT WANTING TO BE TOUCHED, HAVE SEX, OR BE INTIMATE



PHYSICAL DISCOMFORT, HEIGHTENED SENSITIVITY, STIMULATION OVERLOAD, LOW SELF-ESTEEM, EXTREME FATIGUE, EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION

BEING OVERLY CRITICAL OR NIT-PICKING



STRUGGLING WITH IRRITABILITY, HEIGHTENED ANXIETY, AND FEELING LIKE EVERYTHING IS TOO MUCH

SEEMING UNINTERESTED IN YOUR DAY AND NOT LISTENING



BRAIN FOG, MENTAL FATIGUE, BATTLING EMOTIONAL NUMBNESS

FORGETTING IMPORTANT DATES OR SEEMING UNINTERESTED IN MILESTONES



STRUGGLING WITH MEMORY, BRAIN FOG, AND NOT BEING ABLE TO PRIORITISE THINGS DUE TO EXHAUSTION

REFUSING TO TALK ABOUT PROBLEMS OR SHUTTING DOWN DURING CONFLICT



FEELING MENTALLY DRAINED, SCARED OF BEING MISUNDERSTOOD, OR NOT HAVING THE EMOTIONAL ENERGY TO ENGAGE

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT:



Educate yourself:

Understanding PMDD is the first step in offering support. Learn about the symptoms, causes, and effects of PMDD, particularly how it affects emotional, physical, and mental health. Realise that PMDD is a severe, cyclic mood disorder, not just PMS.

Validate their feelings:

Let them know that their emotions are valid and that it's okay to feel overwhelmed. Saying things like "I understand this is difficult for you" can go a long way.

Encourage self-care practices:

Support your loved one in establishing self-care routines like regular exercise, mindfulness practices, and eating nutritious foods. Small acts like offering to join them for a calming walk or preparing a healthy meal together can be deeply appreciated.

Be a compassionate listener:

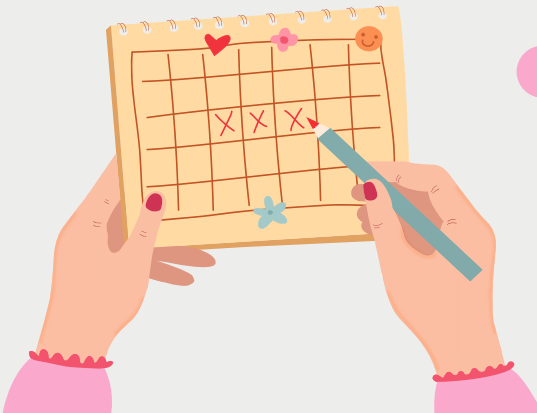
Sometimes, your loved one may just need someone to vent to. Offer a safe, non-judgemental space for them to express their feelings without trying to fix the problem immediately. Just being present can make a huge difference.

**"I UNDERSTAND
THIS IS DIFFICULT
FOR YOU"**



Help them track symptoms:

Offer to help them keep a journal of their symptoms. Tracking patterns may help in understanding when the luteal phase (and PMDD symptoms) are likely to hit hardest. There are also apps that can assist in tracking menstrual cycles and PMDD symptoms.



Be mindful of timing:

If there are important discussions or decisions to be made, consider when they are in the cycle. PMDD often impacts clarity and emotional regulation during the luteal phase, so it may be helpful to hold off on intense conversations until they are in a more balanced phase.

During the luteal phase, even everyday tasks can become overwhelming. Offer to help with things like household chores, errands, or meal prep when they're feeling low. Just lightening their load can make a huge difference and help them avoid burnout.

Support their treatment choices:

Whether they're exploring medication like SSRIs, hormonal treatments, or therapy, encourage them to seek the treatment that feels right to them. Offer to go with them to appointments if they need support or simply respect their autonomy in managing their health.

Encourage professional help when needed:

If they're struggling, encourage them to speak with a healthcare provider, therapist, or psychiatrist experienced in PMDD. Professional support can be key in managing symptoms.

Check in, but don't hover:

Instead of frequently asking how they feel, observe and offer support based on their behaviour. Regularly checking in shows you care, but giving them the freedom to have "down time" allows them to recharge. Simple gestures like hugs and verbal affirmations can provide great comfort.



Look after yourself too:

Supporting someone with PMDD can be emotionally challenging.

Make sure to set boundaries for your own mental health, and practice self care.

You'll be able to offer better support if you are also looking after yourself.

Remember, PMDD is not an excuse to treat people badly. If you are on the receiving end of hurtful behaviour, do not blame yourself or accept this as the norm, you deserve to be treated well too.

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