HEALTH PROFESSIONALS WHO HAVE HELPED US

The following comments are made about the health care professionals who have helped us and who we would recommend to others.

- Listen effectively and compassionately
- Demonstrate that we are not ‘wasting’ your time
- Approach us in a respectful, non-punitive and non-judgemental manner
- Be alert to our denial and/or manipulation without judging it
- Gently challenge our complacency and smugness
- Respect our confidentiality. Whenever we can elicit disrespect from health care professionals then we have proved that our lives are worthless.
- If our lives are in immediate danger and it is necessary to override our wishes, please speak with us first and give us clear reasons why this is so. Even if we are unable to provide consent, we still need to know what is happening to us and why.
- Professionals with different training and skills should be involved in our treatment (where possible). Psychologists, psychiatrists, nurses, psychotherapists, dietitians and family support workers can be useful.
- Give us information about the illness, treatment choices and support services – including costs of different forms of treatment and their availability.
- Read literature we produce - develop insight into the thinking of people with eating disorders and an awareness of the struggles of families coping with the illness.
- Do not infantilise us. Sometimes, through informing and supporting parents and carers, health professionals unwittingly disregard ‘the patient’.
- Do not assume you know what we are thinking - we will resent you and feel we have to develop more devious ways of hiding ourselves from the world.
- Do not assume you know what is best for families - share your thoughts and give us time to consider our response.
- Know when you are out of your depth. If you can’t help refer us to someone who can.

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1 Eating Disorders Foundation ‘Tips for GPs’