



Tips for School Friends...

If you have a school buddy who has disclosed that they have an eating disorder, here are some ideas about things you should or shouldn't do...

Do

- Read up on eating disorders so you understand what is going on for them
- Check in with how they are going and be available to talk to them if they want to
- Encourage them to seek professional help
- Find an adult you can talk to about what is going on (eg parent, school counselor)
- Remind them of their strengths and the things you like about them: they are more than their eating disorder
- Be open about your concerns in a private, one-one-one and neutral setting (ie not around food)
- Demonstrate healthy and normal eating, particularly in their presence
- Arrange social activities that don't involve food or exercise (eg going to the movies, shopping)
- Offer to help them to reduce their stress (eg school work, problem solving)
- Keep positive: recovery takes time

Don't

- Become the food police or force them to eat
- Engage in "fat talk" or "diet talk" as this is usually very triggering
- Get angry, frustrated or caught up in arguments about their behaviour
- Judge them for what they are doing or say they are doing it on purpose
- Keep secrets or agree to keep secrets about what they are doing
- Comment on what or how they eat
- Comment on their (or other peoples) appearances
- Talk about your own difficulties with eating
- Dwell on their weight gain or weight loss

Finally...

If you feel comfortable doing so, it is helpful to ask your friend directly what things you can do to help support them in their recovery. Wait until you have an appropriate time (one-on-one, in private, and when you are having a meaningful discussion) for this discussion. Write down any other ideas here ...

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