

EATING DISORDER TIPS

for Loved Ones

Take a deep breath. Remind yourself that both you and your loved one are going through an extraordinarily difficult time, and you will get through this together. Give yourself a heavy dose of compassion, and thank yourself for doing the work to learn as much as you can.

Learn as much as you can about your loved one's diagnosis. The information may seem overwhelming or even scary initially, but it will serve as fuel as you work to defeat this illness. The more you know, the more empowered you will feel through this battle.

Know that the eating disorder voice inside your loved one's mind is self-deprecating and cruel. Help to counter that harshness by reminding them of their goodness and your love for them. Even if they struggle to internalize it, they benefit from you expressing care and warmth.

Understand that while eating disorders involve problems with eating, they are also a manifestation of struggles inside. Fully addressing the eating disorder means both nourishing one's body fully and addressing the emotional challenges that drive the behaviors.

Engage in your own therapy process to keep you healthy and strong during the recovery journey. This process draws up so many difficult feelings and you deserve a space and tools to manage your own mental health through it.

Consider your own relationship to food and your body. If you've struggled with this in the past or are struggling now, this is an important time to work on healing those issues in order to support both yourself and your loved one.

Recognize that all of the thoughts and feelings you are having right now are valid and make sense. Avoid judging your own experience of this.

Recognize that supporting someone through an eating disorder is not a typical relationship. You are currently in a crisis, and your interactions and experiences right now will look different. Remember that you are doing this hard work so that you can have a strong relationship in the future.