

## **Worksheet 7.7: Considering the concept of reasonable risk**

The eating disorder affects the brain's capacity to learn, Edi can become very childlike and needy, and this partly explains why many carers get trapped in an overprotective caring role. Both Edi and the carer can become exceptionally risk-averse. If nothing changes, then nothing changes and families can easily become stuck.

Think of a scenario in which you have been risk-averse because of your fear that making any changes might make things worse.

Alternatively use this scenario:

Sam, age 18, has been discharged from the adolescent eating disorder service. He has been under their care for 18 months and has successfully completed his re-feeding programme and a course of CBT. His parents Julie and Robert have mixed views about Sam's desire to go to university to study Sport Science. He has always been very sporty and plans to work in some sort of sporting arena. On the one hand Julie and Robert want him to get on with his life, and on the other they are worried he will relapse. Sam states he is fed up of them treating him like a baby and thinks that they need to celebrate his recovery and let him get on with his life. All his friends are going to university and he doesn't want to be held back.

Useful questions when considering change:

1. What happens if nothing changes? (No risk taken.)
2. What is the worst thing that can happen if I make this change?
3. What is the most likely thing that will happen?

4. On balance am I prepared to take that (reasonable) risk?

Carers can role model so much by showing they are prepared to take reasonable risks:

- They believe Edi can take more responsibility.
- Everyone learns by taking risks, making mistakes and learning from those mistakes.
- Taking risks is a normal part of life.
- If nothing changes you can get stuck in a cycle in which nothing changes.
- Change is uncomfortable, and it can feel that things get worse before they get better.