

COURAGE TO NOURISH

7 Dos for Supporting your Loved One

One of the most common questions we hear from the loved ones of our clients is "What should I say (or not say) to my [daughter, son, wife, husband, cousin, sibling, friend...etc]?" We created this handout with the 7 "DOs" of supporting someone who is struggling with an eating disorder.

AT THE DINNER TABLE- TALK ABOUT NON-FOOD RELATED TOPICS

Instead of:

" This has X calories"; " I can't eat that because I'm on X diet"; " WOW, this is so unhealthy"

Do this:

"What was the best part of your day?"
"Do you want to hear about this fun thing I'm doing?"
Discuss positive family memories



VALIDATE YOUR LOVED ONE'S NEGATIVE EMOTION

Instead of:

I know this is hard bu you have to do it.

Do this:

I could imagine this is hard because
1)you haven't eaten X food in a while
2) you're worried about how it's going to make you feel
3) you've had a tough day. Let's take the first bite together



ASK YOUR LOVED ONE HOW YOU CAN HELP

Instead of:

Assuming they do not want your help or that you won't be of any help.

Do this:

Ask your loved one " what can I do to help?"
Sometimes the answer may be nothing or " I don't need your help." You can simple respond and let your loved one know you're there if they need you.

REMIND YOURSELF, YOU ARE NOT TO BLAME. YOU MAY NOT ALWAYS "SAY THE RIGHT THINGS" AND THAT'S OKAY

Instead of:

Withdrawing from your loved one

Do this:

You can tell your loved one something like this. " I love you and I want to help you in any way I can. I know I won't always say the right thing. I am learning. Can you help point me in the right direction?"

GET SUPPORT FOR YOURSELF

Instead of:

Sacrificing your own health and self care

Do this:

1) Plan a dinner out, either alone of with a friend
2) Find time for meditation or yoga
3) Consider reaching out to a therapist and/or dietitian for you to work with one-on-on.



EAT SIMILAR FOODS TO YOUR LOVED ONE

Instead of:

Eating vastly different foods than your loved one or cooking a separate meal for yourself.

Do this:

Keep in mind your loved one is working on challenging food rules and getting comfortable with eating certain food again. It would mean the world to your loved one if you and the family ate similar food as them when together at mealtime.

