

Quick Start Guide to Talking Eating Disorders

Framing is the process of making choices about what to emphasize and what to leave unsaid.

Below is a list of themes to avoid and alternatives to utilize.

Instead of:

Appealing to sympathy

Talking about vulnerable populations and dysfunctional people

Using crisis-laden or emotional rhetoric to condemn eating disordered behavior

Relying on the public's limited conception of eating disorders as an individual problem

Focusing only on individual's problems and therapies

The terms "disordered" and "victim"

Using data and expert jargon to explain the causes and consequences of trauma and eating disorders

Providing solutions that emphasize individual responsibility

Descriptions of the problem

Try:

Appealing to equality: this is about treating everyone equitably

Talking about importance of feeling safe to empower while reducing risk factors

Appealing to safety: this is about valuing everyone safety

Intentionally expanding the causes of abuse to include self-neglect, sexual abuse and systematic causes

Explaining the underlying social conditions that can increase risk factors

Using people-first language: "survivors", "people who experience(d) an eating disorder", or "someone who is in recovery"

Using the **Social Structure** metaphor: Society is like a building. Let's improve it with support beams that can keep everyone safe

Providing solutions that emphasize collective responsibility and relational/family/systemic changes

Telling a complete story: *Why* it matters, *how* it works and *what* can be done to address the problem