

Eating Disorder Recovery Reading List

Books for understanding, recovery, reflection and supporting somebody you care about

A gentle note before you begin

Books can help us find language for experiences that have felt confusing or lonely. They can offer practical tools, lived experience, hope and a reminder that recovery is possible. But a book does not know your medical history, nutritional needs, diagnosis, sensory profile or stage of recovery. Reading should sit alongside appropriate professional care rather than replace it.

You also do not have to read every recovery book. Some books will feel helpful and others may not be right for you. If a book increases comparison, shame, food rules, body checking or eating-disorder urges, it is okay to put it down. Recovery reading should support you, not become another task you have to perform perfectly.

My recovery bookshelf

8 Keys to Recovery from an Eating Disorder	Carolyn Costin & Gwen Schubert Grabb Recovery & reflection A broad recovery-focused book that explores motivation, the eating-disorder voice, emotions, body image and building a life beyond the illness. Useful when you want something reflective rather than condition-specific.
Life Without Ed	Jenni Schaefer with Thom Rutledge Separating yourself from ED Uses the idea of separating the eating disorder from your own identity. Many readers find the 'ED voice' approach useful for noticing when the illness is speaking rather than treating every thought as truth.
Beating Your Eating Disorder	Glenn Waller, Victoria Mountford, Rachel Lawson, Emma Gray, Helen Cordery & Hendrik Hinrichsen CBT self-help A CBT-based self-help guide for adults with eating disorders and their carers. Structured and practical, so it may suit people who like clear explanations and exercises.
Overcoming Anorexia Nervosa, 2nd Edition	Patricia Graham & Christopher Freeman Anorexia A cognitive-behavioural self-help guide focused on anorexia nervosa. Best used alongside professional support rather than as a substitute for medical or specialist care.
Getting Better Bite by Bite	Ulrike Schmidt, Janet Treasure & June Alexander Bulimia & binge eating An evidence-based self-help programme for people affected by bulimia nervosa and binge-eating difficulties, with practical recovery work.

Overcoming Binge Eating, 2nd Edition	Christopher G. Fairburn Binge eating A widely recommended evidence-based book explaining binge eating and the patterns that can maintain it, followed by a structured self-help programme.
The Picky Eater's Recovery Book	Jennifer J. Thomas, Kendra R. Becker & Kamryn T. Eddy ARFID Written specifically for adults with ARFID. It looks at sensory sensitivity, fear of aversive consequences and low interest in eating, with exercises intended to support greater flexibility.
Intuitive Eating, 4th Edition	Evelyn Tribole & Elyse Resch Relationship with food Explores moving away from diet rules and reconnecting with internal cues. This is not suitable as a stand-alone treatment for every eating disorder or every stage of recovery, so discuss it with your treatment team if you are unsure.
The Intuitive Eating Workbook	Evelyn Tribole & Elyse Resch Workbook A practical workbook accompanying the Intuitive Eating approach, with reflection exercises around food rules, hunger, satisfaction and body respect.
The Compassionate Mind Approach to Beating Overeating	Ken Goss Compassion-focused Uses compassion-focused therapy ideas to explore shame, self-criticism and overeating. Particularly useful for readers who recognise a harsh internal voice.

Skills-based Caring for a Loved One with an Eating Disorder: The New Maudsley Method	Janet Treasure, Gráinne Smith & Anna Crane For carers For family members and carers. Offers practical communication and coping skills designed to help supporters become calmer, more effective allies in recovery.
ARFID: Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder - A Guide for Parents and Carers	Rachel Bryant-Waugh ARFID carers A practical guide for people supporting somebody with ARFID, with strategies and explanations that can help families understand the condition.
Help Your Teenager Beat an Eating Disorder, 2nd Edition	James Lock & Daniel Le Grange Parents & teens For parents and carers of adolescents. Explains family-based approaches and the role parents can play in supporting recovery.
Supporting Autistic People with Eating Disorders	edited by Kate Tchanturia Autism & eating disorders Focuses on adapting eating-disorder understanding and treatment for autistic people, including the ways sensory, communication and neurodivergent needs may shape recovery.

How to use a recovery reading list

Choose for the need you have today

If you want practical exercises, a structured self-help guide or workbook may suit you. If you feel alone, lived-experience writing may offer connection. If you are supporting somebody else, choose a carer-focused book rather than expecting the person with the eating disorder to educate you. If sensory or neurodivergent needs are central, look for resources that explicitly understand those experiences.

Read slowly

Recovery reading does not have to be completed from beginning to end. One chapter, one paragraph or one useful sentence can be enough. You can highlight passages, keep a notebook beside you, listen to an audiobook, or discuss something that stood out with your therapist, dietitian or support person.

Notice what happens in your body

A book may be well regarded and still not be right for you at this moment. Pause if you notice increased urges, comparison, anxiety or a desire to turn recovery ideas into rigid rules. Talk to your treatment team if you are unsure whether a particular approach is appropriate for your stage of recovery.

Questions to take from your reading

What did I recognise in myself?	
What made me feel understood?	
Was anything triggering or unhelpful?	
What is one idea I want to discuss with my support team?	
What would recovery make more room for in my life?	
What do I want to remember on a difficult day?	

A message from Maggie

I love books because sometimes somebody else finds the words for something we have been carrying quietly for years. But please do not turn this list into another measure of whether you are doing recovery correctly. You do not need to read them all. You do not need to agree with every page. Take what helps, leave what does not, and bring questions back to the people supporting you.

Most importantly, keep remembering that recovery is not something you have to learn perfectly before you are allowed to live. The books are here to support your life - your life is not here to complete the books.

Warmly, Maggie

Space to Breathe Therapy

Reading recommendations were cross-checked against Beat's helpful-books list and NHS eating-disorder service reading recommendations. This resource is educational and does not replace specialist treatment.