

A Message From Parents

If you are reading this brochure, you likely have someone who you love very much struggling with an Eating Disorder. Please do not feel alone; we have faced the same thing. We were feeling scared, confused, frightened and not sure where to turn or how to help your loved one. This message is to tell you there is hope.

Walking with a person who has an Eating Disorder is a journey of courage-it is not easy, but it can be done.

Our first suggestion is to find out all you can about this complex illness. Ask many questions of the health care team and encourage your child to keep all appointments.

Support from other families and from professionals was also key for many of us in surviving this illness.

Tips From Other Parents

- Present a united front when dealing with a loved one with an Eating Disorder.
- Seek help for yourself. Many of us have found professional help essential to our well-being.
- Pick your battles. Know when to take a stand and when to back off.
- Educate yourself as much as possible. The more you know, the more you can help.
- Be patient. Overcoming an Eating Disorder takes time.
- Let the person struggling with an Eating Disorder know that you love and support them.
- Do not let the Eating Disorder control the home. Continue to parent your child.

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PARENTS OF HOPE

**"Those who
have hope have
everything"**

Margaret Boyd

Parents of Hope



There are many key lessons we have learned from our families' journey with our

loved one struggling with an Eating Disorder. Love the child, hate the illness, but always love the child. If you are to help your child recover from the Eating Disorder it is essential to keep a relationship with your child. This is difficult to do at times when you know the solution seems so simple: just eat. This is where other parents can be so valuable to you. As much as you want to help - to "fix" - this illness, it is necessary to realize we cannot. We must love the child, and support their struggle, but it is their battle to fight.

It is often said that the world of an eating disordered person is like a distorted mirror. It is important that you learn not to step into this distorted world. This knowledge can help you not engage in irrational discussions with your child. It is useless to argue rationally with someone that has irrational thoughts.

Please remember that there is hope. Statistics can be scary but things can improve. Your child can recover from this illness. It is the motto of the Parents of Hope that there is help and there is hope for the young person, parents, and family.

The Parents of Hope

Becoming Involved

- Completion of the Bridge to Hope education group is required.
- Any parent welcomed
- Join at anytime

Benefits of the Group

- Mutual support from other parents.
- Safe environment to share experiences and concerns
- Opportunity to identify and discuss common issues
- On-going education
- Opportunity for advocacy

When and Where do we meet?

- Monthly meetings take place at the Centre for HOPE on Major's Path.
- 7:00pm—9:00pm

Resources

Anorexia Nervosa "A Guide to Recovery" - Lindsey Hall & Monika Ostroff

Dying to be Thin—Ira Sacker

Help Your Teenager Beat and Eating Disorder—James Lock & Daniel LeGrange

Help for Eating Disorders, A Parents Guide to Symptoms, Causes, and Treatments—Debra Katzman and Leora Pinhaus

National Eating Disorder Information Center—

www.nedic.ca



A Message From A Young Survivor

(This is an excerpt from a letter written by one of our daughters)

" ... It was a long and grueling process between starting recovery to writing this letter, I still have a ways to go. There are days I don't want to eat because I don't want to feel, but we all have those days. We just express them with different behaviours. Those are the days when I read this letter or open my journal and remember everything I have overcome and conquered. Every fear I have faced or tear I have cried; every time I eat what I like instead of what is "safe" and discover yet again it is ok—I can trust my body.

The good news is there is a way out of your eating disorder. It is dark and scary and you're only able to see one step in front of you the whole time ... When you have struggled and pondered and cried and yelled and screamed and wished you were something different, something more (which is ironic considering you are physically trying to make yourself less) you learn to embrace your flaws and acknowledge your attributes.

When you take back control, there is color everywhere again. You didn't even notice it was gone but you see it so clearly now ... "