

For friends and family of a person with an eating disorder

DO:

- Be patient -- eating disorders can be a long-term illness. You cannot expect overnight recovery even if the person is in therapy.
- Encourage the individual to seek professional help for his/her eating disorder.
- Be aware that low self-esteem is often an issue for those with eating disorders.
- Allow each household member to make his or her own food choices.
- Accept your limitations and seek outside help for yourself.
- Avoid power struggles over food
- Accept the other person's right to an independent life
- Hold the person responsible for behavior that affects others
- Encourage the person to get involved with non-food related activities.

DON'T:

- Be surprised if you are met with denial or hostility when you first raise concerns about the individual's eating behaviour
- Don't lay blame. This only reinforces the individual's feelings of failure.
- Eat or avoid foods solely to accommodate the individual's eating disorder.
- Dwell on food-related discussions.
- Make mealtimes a battleground
- Monitor someone else's behaviour for them
- Try to act as a therapist
- Comment on the individual's weight and/or appearance