

My Support Network

You do not have to manage everything alone. Eating-disorder recovery can involve emotional, practical, nutritional and medical needs, and different people may be able to support different parts of that journey.

Building support around you

A support network does not have to be large. One safe person who understands how to respond can make a meaningful difference. Your network may include family, friends, a partner, therapist, dietitian, GP, eating-disorder team, peer support, workplace or education support and community services.

Good support should not remove your voice. It should help you feel safer, understood and more able to take part in decisions about your recovery.

People I feel emotionally safe with

Who can I be honest with when I am struggling?

Someone I can tell when eating feels difficult

Who can listen without judging, arguing or trying to fix everything?

Professional support available to me

GP, therapist, dietitian, eating-disorder service or other professionals.

Helping People Understand My Needs

People may care deeply and still be unsure what to do. Being specific can make support easier for everyone. What helps one person with an eating disorder may feel unhelpful or pressuring to another.

What I want people to understand about my needs

Include emotional, communication, sensory, food and mealtime needs.

What helps me feel supported

Listening, calm company, practical help, predictability, distraction, reassurance or space.

What feels unhelpful or pressuring

Comments about food, weight or appearance; monitoring; arguments; comparisons; rushing or minimising.

How I prefer people to talk with me about eating

When, where and what tone or language makes conversation safer?

What helps before, during or after meals

Be as practical and specific as possible.

What I need when I become overwhelmed

Words, quiet, company, grounding, sensory changes, time or another form of support.

Making It Easier to Reach Out

Asking for help can feel difficult, especially when the eating disorder is telling you that you should cope alone, that you are a burden or that things are 'not bad enough'. Preparing words in advance can reduce the pressure of having to explain everything in the moment.

A sentence I could use to ask for help

For example: 'I'm finding eating harder today and I don't want to manage it on my own.'

A message I could send if speaking feels difficult

Write a short text, email or note you could reuse.

One person or service I could reach out to is...

Add contact details somewhere easy to find.

What I would like them to do

Listen, sit with me, help with a meal, contact someone, distract me or help me make a plan.

What I do NOT want them to do

This can be as important as saying what helps.

If the first person is unavailable, my next option is...

Create a second route to support.

Different People, Different Roles

Eating disorders can affect both mental and physical health, so your support may need more than one kind of expertise. A therapist may help with emotional and behavioural patterns, a dietitian with nutritional rehabilitation, and a GP or medical team with physical monitoring and treatment decisions.

My GP / medical contact

Who, how to contact them, and what I want them to know.

My eating-disorder / mental-health professional

Name, role, contact route and current plan.

My dietetic / nutrition support

What guidance am I following and who should I contact with concerns?

Practical support that could reduce pressure

Shopping, cooking, transport, childcare, appointments, work or study adjustments.

Support around sensory needs

Environment, noise, smells, textures, lighting, seating or communication.

What would tell me I need more professional support?

Record changes you and your network should take seriously.

Who can help me take that next step?

You do not have to organise everything alone.

Keeping My Support Network Connected

Support needs can change. Revisit this page as recovery develops, after a difficult period or whenever somebody new becomes part of your care.

Who is currently in my support network?

Who would I like to add or reconnect with?

What is one thing I can tell my support network this week?

What would make accepting help feel easier?

Books & useful support

Skills-based Caring for a Loved One with an Eating Disorder - Janet Treasure, Anna Smith & Anna Crane

8 Keys to Recovery from an Eating Disorder - Carolyn Costin & Gwen Schubert Grabb

Sick Enough - Jennifer L. Gaudiani

Beat and the **NHS** provide UK eating-disorder information, helplines and routes to professional support.

A message from me

Needing support does not mean you are doing recovery badly. Sometimes allowing another person to sit beside you, listen, help with a practical task or understand what is happening is part of recovery itself. You are allowed to tell people what helps and what does not. Build your network around safety, respect and understanding, and remember that you do not have to carry every difficult moment alone.

Space to Breathe Therapy
Support • Understand • Empower