



The Joy of Recovery From Eating Disorders

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The mental health field has come a long way in the last thirty years in its ability to identify, understand and treat eating disorders. No longer hidden from public view, anorexia and bulimia have become household words. Eating disorders have gained broad recognition as symptoms such as extreme weight loss or weight gain, bingeing, purging, and food restriction are now spoken about far more openly than ever before. Research has given us a greater understanding of the problems and a variety of treatment approaches have proven to be successful.

Nevertheless, one's initial encounter with an eating disorder – whether from personal experience or that of a loved one – can be frightening, confusing, and overwhelming. The emotional turmoil of an eating disorder often is made worse by mistaken beliefs that the disease is simply about a desire to be thin and condemns the sufferer to a life-long struggle with food and weight loss.

While societal pressures to be “thin” play a part, the problems have even deeper roots in psychological conflicts and unresolved emotional needs. When attention is placed simply on weight gain, or stopping destructive behaviors without identifying and resolving the deeper, underlying conflicts, recovery becomes short-lived and even greater frustration, discouragement, and hopelessness follow. The best treatment practices these days focus on helping restore normal eating behavior, but also focus on treating unresolved traumas and on developing more effective coping skills.

Fortunately, there are excellent treatment options available today which provide real hope for complete and lasting recovery. By uncovering and resolving the underlying issues, those who once suffered can find freedom from their struggles with food, fat, and dieting. These newer treatments don't just help people “get better,” they also help them find, in their healing journey, ways of creating lives that are rich, meaningful, and fulfilling – beyond their wildest dreams. This is the joy of recovery!

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