

Worksheet 10.6: Talking about gaining weight

One of the biggest fears of Edi with anorexia and/or bulimia, is about gaining weight, yet gaining weight is often the primary objective at the early stages of recovery. Developing useful phrases to use over and over again to help calm Edi's fears can be really helpful.

The New Maudsley Model doesn't talk about 'gaining weight' as this can create all sorts of negative reactions in Edi. However, gaining weight is often a key and non-negotiable objective. There is a high level of sensitivity around this area. For example:

Carer: That dress looks lovely.

Edi: Are you saying that I look well, and bigger and I've put on weight?

Carer: It was not a comment about size at all.

Edi: But you do think I look bigger though, don't you, because I do, I can see it and everyone can.

Carer: I know this is a very distressing topic for you and it occupies a lot of space in your mind but I don't want to get into a discussion about weight. I love you and want to be here for you, now shall we try and do something else to help take your mind off the struggles?

Write down your own words or phrases that might be less triggering than 'gaining weight'.

Each family will have their own phrases that work best for their loved one. Words such as 'wellbeing', 'strength', 'health' and 'being' safe are useful. Carers can be creative in coming up with phrases that are less triggering for Edi and this is a really worthwhile exercise.