



## 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.

The “DO”	Instead of...	Do this...
<b>At the dinner table, talk about non-food related topics</b>	<p>“This has X calories”</p> <p>“I can’t eat that because I’m on X diet”</p> <p>“Wow, this is so unhealthy”</p>	<p>“What was the best part of your day?”</p> <p>“Do you want to hear about this fun thing I’m doing?”</p> <p>Discuss positive family memories</p>
<b>Validate your loved one’s negative emotion surrounding food and body while providing reasons why it must be hard</b>	I know this is hard but you have to do it.	<p><b>Because x 3</b></p> <p>I know this is hard because... 1) you haven’t eaten X food in awhile 2) and because you’re worried about how it’s going to make you feel 3) and because you’ve had a tough day. Let’s take the first bite together.</p>
<b>Ask your loved one how you can help</b>	Assuming they do not want your help or that you won’t be of any help.	<p><b>Ask your loved one “What can I do to help?”</b></p> <p>Please note: sometimes the answer may be nothing or “I don’t need your help.” You can simply respond and let your loved one know you’re there if they need you.</p>
<b>Remind yourself, you are not to blame. You may not always “say the right things” and that’s okay.</b>	Withdrawing from your loved one	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?”



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<p><b>Eat similar foods to your loved one</b></p>	<p>Eating vastly different foods than your loved one or cooking a separate meal for yourself</p>	<p>Keep in mind your loved one is working on challenging food rules and getting comfortable with eating certain foods again. It would mean the world to your loved one if you and the family ate similar foods as them when together at mealtime</p>
<p><b>Get support for yourself</b></p>	<p>Sacrificing your own health and self care</p>	<p><b>Ideas for self care:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Plan a dinner out, either alone or with a friend</li> <li>● Find time for meditation or yoga</li> <li>● Consider reaching out to a therapist and/or dietitian for you to work with one-on-one</li> </ul>

Jot down some go-to phrases you may be able to use. Practice saying them in different ways in the mirror:

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Jot down some ideas for self care:

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