

## Discussing Your Illness with Others

Deciding who to tell about your mental health is a personal decision. For example, you may choose to share your diagnosis with your friends and family for support. Or you may choose to share with your employer or teachers if you need accommodations to be successful. Spending a little time thinking about the pros and cons of sharing details about your mental health with each person can help you decide and feel more prepared for the conversations.

### Decision exercise

1. **Think of the person you want to talk to and use the space below to write down your benefits/costs (or pros and cons) of sharing with them.** Create a separate list for each person you are considering. Remember, no concern is too small. If it matters to you, it belongs on your list.
2. **Rank your statements.** When you've finished, decide how important each statement is to you by ranking it from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important.
3. **Decide if you are going to share or not.** Based on your analysis, you may decide to share, not to share, or delay your decision and revisit later. You should also discuss your thoughts and findings with your therapist who may offer helpful guidance.

### Examples of benefits and costs

- **Benefits:** I'll be able to talk with those closest to me openly; I'll be more productive at work once I have the right support in place; I'll build my support network to help me stay healthy.
- **Costs:** I may feel like people are judging me; My boss may lose confidence in me; I may be excluded from certain situations.

**If I choose to share with [insert person's name], I may face the following positive benefits and/or negative consequences:**

**Possible benefits (pros) of sharing:**

- Benefit/ranking:
- Benefit/ranking:
- Benefit/ranking:

**Possible costs (cons) of sharing:**

- Cost/ranking:
- Cost/ranking:
- Cost/ranking:

**For more mental health educational resources, visit [depressioncenter.org/toolkit](https://depressioncenter.org/toolkit).**

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This document provides general educational information developed by the Eisenberg Family Depression Center. It is not a substitute for professional medical advice. Please consult your health care provider if you have questions about your health or treatment options.