

ARFID

Trigger warning: food, eating disorder mention, possible triggers.

ARFID, which stands for Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder, is an eating disorder that I myself live with. Before my diagnosis I had no clue what it was; since then I have learnt so much that has helped me and my relationship with food.

ARFID is an eating disorder that commonly gets misdiagnosed and mistaken for extremely 'picky eating' People with ARFID will have a very short list of foods they can eat.

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Between 1.25 and 3.4 million people in the UK live with an eating disorder. That means you might know somebody with one, and so it's great to know more about eating disorders, as I think schools don't cover them much, and to educate yourself is really important!

As someone with an eating disorder (and if you also have one, I'm sure you'll agree) I often have things said to me that just make my head explode. Without further ado, here is a list of things you can do as a parent, or relative of someone with an ed!

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For parents with kids who have ARFID, my main piece of advice would be to always stay calm. It's only going to make your child feel worse when voices are raised.

Understand that 'won't' and 'can't' have entirely different meanings. It's not that your child 'won't' eat, it's that they 'can't' which brings me to my next point,

Listen. Talk to your child about their eating environment. If they say that there are things that would make them feel more comfortable around food (A sensory toy, seeing how the food is made..etc) then listen to them.

A lot of people talk to specialists about their relationship with food and eating disorders, so normalise things like therapy in your household. It is **not** a bad thing.

please note that I am not a medical professional and all advice comes from experience in having an eating disorder.

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To all the incredible people living
with eating disorders right now:
you're so strong and you're so brave.

It's really tough but recovery **is**
possible. I believe in you, and when
it feels like nobody does, or nobody
else in the world understands how
you're feeling, I am proud of you. I
know how hard you're working, and
you **are** doing amazing.

Love, Ariella :)