Eating Disorders: Seven tips for Families and Carers

1. Learn as much as you can
The more you can learn about eating disorders and how to treat them the better you will be able to understand what is happening to the person you are caring for.

2. Remember who the person is
The person you care for is not their illness even though it may affect their sense of identity. Help them to realise there is more to them than their eating disorder.

3. Communicate openly
Communicate regularly with the person you are caring for and avoid showing judgment and negativity. Encourage them to express how they are feeling.

4. Stay positive
Draw attention to the positive attributes of the person you are looking after. Talk about things they enjoy and are good at and talk about and plan for the future.

5. Make time for yourself
Caring for a person with an eating disorder is hard. Prioritise regular time for yourself to restore your energy and help you become better equipped to be there for the person you care for.

6. Be patient
Recovery takes time, patience and perseverance. Remember there is no ‘quick fix’ for an eating disorder.

7. Seek support
Seeking professional support can reduce the amount of stress you carry and improve your capacity to care for someone with an eating disorder. You don’t need to do it alone.

The National Eating Disorders Collaboration (NEDC) is an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Health.

nedc.com.au/families-and-carers