

Eating Disorders in adults: What families & carers can do

- Be part of the treatment team
- Strongly support full nutrition & normalised eating. You may need to provide meal support & food purchasing or preparation until the person with the eating disorder is able to do so independently
- Offer emotional support & distraction during the suffering of eating disorder recovery
- Provide a safe environment for recovery in their home e.g. remove exercise equipment, encourage family meals
- Consider giving up activities & habits that conflict with a loved one's recovery e.g. dieting
- Collaborate with the person, not the eating disorder
- Consider putting boundaries on eating disorder & compensatory behaviors in home
- Encourage patients signing waivers for communication with treatment providers to support communication between the treating team
- Consider quitting or cutting back on other obligations to concentrate on supporting loved one
- Model emotional regulation - remain calm
- Offer financial assistance while a loved one is out of work, however consider refusing to financially support a loved one who is not in effective treatment
- Become educated in eating disorders reading widely in professional/lay literature & form educated opinions on treatment. Refuse to support ineffective treatment
- Family members/parents can support each other emotionally
- Put aside conflicts with spouse or other family members to present a common voice to the patient
- Consider & attend to siblings & extended family affected by the illness
- Take care of yourself. Seek treatment if you are experiencing anxiety/depression, are ill or have eating disordered behaviours
- Seek peer support online or in person
- Educate extended relatives and community about the current science in eating disorders