



Dos and Don'ts

For Family Members and Friends of Individuals with Eating Disorders

<p>DO Realize there is not a quick and easy solution.</p> <p>DO Talk to the person about your concerns, ask questions and listen.</p> <p>DO Express your feelings honestly with the person; they sense how you are feeling anyway.</p> <p>DO Let the person know the qualities and characteristics (other than physical) that you appreciate about him/her.</p> <p>DO Plan social activities that do not involve food.</p> <p>DO Empower the individual to make his/her own decisions and be accountable for these decisions.</p> <p>DO Allow the person to be in charge of his/her routines of daily life, realizing that by giving up control, you are setting the stage for the person to develop healthy self-control.</p> <p>DO Encourage the person to get a professional assessment from a practitioner experienced in treating eating disorders.</p> <p>DO Realize the person may be ambivalent about getting well, as well as take comfort and feel safe in the control and rituals of the disorder.</p> <p>DO Express that you care and are interested in seeing the person get well.</p> <p>DO Inform yourself about eating disorders and the treatment options, attend support groups and read current literature.</p>	<p>DON'T Ever give up; this is a long-term illness and people recover everyday.</p> <p>DON'T Ignore the problem, hoping it will away; talk about it.</p> <p>DON'T Panic. Seek the support you need.</p> <p>DON'T Assume there isn't a problem if the individual doesn't show physical symptoms.</p> <p>DON'T Force the person to eat or tell him/her to "just eat."</p> <p>DON'T Make your love a condition of the individual's appearance, health, weight, achievements or any other attribute.</p> <p>DON'T Comment positively or negatively on an individual's appearance or weight.</p> <p>DON'T Feel you must walk on "eggshells" so the person with the eating disorder won't be upset.</p> <p>DON'T Let the eating disorder disrupt family routines.</p> <p>DON'T Be manipulative. Be direct with your feelings and experiences.</p> <p>DON'T Try to control the person's behavior as this can intensify the problem.</p> <p>DON'T Impose rules, except those that are necessary for the individual's or family's safety and wellbeing. Avoid power struggles.</p> <p>DON'T Blame yourself, feel guilty or dwell on the causes of the individual's eating disorder.</p> <p>DON'T Tell the anorexic who has gained weight that he/she looks better.</p> <p>DON'T Expect yourself to be the perfect parent, family member or friend.</p>
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