REACHING OUT TO SOMEONE WHO MAY HAVE AN EATING DISORDER

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.
• Stay calm; these things take time.

DON’T:

• 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.
• Don’t be afraid to upset them; talk to 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, please contact The Renfrew Center Foundation at 1-877-367-3383 or visit www.renfrewcenter.com.