

Position Statement

The Covid-19 Effect On Families Facing Eating Disorders

March 22, 2020

In a time of global crisis, F.E.A.S.T. is concerned for the specific needs of families who are supporting those with eating disorders in their homes:

- Newly recognized or diagnosed patients about to begin treatment
- Patients mid-treatment who are currently unable to attend appointments or get medical treatment
- People with chronic eating disorders losing access to ongoing medical and psychological support

The challenges to families facing eating disorders are the same as for all families right now, but the global pandemic comes on top of life-threatening and often 24/7 caregiving for very ill family members:

- Lack of access to providers
- Symptoms and distress in the home
- Uncertainty around food sources
- Social isolation further isolating family members from support systems and connection
- A stressful time for family and society overall
- Lack of structure
- Competing needs of other family members
- Fear for the future

We have deep concern for families all over the world now taking responsibility for full time treatment and support for their family members. We are hearing widespread desperation and resignation from parents and caregivers that they cannot manage on their own and that they have no choice but to accept that the eating disorder will continue unchallenged until the time of social distancing is over.*

Now more than ever, [F.E.A.S.T. Principles](#) guide our advice to families during the Covid19 social isolation. Families at home are in fact in a position to do much of the work of treatment and to do so with the evidence behind them: families are strong allies of recovery and the home can be a powerful driver of treatment goals.

- **Recovery First:** even in a pandemic
- **Supervision:** parents can serve the same roles as clinic staff
- **Structure:** those with eating disorders benefit from structure and predictability and routines
- **Skills:** the F.E.A.S.T. community shares a wide variety of tools and strategies for caregivers to choose from
- **Connection:** isolation at home means connection with family and with the world virtually
- **Information is power:** parents and caregivers are empowered and supported by good information and making choices that work for one's individual family

F.E.A.S.T. is available to support parents find information and support through our live chat/email/phone support available from our website: www.FEAST-ed.org. Let us show you around and connect you today.***If you sense that your affected person is unsafe, or you feel unsafe, call emergency services and keep in touch with your clinical team. Having a plan can prevent emergencies and provide reassurance and confidence when challenging the symptoms.**

Connect with us online
www.feast-ed.org

RECOVERY FIRST

Yes, even in a pandemic.





FOOD IS STILL MEDICINE

ALL MEALS.
ALL SNACKS.
EVERY DAY.



SUPERVISION

Transitions are often very difficult.
Keep your supervision level high.



STRUCTURE

In difficult times, sufferers benefit from structure and predictability, especially around meals and snacks.



SKILLS

Learn, use, and practice the skills you need: **Distraction. Mindfulness. Radical Acceptance.**



CONNECTION

Strengthen connections with those near you. Reconnect or make new "virtual" connections with other parents online.

INFORMATION IS POWER

We are here. Because we've been there.
Reach out via live chat, email or phone:
www.feast-ed.org



F.E.A.S.T. = FAMILIES EMPOWERED AND SUPPORTING TREATMENT OF EATING DISORDERS