

Family Focus: While Your Loved One Is In Treatment

- **DO NOT BLAME YOURSELF.** You are not the cause of this illness, but you can be crucial in your loved one's recovery.
- Take care of yourself while your loved one is in treatment. Take long walks, journal, exercise and practice healthy eating habits. Reach out to your friends, family, church and community for support. This is the time for you to gather your own personal strength and energy.
- It is important for your loved one to see positive examples of healthy eating and exercise. Provide these examples. Do not use diets; they are often unsuccessful and contribute greatly to the constant thoughts of weight, food, calories, and appearance that plague an eating -disordered person.
- Be understanding and supportive if your loved one becomes resistant to the Program. This is a common reaction among eating - disordered individuals. Consider this text from: *The Parent's Guide to Childhood Eating Disorders*:

“When your child resists help, she is not deliberately being difficult; it is her fears that are causing her to act this way. The eating disorder has served as a coping mechanism, and you are threatening to take it away, a frightening prospect.”

- Ask your loved one what you can do to help in his or her recovery. Make a commitment to assist, but use good judgment. If you are uncertain in your decision, consult with a Program Therapist . . . they are here to help.
- Attend family therapy weekly while your loved one is in the Program.
- Develop healthy communication skills with ALL family members. Work towards creating a family dynamic where all members can feel that they have a choice that is heard . . . this is vitally important for the eating - disordered person. Learn techniques such as Non - Violent Communication and speaker/listener dialogue.
- Parents, spend some individual time with the patient's siblings. Talk with them about not teasing or being authoritative with the person in the Program.
- Stay focused on the bigger picture. Do not lose sight of what you are trying to accomplish. Remember that you are fighting the Eating Disorder, not your loved one!
YOU CAN GET THROUGH THIS!

Nova Luna Center

Eating Disorder Programs

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