



Questions parents may want to ask treatment providers privately



Appropriate support from parents and family is crucial to the treatment process and recovery. Below are some questions you can ask the treatment provider (at an eating disorder facility or private practice) to assist you in providing the best support possible for your loved one.

Remember you may need to be proactive to help ensure the communication process flows smoothly. And don't forget to find support for yourself! As a parent, family member, or friend it's easy to overlook the self-care you need as you focus on your loved one's recovery. National Eating Disorders Association's (NEDA's) treatment referral resource on the website lists family support groups, though you can ask the treatment provider helping your loved one to make a recommendation.

1. How can I best support my child/family member during treatment?*
2. What is my role?
3. How often can I discuss progress with you?
4. What should be done if my child/family member does not want to participate in treatment?
5. Can my child/family member be admitted to a facility against her/his will? If so, under what circumstances?
6. How should I prepare for our family member's return home?
7. What books, websites, or other resources do you recommend?
8. How can I tell if a relapse is occurring? What should we do?
9. If my family member receives outpatient treatment, how will you decide if more intensive treatment is needed?
10. If I have concerns about how it's going, who should I call?
11. What limits should be placed on exercise? What distinguishes compulsive from healthy exercise?
12. Are there any special first-aid items such as Gatorade® or Pedialyte® that I should keep on hand to help with bulimia-related emergencies?
13. How can I encourage "safe" food choices?
14. What if my family member shuts me out of talking about things?
15. Will my family member be in group treatment with people of similar age/sex? What kind of food-related supervision should I provide?
16. If my family member is fascinated by cooking, nutrition, or fitness, should those interests be encouraged?
17. Is it wise for a recovering patient to have a job related to food or exercise?
18. How should I involve my family member in meal planning, preparation, and food shopping?
19. How much weight gain should be expected in what time period with anorexia nervosa?
20. What support can I offer during a time of weight gain?
21. Is it my responsibility to monitor refeeding and/or weight? What procedures should I follow for weighing?
22. How do family members determine if purge behavior is occurring in the home setting?
23. What action should I take if we notice this behavior?
24. If I become anxious or notice problems, who should I call?
25. My family member doesn't want anyone to know about the illness. I do because it would help me to share about the illness with select, carefully chosen, discrete people in our lives. They could be supportive, but I'm afraid that my family member might see them as spies. What should I do?

*If the patient is age 18, and often even younger, parents will need written permission from the patient to discuss his/her situation with a healthcare provider (professional or facility). See **Confidentiality issues**.

KEY SOURCES:

National Eating Disorders Association
 ECRI Institute www.bulimiaguide.org
 ECRI Institute interviews with parents