



## Family and friends offer essential support in the fight against eating disorders.

If you are seeking information on eating disorders, chances are you have a loved one who is showing signs of a problem or is currently struggling with the illness. We're glad you are reaching out to learn more. Parents, siblings and close friends play a significant role in guiding and supporting others. In many cases, individuals with eating disorders cannot recognize a need for help in themselves, and it takes a strong, caring individual to reach out.

Most importantly, you need to know that there is hope. Recovery can be difficult – but it is possible. The information in this section is specific to family members and friends. But you'll find a host of terms and topics under [general information](#). We recommend you start there and then augment your learnings with the subjects covered here.

[Review terms and topics under General Information.](#)

[Ask an Expert a question and review answers to commonly asked questions.](#)

[Find tons of helpful information in the NEDA Parent Toolkit.](#)

[Read stories of hope.](#)

### Information for family and friends:

#### **Anorexia, Bulimia, & Binge Eating Disorder: What is an Eating Disorder?**

Eating disorders such as anorexia, bulimia, and binge eating disorder include extreme emotions, attitudes, and behaviors surrounding weight and food issues.

#### **What Should I Say? Tips for Talking to a Friend Who May Be Struggling with an Eating Disorder**

If you are worried about your friend's eating behaviors or attitudes, it is important to express your concerns in a loving and supportive way. It is also necessary to discuss your worries early on, rather than waiting until your friend has endured many of the damaging physical and emotional effects of eating disorders.

#### **What Can You Do to Help Prevent Eating Disorders?**

Be a model of healthy self-esteem and body image. Recognize that others pay attention and learn from the way you talk about yourself and your body. Choose to talk about yourself with respect and appreciation.

#### **How to Help a Friend with Eating and Body Image Issues**

If you are reading this handout, chances are you are concerned about the eating habits, weight, or body image of someone you care about. We understand that this can be a very difficult and scary time for you. Let us assure you that you are doing a great thing by looking for more information.