

2021 Eating Disorder Special Interest Caregiver Workshop Examples for Scripts

These scripts were developed for caregivers by caregivers. Remember – these are suggestions only – it's imperative that you personalize them in a way that suits your family / situation best.

Validation: I can understand/imagine you wouldn't want to eat right now because...

- you already feel like you've gained too much weight
- it might feel unbearable in your body
- this has been your way of managing (pain/stress) for so very long
- not eating helps you feel better
- considering adding additional food may feel overwhelming
- you want to make decisions about your body yourself
- eating is stressful for you
- your food rules tell you that you shouldn't eat certain things
- it's been so long since you've had these foods
- you have another change coming up and it feels too fast

Emotional Support sentences:

- you've got a lot of support when you come home
- I'm going to be with you every step of the way
- I've learned new ways to support you
- I'm going to deal with the meal situations better than I did before
- I believe in you
- I am here with you

Practical Support suggestions:

- after meals, I will help you deal with your emotions/stress more often
- we can have music on, play card games, whichever you prefer

Validation: I can understand why you wouldn't want to go to therapy because...

- it might feel like there's no way a stranger could possibly understand you
- it can feel like you have no voice or choice in the process
- you don't want to feel like if it doesn't work, that you'll somehow disappoint us
- it might be embarrassing or uncomfortable to have that kind of attention focused on you
- it might feel hard to trust that they actually care

Emotional Support sentences:

- I want you to know that it won't be forever
- I'm holding on to hope that it can help

-I'm here to help you to find ways to make it more meaningful.

Practical Support suggestions:

- let's go today and see how it goes.
- let's be sure to share your fears or any hopes with the therapist, so that we can make this work better for you
- I can even talk to him or her about your concerns on your behalf or come in with you for the first part

Validation: I could understand why you'd feel fat because...

- you've gained weight and it's hard to get used to
- you've been eating more than you are used to and your tummy hurts / is bloated
- you feel best when you're restricting
- your pants don't fit the same as they used to
- your body feels uncomfortable to be in right now

Emotional Support sentences:

- I see how hard this is for you and I'm here for you
- I'm not going anywhere and I'm always here when you have these feelings
- the feelings will pass – thankfully you won't feel like this forever
- your body is going to adjust in a good way; it's where it needs to be (if not underweight)

Practical Support suggestions:

- let's go snuggle on the couch / watch your favorite show / take the dog for a walk to get your mind off the feeling / discomfort
- let me get you a hot pack

Validation: I could understand why you'd want to eat in small bites because...

- it might feel like if you eat faster or take bigger bites, you will eat too much
- it might feel like if you go faster the anxiety will get so much bigger
- this is a rule the eating disorder has set out for you to get through the meal
- it helps you to numb the stress

Emotional Support sentences:

- I'm here to help coach you along
- I know you are working so hard right now
- I believe in you

Practical Support suggestions:

- let's take matching bites, same fork, same timing
- let me portion it on your fork to take the stress off for these first few bites
- why don't I put some music on or a YouTube video to help make it easier
- let's set the timer for 30 minutes and then do something fun to take your mind off the guilt

Validation: I could understand why you'd be so angry with me because (said with energy in response to an angry attack)...

- it probably feels like we're not listening to you or respecting your perspective (said with energy)
- you want things to be different now (said with energy)
- we haven't always been there for you in the ways you've needed, wanted and deserved (said with softness)

Emotional Support sentences:

- your anger is valid, and it's ok that you're mad
- I'm never going to stop trying to be there for you in better ways
- I'm here with you as long as you want or need

Practical Support suggestions:

- why don't we each take 10 minutes to cool down and try this conversation again
- though I need to set the limit around this, I can brainstorm some ways to make it feel less painful (if anger is in response to a limit)

For more script ideas, check out Adele's book of scripts available on Amazon:

Lafrance, A., & Miller, A. P. (2020). *What to Say to Kids when Nothing Seems to Work: A Practical Guide for Parents and Caregivers*. Routledge.