

# MEALTIME STRATEGIES



This handout is for the parents of a child who has an eating disorder.

## What you can say: Because X3

Your job is not to be your child's cheerleader. When you notice your child is needing more support:

**Example:** "I know that eating this piece of pizza is hard for you because it has been a long time since you have had pizza, because you're eating a lot more than you have been recently, and because this is not a food that you have been allowing yourself to have. Ok, i'm going to have you pick up the crust."

## Tips for the Table

Body language goes a long way.

Move your chair closer a little at a time.

Have one parent sit on each side of your child.

Eat at a slower pace so that you can do "group bites" if necessary.

Model what normal eating is.

Keep your own food problems away from the table.

## Do's

Listen to your loved one with sensitivity and understanding; Be patient. Recovery takes time. There are no "quick fixes."

Learn to set limits or say "no" in a caring and reasonable, but firm and consistent manner.

Express genuine concern and willingness to listen without judgement. Avoid power struggles.

Set a good example by demonstrating a normal relationship with food and not speaking negatively about your own body.

## Don'ts

Talk about weight or appearance or call foods "good", "bad" or "unhealthy."

Blame, judge, or place guilt. Focus on the "here and now."

Put a timetable on recovery. Everyone is different.

Try to change the person's attitudes about eating. Leave this work to the treatment team.