

Creator's Guide: Safe Sharing of Your Eating Disorder Story

Why Share Your Story?

Personal stories have power. When shared safely, they can:

- Inspire hope in people who are struggling.
- Challenge stigma and promote understanding.
- Motivate others to seek help and begin their own recovery journey.
- Help you, the storyteller, draw meaning from your experiences.

Before sharing, check in with yourself: consider your emotional, physical, and psychological wellbeing, and reflect on where you are in your recovery process.

Share with Care: What to Avoid

Specific behaviours, measurements, or quantities. Avoid details such as calorie counts, BMI, clothing size or exercise routines. These can be problematic as they may prompt others at risk to engage in harmful behaviours.

Skip triggering imagery. Don't use images of scales, tape measures, empty plates, or detailed hospital shots.

Avoid glamorising / sensationalising the illness. Stay away from before/after comparisons and images of extreme body weights.

Language matters

Do say: "experiencing an eating disorder", "has a lived experience of", or "is living with".

Don't say: "anorexic", "bulimic", "sufferer", or "victim".

Do say: When discussing body shapes, use language such as "larger body", "larger body shape", "higher weight", "lower weight"

Don't say: "Overweight", "fat", "obese" or "skinny"

Tell A Thoughtful Story

- Be authentic. Speak about your experience. This shows that eating disorders are diverse, complex, and vary from person to person.
- Present the disorder as a serious, multifaceted mental illness, not as a personal choice or phase.
- Highlight both physical and psychological impacts.
- Explore the impact on work, social life, family and friends; what signs were there for them to pick up on?
- Share the steps you took in seeking help, therapy, coping skills and mindful habits to take better care of yourself.
- Ups and downs don't mean failure. It is important to show they are part of recovery.
- Emphasise that recovery can be hard and can take time, but it is possible at ANY stage.
- Encourage others who are struggling to talk to a trusted support person and your GP.

Quick Checklist Before Posting

- Am I sharing my lived experience without specific behaviours, numbers, or images?
- Am I focusing on hope, recovery, and what helped me?
- Am I avoiding language or visuals that could glamorise eating disorders?
- Do I feel emotionally ready and supported?
- Am I including national helplines, support websites, or mental health services?

Safe Sharing Tips at a Glance

DO THIS

Use respectful language: “living with an eating disorder”

Focus on emotional and physical impacts plus recovery steps

Show recovery as a process

Encourage help-seeking + provide support links

Cite trusted organisations for facts, like InsideOut, Butterfly & NEDC

Share your personal experience

AVOID THIS

Avoid labels: “anorexic”, “sufferer”, “obese”, “fat”

Avoid listing behaviours, numbers, or measurements

Avoid romanticising the illness or “before/after” images

Avoid suggesting that eating disorders are a lifestyle

Avoid sharing unverified or sensational content

Avoid providing medical or clinical advice

Final Thoughts

Sharing your lived experience can be deeply impactful - both for others and for yourself. By following these guidelines, you can ensure your story helps, not harms, and always provides hope.

Support Is Available

Support services offering 24/7 helplines include:

- o Butterfly National Helpline: 1800 334 673
- o Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636
- o LifeLine: 13 11 14

Free, proven online treatment is available via InsideOut Institute's eClinic:

eclinic.insideoutinstitute.org.au