

# WHAT TO DO WHEN SOMEONE IS RECOVERING FROM AN EATING DISORDER

Many teachers, community leaders and families often ask Renfrew staff members, “What do you do when a fellow student, family member or peer<sup>1</sup> comes back after being treated for an eating disorder?”

We created this two-part educational piece to help answer that question. This handout is for teachers, community leaders, families, and for those who may come in contact with her once she returns home or goes back to school or work.

Eating disorders are complex mental illnesses and it is best to learn as much as possible about the disorder to help her adjust back to school/work and to help educate her peers.

When dealing with someone recovering from an eating disorder, it can be difficult to know what to say and do to help her in the recovery process. This is a challenge because of the stigma associated with eating disorders and mental illnesses. Many incorrectly assume that eating disorders are a choice, a weakness, or just a matter of vanity.

Individuals being discharged from our treatment programs at The Renfrew Center often say, “I just want to be treated normally.” Often peers and family members “walk on eggshells” when the individual returns home because they are uncertain what to say or do to be helpful. However, it does get easier over time. The handout, on the back of this page, has some tips that teachers, leaders, peers and families can utilize to help make this process more comfortable for every involved.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the flyer we refer to the individual in recovery as a “peer” or use the pronouns her and she. Renfrew recognizes that men also struggle with eating disorders. The flyer is not meant to exclude men or boys.



**For more information, please contact The Renfrew Center Foundation  
at 1-877-367-3383 or visit [www.renfrewcenter.com](http://www.renfrewcenter.com).**

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