

# ***How to Help a Friend***

If you're worried about a friend's relationship with food and want to learn how to best support them, here are some dos and don'ts:

## **Do:**

- Allow your friend time and space to talk about what's happening
- Let them know you're here to listen and not criticize
- Find examples about what you're worried about: for example, you've noticed your friend hasn't been joining you for social events
- Explain to your friend how much you care about them
- Communicate your concerns
- Use "I statements" I am worried about you because...
- Know the resources you have available. The NEDA Website is a good place to start. (<https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/>)
- Suggest to support them in telling a family member or reach out to a treatment team

## **Don't:**

- Comment on weight changes or their body
- Comment on food or try to force them to eat/not eat something
- Make comments about your own body or your own eating habits
- Swear secrecy
- Place blame, or offer simple solutions ("Just eat!" "Just don't eat!" "You're hurting me by doing this")
- Gossip to others what they share to you in confidence
- Let your fear of upsetting them get in the way of you getting them the help they need

## **Try this on your own!**

- Journal 3 bullet points about why you care about your friend
- Journal 3 bullet about why you're worried about your friend
- List 3 resources you have found and can share with your friend