

Talking points for meetings with local Federal MP

These talking points provide a guide (rather than a script) on how you might approach your meeting with your local Federal MP.

EDFA members who meet their local Federal MP are likely to most effective by:

- telling their own personal stories
- highlighting the specific issues and gaps in the health system they have experienced, and
- calling for real action that will deliver a comprehensive approach to eating disorders in line with the issues identified by EDFA and those you have personally experienced.

Talking Points:

- **Thank the Federal MP** for taking the opportunity meet with you. Introduce yourself and remind the Federal MP why you asked to meet (i.e. you a family member/carer who wants action to address the issues and gaps that are preventing loved ones with eating disorders from accessing the treatment they need and deserve).
- **Tell your own personal story**, highlighting the challenges of being a family member/carer of a loved one with an eating disorder; the problems you have experienced getting access to the treatment and support required by your loved (and yourself as a carer); and the impact of these gaps in services on your loved one's recovery and your ability to support them.
 - Where possible when telling your story refer to issues and gaps highlighted in EDFA's comprehensive approach to eating disorders – this should not be difficult.
- **You are a member of Eating Disorders Families Australia (EDFA)** – a national voluntary organisation that supports and advocates on behalf of the families and carers of people with eating disorders. Refer to the support EDFA provides, including the **strive** carer support groups, education and information, and personal peer support through its Facebook page.
- **EDFA is advocating for a comprehensive approach to eating disorders** (hand over a copy of the two-pager titled 'Comprehensive Approach to Eating Disorders'). While you recognise there has been some additional Federal support for eating

disorders in recent years, it is nowhere near enough with huge gaps in the system and demand for services far outweighing availability (provide a personal example).

- **Emphasise that more than 1 million Australians have eating disorders** equating to more than 6,600 people in every electorate. For these people and their families and carers, getting the treatment and support they need determines their ability to participate in society and can literally be a matter of life and death. It is incredibly important for them.
- Make clear **you need the Federal MP to advocate** to their party leader and health minister/shadow minister demanding real action (and real investment) in a comprehensive approach to eating disorders. Highlight areas where urgent action is needed, including:
 - More specialised hospital beds for acute eating disorder patients.
 - Reduced out-of-pocket costs for Medicare consults by psychologist and dietitians.
 - Lived experience coaches to support people with eating disorders maintain recovery.
 - An eating disorders entry point that enables people to navigate the system.
 - Specialised training for GPs, psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses and educators.
 - Clarity regarding eligibility of people with severe eating disorders for the NDIS.
 - In-home meal and behavioural support by trained professionals to support carers.
 - Programs to help adolescents with eating disorders remain in school with support.
 - Body image social media literacy programs delivered by people with lived experience.
- Recognise that while all these issues are unlikely to be addressed before the election, the status quo is not working for people with eating disorders and their families and carers. Hence, **there is a need for a strong public commitment to a comprehensive approach** to eating disorders and a clear enunciation of the actions that will be taken.
- Make clear that you and fellow EDFA members are advocating around the country and will be using their connections and social media to **elevate eating disorders as an issue in the Federal election**. Say you are confident other EDFA members in their electorate would be happy to talk to them and that if they talk



to local clinicians and community service providers, you are sure they will point to the same issues.

- **Ask the Federal MP what they intend to do to help.** Say that you are willing to help them with their advocacy to their party leader and minister/shadow minister. Indicate that you are keen to be informed about the result of their advocacy on behalf of people with eating disorders and their families and carers (and will be following up with them). Make clear you are not interested in form letters that talk about all the good things being done, because that is not your experience on-the-ground. People with eating disorders need real commitments that will make a genuine difference, not more rhetoric.
- **Thank the Federal MP for their time.** [Depending on how the meeting has gone] stress that people with eating disorders and their families and carers need champions for their cause who won't give up until real action is achieved.