



The Emily Program

For Male Support People

If you are the husband, partner, father, stepfather, brother or friend of someone with an eating disorder, you're right to be worried. You may or may not know a lot about eating disorders, but here's a very important fact: they can be fatal. Translation: your loved one's life is at risk right now.

It may be really difficult to be around your loved one's thoughts, behaviors, conversations, tensions, worry, and confusion about food and eating.

Shared meals are difficult because of your loved one's eating behavior or comments about food, eating, weight, or body image. She/he may seem to have lost control over how she/he eats. She/he may be saying and doing illogical or irrational things.

Her/his obsession about food, eating, weight, etc., may feel like they are dominating your life, too.

But there is hope and help:

- Other men and families have gone down this road before—and are here for you
- Recovery is possible
- You can be a key player in her recovery

Because eating disorders impact families and friends so profoundly, families and friends can have a profound role in helping someone with eating disorders to recover.

Some of us men don't fully grasp the influence of our love, concern, and involvement on our families and friends. But here at The Emily Program, we get it. We know how much your loved one needs your involvement in her/his recovery.

We also know it's difficult for many of us men to take the steps essential to helping our loved one recover from eating disorders—for example, rearrange our schedules and responsibilities, talk openly about our emotions and thoughts, monitor someone's eating disorder behavior, and work effectively to resolve family and/or friendship problems.

But, even though it's difficult, your loved one's recovery can depend on your involvement.

That means working with eating disorders professionals to be part of a healthy relational and family response to the eating disorder. It means participating in family therapy sessions (if recommended) and attending gatherings like Family & Friends Support Group, Multi-Family Group, and/or Anna Westin House Family Weekend.

If you live or are deployed far away, or if you travel a lot--your loved one still needs your involvement. Talk to her/his therapist, so we can use phones, internet and/or other tools to bring you into the recovery process.

We know you have the courage to show up and do what need to be done; we're here to support you.