

Making the Decision to Overcome Your Eating Disorder

Cost/ Benefit Analysis

Eating Disorders are a good example of false promises gone to extremes. Sufferers are led to believe that their eating disorder symptoms will grant them the power to solve their problems. For some, the manipulation of their weight (either gaining or losing) serves multiple functions, and often has in common a sense of gaining control over a life that seems terribly out of control. The stark reality is that an eating disorder never solves any underlying problem. Rather it becomes a problem, by taking over one's ability to function normally in life.

Too often, it is not until the costs of having an eating disorder outweigh the perceived benefit that one becomes open to treatment.

Changing a behavior is often difficult because we do not continue a behavior unless we are getting rewarded for it. In order to change, we must actively search for an alternate behavior that will provide us with the same reward.

You may intellectually think that you wish to change your eating disordered habits, but you find that you still actively engage in them. It is not that your resolve is weak, but you have yet to identify your triggers.

In this exercise, you will learn how the eating disorder is helping you in life, and the costs that you have been willing to pay for sustaining the eating disordered behavior. For every eating disorder, benefits/cost may differ. Remember, you are now on a road to recovery. No matter how tempting the eating disordered behavior seems, it has taken you away from those that you love and from realizing your full potential. Now is the time for change.

Benefits

1. Feeling of mastery/control over life
2. Proud of losing weight
3. Others being proud of your weight loss
4. Feeling of accomplishment
5. Feeling of beauty
6. Feeling that you are special
7. Feeling that no one will want to touch you or find you attractive
8. Feeling of being unique
9. Others expressing awe and envy of your weight loss
10. Feeling of being invisible
11. Feeling that you are able to eat anything that you wish
12. Proud of your new body shape

13. Proud of your new clothes size
14. Proud of others noticing your changing shape
15. Proud of others noticing your food intake

Add your own thoughts below:

Costs

1. Death
2. Isolation from friends and loved ones
3. Constant thoughts of food
4. Loss of a sense of self and an identity separate from your eating disorder
5. Constant worries of weight gain
6. Inability to express anger
7. Inability to maintain close friendships
8. Inability to socialize at events that involve food
9. Inability to love yourself
10. Belief that others will only like you at a certain weight
11. Letting your worth be determined by a scale or clothes size
12. Always being cold
13. Loss of menstrual cycle or menstrual irregularities
14. Risk of osteopenia or osteoporosis
15. Constant fatigue
16. Abnormal growth of downy hair
17. Depression
18. Suicidal thoughts (if this happens call 911 immediately!)
19. Muscle aches
20. Dental caries
21. Electrolyte disturbances
22. Dizziness
23. Slowed heart rate
24. Muscle loss
25. High blood pressure
26. Heart disease

- 27. Diabetes mellitus
- 28. Gallbladder disease
- 29. High cholesterol levels
- 30. Constipation or diarrhea
- 31. Cost of binge food
- 32. Involvement in risky sexual practices
- 33. Issues of drug /alcohol abuse

Add your own thoughts below:
