



(902) 443-9944 phone

(902) 443-5680 fax

www.edag.ca

info@edag.ca

65 Ochterloney St., 2nd floor, Dartmouth, NS B2Y 1C3

WHEN YOU ARE APPROACHED BY SOMEONE WITH AN EATING DISORDER

- Avoid anticipating someone's needs, ask them instead and don't offer unsolicited advice.
- Learn how to listen - avoid playing into an individual's self-deprecation & "set up." For example - they say: "I am so fat!" You say: "No, you're not." Learn to simply validate - paraphrase what they are saying, try: "You aren't feeling comfortable about your body today?" This may illicit a response & possibly prompt a discussion on the topic.
- Avoid trying to fix the situation
- Avoid the language of "should/should not." Instead, try "You might like to..."
- Avoid the "Me Too Syndrome" which takes the focus off the person talking & places it on you (not a great way to validate). Remember this is not about you.
- Do not play therapist (unless, of course, you are one). Know your limitations & how/where to get help.
- Have information & contact numbers & books available to give out.
- Be careful & sensitive when discussing the topic - accept any information & discussion as a gift & as a step to wellness.
- Always let the person know that telling somebody is the first & biggest step to working at changing this.
- Let them know that you are there to listen.
- Show your concern - this will communicate care & interest.
- Listen. Ask leading questions - avoid anything that will initiate a defensive response.
- Avoid focusing on weight - focus on moods, feelings, energy, etc.
- If necessary, work around the issue. Disclose your own experience if appropriate.
- Validate. Think of eating disorders & weight preoccupation as a coping mechanism which can often indicate a great deal of turmoil inside this person.
- Avoid knee-jerk reactions."
- When you are concerned, & a person has not come to you but you want to help, be specific about the things that you have noticed, e.g., the smell in the bathroom, the missing food, the portable scales, trips to the bathroom after meals, the weight loss/gain, continuous comments made. Let her/him know that these incidents concern you.
- Educate & inform. Explain the dangers & risks involved in dieting & eating disorders.

