



## Reaching Out to Someone Who May Have an Eating Disorder *Some Do's & Don'ts*

### **DO:**

- Learn about eating disorders so that you will know the signs when you see them.
- Recognize that eating disorders are potentially fatal diseases and treat them accordingly.
- Listen to your friend with understanding, respect and sensitivity.
- Tell the person that you are concerned, that you care and would like to help.
- Suggest that the person seek professional help from a physician and/or therapist.
- Be available when your friend needs someone.
- Talk about things other than food, weight, counting calories and exercise. Attempt to discuss feelings instead.
- Share your own struggles.

### **DON'T:**

- Don't take any action alone. Get help.
- Don't try to solve the problem for them. They need a qualified professional.
- Don't blame them for doing something wrong or tell them they are acting silly.
- Don't gossip about them.
- Don't focus on weight, the number of calories being consumed or particular eating habits.
- Don't make comments about a person's appearance. Concern about weight loss may be interpreted as a compliment and comments about weight gain may be seen as criticism.
- Don't be afraid to upset them; talk with them.
- Don't reject or ignore them; they need you.
- Don't get involved in a power struggle around eating or other symptoms.

**For more information about food, weight or body image issues,  
call The Renfrew Center at 1-800-RENFREW or visit [www.renfrewcenter.com](http://www.renfrewcenter.com).**