

# F.E.A.S.T.

Families Empowered & Supporting Treatment (for **eating disorders**)

## Parents and Carers

Online Peer Support

[www.aroundthedinnertable.org](http://www.aroundthedinnertable.org)



[facebook.com/groups/ATDTcarersupportgroup](https://facebook.com/groups/ATDTcarersupportgroup)

International, 24/7, peer-support for anyone caring for someone with an eating disorder.  
Shared experience, freely available, anytime, anyplace.

### **F.E.A.S.T. believes:**

- Eating disorders are biologically based and fully treatable
- Parents do not cause eating disorders, and patients do not choose them
- Parents and caregivers can be a powerful support for a loved one's recovery
- Patients should receive evidence-based treatment, when available.
- Families should be supported in seeking the most appropriate treatment in the least restrictive environment possible.
- Food is medicine: all treatment should include urgent and ongoing nutritional rehabilitation.
- When the family is supported, the patient is supported.
- Siblings and parents are affected by a family member's illness; their needs deserve full attention too.
- Parents have a unique capacity to help other parents with support, information, and the wisdom of experience.

F.E.A.S.T. is committed to a coalition-building model of advocacy work that requires mutual respect among caregivers, professionals, and patients.



[www.feast-ed.org](http://www.feast-ed.org)

The following is taken from a post on the Around The Dinner Table forum (previous page), giving a perspective on the fundamentals of refeeding vs "normal" parenting:

*"I believe it is also critically important to **re-frame the re-feeding process as a medical protocol**. Your daughter is very ill with a life-threatening disease, and just like a cancer patient, she needs a treatment plan that will deliver the right medicine in the right quantities to beat the disease.*

*In the case of ED **the medicine is food, and the quality and quantity of the medicine needs to be non-negotiable**. (high calorie, adequate fats and proteins are the prescription)*

*Just like a cancer patient, your daughter needs **a safe environment** for this treatment where nothing is more important than getting her well. This means structuring your life and her life in a way where eating is the first priority, and **not eating is not an option**.*

***Think of your home as an extension of a hospital** where your daughter will be fed regularly, watched carefully, kept safe from ED behaviors, and looked after in a calm, caring manner.*

**Re-feeding is not normal eating, and is not normal parenting.**

*In normal eating, food sustains the body and the brain. **In re-feeding, food heals the body and the brain** first through weight restoration, then catch-up growth, and finally re-balancing brain chemistry that will lead to new healthy thought patterns and behaviors.*

*Normal parenting involves helping to guide our children towards independence, while easing their pain along the way. **Parenting during re-feeding requires a more clinical approach** and an understanding that your daughter will suffer physically and mentally as her body and brain adjust to eating again.*

*It requires **taking over all the decisions about food**, rather than guiding the child to make good choices, because a brain taken over by ED is unable to make good food choices.*

*It takes a lot of food and a lot of time and a lot of dedication, tools which determined families with good support can provide 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year. No professional can offer that kind of dedication to your daughter, but the best ones will support that kind of dedication in the family.*

*So, gather your confidence, get your support in place, make a plan for the preparing and serving of the food, consequences for resistance, supplements to replace thrown food, and **know that you are doing the right thing to help your daughter** even though it will be incredibly painful for you and her. The only way out of the pain is through the pain, but a life worth living is the reward."*