

Worksheet 7.4.1: Alternative accommodating scenario – when Edi is extremely anxious and intolerant around food preparation and mealtimes

Creating a menu of options

Scenario

Emily, age 35, lives at home and has been suffering with an eating disorder for 15 years. Recently she has become intolerant to food preparation and consumption – the smell and sight of food – to the extent anyone doing this causes high anxiety and distress. The family now completely avoid cooking any foods with smells, with family meals taking place in a fragmented manner and in secret at times when Edi is outside the kitchen and dining room, and most family members leave the house to eat outside.

Task: Consider a menu of options to help the family to start to reclaim some of their family mealtimes.

Families often find they are being ruled by the demands, fears and high anxiety of Edi. The family has become used to treading on eggshells and avoiding conflict at all costs. Gradual exposure to more normal family life and interactions, on a pre-agreed basis and using baby steps while also acknowledging the challenges Edi is facing can help families to regain more normal family interactions around food.