

Here are some things you can do when talking to someone you're worried about:

- Think about what you want to say and make sure you feel informed. You can read about the [symptoms of eating disorders](#) or take a look at our booklet: "[Eating disorders: a guide for friends and family](#)".
- Choose a place where you both feel safe and won't be disturbed. If you're one of several people who have felt concerned, don't talk to the person together as they may feel you're ambushing them. Decide who they are most likely to open up to.
- Choose a time when neither of you feels angry or upset. Avoid any time just before or after meals.
- Have some information with you that you can refer to if you're able to. You could share it with them, or leave it with them to look at by themselves.
- Try not to centre the conversation around food and/or weight. While it may be necessary to bring this up to explain why you're worried, these may be things they're particularly sensitive about. At their roots, eating disorders are about what the person is feeling rather than how they're treating food.
- Mention things that have concerned you, but try to avoid listing too many things as they may feel like they have been "watched".
- Try not to back them into a corner or use language that could feel accusatory. "I wondered if you'd like to talk about how you're feeling" is a gentler approach than "You need to get help", for example.
- They may be angry and defensive. Try to avoid getting angry in response, and don't be disheartened or put off. Reassure them that you'll be there when they're ready, and that your concern is their wellbeing.
- Don't wait too long before approaching them again. It might feel even harder than the first conversation, especially if they didn't react well, but if you're still worried, keeping quiet about it won't help. Remember, eating disorders thrive on secrecy.
- If they acknowledge that they need help, encourage them to seek it as quickly as possible. Offer to go with them to the GP if they would find that helpful.
- If they tell you there's nothing wrong, even if they seem convincing, keep an eye on them and keep in mind that they may be ill even if they don't realise it. Denial that there's a problem is common – in the case of anorexia, it's considered a symptom of the illness. You were worried for a reason, so trust your judgement.
- If you need some support, visit our [support services page](#) for details on how to get in touch.