

EATING DISORDERS CARER RESOURCE

1. Make meal times as regular and as calm as possible.
2. After meals might be a distressing time for the person you care about, discuss distracting or soothing activities that may be helpful after meals such as board games, movies, craft activities, colouring in or a gentle walk together.
3. No food, weight or exercise talk at the dinner table, talk about the weather/movies/craft projects...
4. Don't cater to the eating disorder, dinner meals should be 'normal' family options and include carbohydrate (grains or starchy foods), protein (meat or alternative proteins) and vegetables or salad. Aim for each third of the plate to contain each of these in equal amount (one cup of each is a general guide).
5. Avoid mindless or distracted eating in front of the TV.
6. If your person you care about engages in purging/vomiting you may consider discussing if it may be helpful to limit their bathroom use until 30-60 minutes after meals.
7. At the start of recovery intensive support with meal preparation and food shopping may be helpful – less things for the eating disorder to get caught up in.
8. Relapse or flare-ups of the eating disorder behaviours can happen from time to time during the recovery process, this is not a failure, it's an opportunity to learn something and continue to build resilience. Avoid supporting the 'all or nothing' approach and help your loved one get back on track.
9. Ask the person you care about if they would be comfortable for you to attend a nutrition or psychology session with them to get the information you need about meal plans, triggers and coping strategies.
10. Consider engaging a psychologist or counsellor for yourself during this time to help manage your own mental health. Join a support group for carers to ask questions of others in the same situation (run regularly by the Butterfly Foundation).

Remember everyone is different, the best option is to have a conversation and ask the person you care about as to what they feel is the best way to support them.

You might start with: 'how can I best support you at meal times?'
'how can I help after meals or when you are distressed?'

A person's support needs may change through recovery so check-in now and then or review what you are currently doing to ensure its working for everyone.