

SIX TIPS FOR SUPPORT

Here are six simple ways you can support a loved one who is in eating disorder treatment.

Keep compliments focused on your child's abilities & traits



Instead of focusing on body size or shape, remind your child what you love about them, such as their ability to make others smile, their great work ethic, or their creativity. Show them you value them regardless of their size.

Use neutral language when talking about food



Instead of labeling food as "good/bad" or "healthy/unhealthy," focus on food as fuel for our bodies, the nourishment it provides, and the joy of different flavors and positive traditions or memories related to food.

Be patient

Eating disorders can be complicated and take time to heal from. Be patient with your child as progress is non-linear and can have ups and downs that look different for everyone. Show your child you are there for continued support throughout the process.



Ditch the numbers



Refrain from discussing weight, calories, BMI, nutrition label %'s or facts, or other numbers that are likely sensitive for your child.

Try to set an example



Even if you struggle with your own body image, keep comments about your own body neutral (i.e., "I'm glad my legs are strong to help me walk long distances" or "I nourish my body to have energy throughout the day").

It can help to model positive or neutral body image thoughts for your child or simply, to focus on other topics.

Check in regularly with your child's care team

Contact your child's dietitian and therapist regularly to be involved in your child's care. We're here to help all of you!



You can be a powerful asset and support system for your child's full recovery.

Be a good listener



Try to validate your child and get to know their concerns. Fully listen to them without trying to "fix" their problems or judge them negatively. Listening to your child without judgement shows you care and helps them feel safe sharing with you.