

Tips from other families and carers

- Present a united front when supporting a loved one with an eating disorder.
- Seek help yourself. Many of us have found professional help essential to our wellbeing.
- 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 you love and support them.
- Do not let the eating disorder control your home. Continue to be the parent, partner, friend, sibling etc.

Group Facilitator

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Prerequisite

Completion of Bridge to Hope Education and Support Group



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Parents of Hope



Eating Disorder Foundation
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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 our loved one. This message is to tell you **there is hope.**

Walking with a person that 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 lots of questions of the health care team and encourage your loved one to keep all appointments.

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

What We Have Learned

There are many key lessons we have learned from our families' journey with our loved one struggling with an eating disorder. Love the person, hate the illness, but always love the person. If you are to help your loved one recover from the eating disorder it is essential to keep a relationship with them. This is difficult to do at times when you know the solution seems to simple: just eat. This is where other families and carers 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 person 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 loved one. 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 loved one can recover from this illness. It is the motto of the Parents of Hope that **there is hope for the loved one, family and carers.**

The Parents of Hope

A Message from a Young Survivor

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

"...it was a long and gruelling process between starting recovery to writing this letter, I still have a way 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 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 control, there is colour everywhere again. You didn't even notice it was gone but you see it so clearly now..."