



CEED

THE VICTORIAN
CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
IN EATING DISORDERS

Carer Resource Guide

Caring for a Young Person with an Eating
Disorder



Caring for Young Person with an Eating Disorder

Caring for a young person with an eating disorder can feel like a scary and overwhelming experience. You may be completely new to the world of eating disorders and perhaps struggling to make your way through the myriad of different websites and books to find the support you need. This resource will provide you with some basic resources to get started and to learn more about your important role as a support person.

The words 'carer' and 'support' are used interchangeably in this document to refer to anyone who provides unpaid care or support to someone in their life who is experiencing mental-ill health. This can include people under the age of 18 years and people who may not live with the person they are supporting. You may be a friend, partner, family member, or other support person providing emotional or practical support at this time.

Supports can be key advocates in assisting their loved one to engage in treatment, remain in treatment and support recovery behaviours. We recognise that it is very difficult to recover without support and thank you for persisting in helping your loved one. We hope to answer some of your most common questions here:

What is my role in supporting my loved one?

Learn as much as you can about eating disorders

Having a good understanding of eating disorders may help you to be better able to support your loved one.

Remember who your loved one is outside of their eating disorder

Your loved one is not their illness even though it may affect their sense of identity. Remember that they are still the same person they have always been. Separating the person from the illness can be helpful for you and your loved one. Your loved one is more than their eating disorder.

Be patient – progress/recovery is hard

Your loved one is probably experiencing a lot of intense emotions, sometimes all in one day and sometimes it can feel like progress is impossible. Recovery can be complicated and can sometimes feel like one step forward and two steps back. We encourage you to hold onto hope for your loved one's recovery.

Seek support for yourself

Any major illness affects the whole family and there will be days where it is tough for you. It's okay to seek your own professional support to help you get through this. The better you care for yourself, the more you will be able to help your loved one.

- Eating disorder organisations and support groups such as Eating Disorders Victoria and Eating Disorders Families Australia can help you with access to resources, strategies and support groups
- Your public mental health service may also have a carer lived-experience worker who can provide peer support.

Where can I find general information about eating disorders?

The following Australian organisations have comprehensive information about eating disorders:

- o Eating Disorders Victoria: Eating Disorders A-Z
- o National Eating Disorders Collaboration: Eating Disorders Explained
- o Centre for Clinical Interventions: Information Sheets – Disordered Eating

Where can I learn eating disorder carer skills?

[InsideOut Institute](#) offer a free online skills-building program for carers.

[F.E.A.S.T.](#) have a range of education options for carers including:

- o F.E.A.S.T 30 Days (designed to educate and empower parents and carers of people with eating disorders).
- o Caregiver Skills Toolkit (guidance and skills through a series of short videos).

[Eating Disorders Queensland](#) offer 'The Shared Table', an online meal support training program for carers

[Collaborative Care Skills Workshops \(CCSW\)](#) offer skills-training in communication techniques and practical carer skills, to help reduce carer burden and carer distress. Organisations that offer CCSW include Eating Disorders Victoria and Butterfly. It may also be offered by your own public health service.

[Eva Musby](#): 'expert by experience' carer support, offering free resources, videos, tip sheets and online workshops to carers.

Where can I access financial support?

Speak to your loved one's treatment team. They will be able to advise you about your eligibility for financial support, including Centrelink carer payments, the Carer Support Fund (managed by Tandem) and the Queens Fund.

- o [Carer Gateway](#) is an Australian Government program providing free services and support for carers. You may be eligible to access a tailored support package.
- o [The Hub at Eating Disorders Victoria](#) may be able to direct you towards appropriate financial support resources
- o [Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect](#) is a service that supports carers of people living with mental health challenges or psychological distress. They may be able to assist with access to funds to help with your immediate practical needs.

How do I find an eating disorder treatment clinician in my area?

[Eating Disorders Victoria](#) offer free sessions with the Telehealth Nurse where you can discuss treatment pathways and source treatment providers in your area. You can book sessions online via this link:

[ANZAED \(Australia and New Zealand Academy for Eating Disorders\)](#) have an online search engine where you can look for an experienced eating disorder clinician (includes psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, mental health nurses, nurse practitioners, psychiatrists and GPs) in your area:

I am concerned about the immediate safety of my loved one

Emergency 000: **000 or 112**

Emergency, Police and Ambulance (24 hours)

If someone has tried to harm themselves or someone else, or you think they are about to, call triple zero (000) (or 112 from any mobile phone) immediately or go with them to an emergency department.

Psychiatric Triage: **1300 874 243**

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Priority Primary Care Centres:

Priority Primary Care Centres (PPCCs) provide GP-led care to people who need urgent care, but not an emergency response. Search online for your nearest PPCC.

Your usual GP

Your usual GP may be able to assist in putting together a crisis plan to help manage the day-to-day impact of the illness. They may also refer you to other services.

Where can I access free counselling support for myself?

[Eating Disorders Victoria](#) offer a free Telehealth phone and online counselling service, for carers supporting a person with an eating disorder. You can access up to five counselling sessions.

[Carer Gateway](#) offer free counselling to carers, either in-person one-on-one counselling, in-person group counselling, or phone counselling.

[Eating Disorders Families Australia](#) offer a free counselling service for eating disorder carers. There is no cap on session numbers and no referrals required.

Eating Disorders Books for Carers of Young People

[When Your Teen Has an Eating Disorder: Practical Strategies to Help Your Teen Recover from Anorexia, Bulimia, and Binge Eating](#)

Lauren Muhlheim

[Survive FBT: Skills Manual for Parents Undertaking Family Based Treatment \(FBT\) for Child and Adolescent Anorexia Nervosa](#)

Maria Ganci

[How to Nourish Your Child Through an Eating Disorder: A Simple, Plate-by-Plate Approach® to Rebuilding a Healthy Relationship with Food](#)

Casey Crosbie

[Skills-based Caring for a Loved One with an Eating Disorder: The New Maudsley Method](#)

Janet Treasure, Grainne Smith, Anna Crane

Independent Mental Health Advocacy 1800 959 353

The Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA) is a free and confidential service that helps people who are receiving compulsory mental health treatment to know their rights and have a say in their care.