

Supporting friends who have eating disorders.

- Actively listening to them when they communicate with you about their thoughts and feelings is important. It can be very challenging for someone who has an eating disorder to share how they feel with others, so if they do choose to speak to you about it, then it is important that you listen and don't shut them down. How they are thinking and feeling may be difficult for you to understand but it is very real for them. The best thing you can do is just listen and offer support and advice when applicable.
- Your friend having an eating disorder does not mean that they are no longer the person they were before. The eating disorder is not the person's identity. Treating them as you always have done as best as possible, can be beneficial for them as it can help prevent the eating disorder consuming their whole personality. It can also help make them feel supported and cared for and help them realise that they are loved for who they are.
- Talking about non-E.D topics can be helpful as it can help prevent unhelpful conversations arising, also it can give your friend the opportunity to talk and think about other things in life, and provide a pleasant distraction from the thoughts inside their head.
- Including your friend in social activities when possible is a good way of making sure that they still feel included and valued by you. Your friend may not want to attend particular social outings due to certain challenges they may be facing, but it will still mean a lot to them to be invited and given the opportunity to join in.