

Supporting Your Loved One Through Recovery

The support of loved ones is key to the process of eating disorder recovery. But it can be hard to know just how to support someone affected by eating disorders. The following suggestions may help you keep perspective and provide needed support to your loved one.

5 Languages of Eating Disorder Support

Adapted from counselor and author Gary Chapman's five languages, here are five approaches to expressing support for a loved one in recovery.

Words of Affirmation

Verbally tell your loved one how much you care. Offer genuine compliments and messages of encouragement and hope.

Gifts

Give your loved one a tangible or experiential gift. The gesture need not be extravagant or expensive; the gift's value is in the thought and effort behind it.

Physical Touch

Offer expressions of physical connection.

Acts of Service

Help your loved one by performing a task. Go out of your way to do something for them that makes their life in recovery a bit easier.

Quality Time

Give your loved one your full attention and presence. Avoid distractions and interruptions, making your time together mindful and meaningful.



5 Tips for Supporting Your Loved One

1. Learn about eating disorders. Join us for one of our free ED101 groups. Books, podcasts, and web resources are also a great way to educate yourself about eating disorders. Resources are available on www.emilyprogram.com
2. Accept your limitations. You can't make your loved one want to get better.
3. Accept your loved one for who they are. Remember that they are an individual; they are not their eating disorder.
4. Avoid making comments about appearance. Compliment strengths that have nothing to do with appearance, eating, or food.
5. As much as possible, try to focus on the other things life—not just discussions of weight, eating, exercise, and food.



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