

Recovery: My Way

Recovery is personal and rarely perfectly linear. This workbook is about discovering what recovery could mean in your life, rather than following somebody else's definition of getting better.

Making recovery personal

An eating disorder can gradually take up space that once belonged to relationships, interests, spontaneity, rest, concentration and everyday choices. Recovery can involve nourishment and physical health, but it can also mean greater flexibility, connection, energy, freedom and the ability to participate more fully in life.

You do not need to know exactly where recovery will lead before you begin. These pages help you explore what matters to you, what feels frightening about change and what might make change feel safer.

Your recovery does not have to look like anyone else's. The question is not 'Am I doing recovery correctly?' but 'What would a fuller life begin to look like for me?'

What would recovery mean to me?

Think about feelings, choices, relationships, health, freedom and everyday life.

What would I like to have more space for in my life?

People, interests, rest, work, creativity, movement, spontaneity or something else.

What has the eating disorder taken time or energy away from?

There is no need to minimise the impact.

Understanding What I Bring to Recovery

Recovery often asks you to do things that feel unfamiliar. Fear, ambivalence or resistance do not mean that you do not want recovery; they can be understandable responses to change, uncertainty and letting go of something that may have served a purpose.

What strengths am I already bringing to recovery?

Persistence, honesty, curiosity, courage, humour, creativity, asking for help or simply continuing.

What feels frightening about change?

What do I worry might happen if eating-disorder rules or behaviours begin to change?

What could help change feel safer?

Predictability, information, pacing, choice, professional support, sensory adjustments or trusted company.

What does the eating disorder seem to promise me?

Control, safety, certainty, identity, numbness, achievement or something else?

What does it actually cost me?

Consider emotional, physical, social and practical costs.

What would I want support people to understand about my fears?

What helps you feel heard rather than pushed?

My Future Relationship With Food

A future relationship with food does not have to be defined by perfection. For many people, progress means gradually having more flexibility, less fear, fewer rules and more capacity to respond to their body's needs and to everyday life.

What would I like my future relationship with food to feel like?

Use your own words: calmer, freer, safer, more flexible, less consuming or something different.

What food rules or expectations take up the most mental space?

Notice them without judging yourself for having them.

Where would I like a little more flexibility?

Meals, timing, variety, social situations, preparation, portions or routines.

What helps me feel safer around food?

Include practical, emotional and sensory supports.

What would I like to be able to do that currently feels difficult?

Eating with others, travelling, celebrations, trying foods, resting after meals or another goal.

How will I recognise progress that is not about numbers?

Think about freedom, connection, concentration, energy, flexibility and participation.

Turning Reflection Into Action

Small recovery-focused actions can matter because they create experiences that are different from the eating disorder's usual pattern. A step should be meaningful enough to move you forward but manageable enough that you can approach it with appropriate support.

One small recovery-focused step is...

Choose something specific and realistic.

Why does this step matter to me?

Connect the step to something you want more of in your life.

What might make this step difficult?

Thoughts, emotions, sensory needs, practical barriers or eating-disorder urges.

What could make it more manageable?

Break it down, add support or change the environment.

Who can support me with this?

What exactly would I like them to do or avoid doing?

Afterwards, how can I support myself?

Plan for distress, tiredness or eating-disorder thoughts after the step.

What will I remind myself if it feels imperfect?

Progress can include trying, learning and returning to the plan.

Keeping Recovery Connected to My Life

Reviewing recovery can be more useful when you look beyond symptoms and numbers. Notice whether life is becoming a little larger: more connection, more choice, more energy, more flexibility, more presence or more room for things that matter to you.

Something recovery has already given back to me

Something I am proud of, even if it seems small

Something I am still finding hard

The support I need next

Books & useful support

8 Keys to Recovery from an Eating Disorder - Carolyn Costin & Gwen Schubert Grabb

Skills-based Caring for a Loved One with an Eating Disorder - Janet Treasure, Anna Smith & Anna Crane

Sick Enough - Jennifer L. Gaudiani

The Picky Eater's Recovery Book - Jennifer J. Thomas, Kendra R. Becker & Kamryn T. Eddy

Beat and the **NHS** offer UK information about eating disorders, treatment and support.

A message from me

Your recovery is allowed to be yours. It can include uncertainty, difficult days and moments when you are not sure you are ready for the next step. Try not to measure yourself against somebody else's timeline. Keep looking for the parts of life you want the eating disorder to take up less space in, and let those things help shape your direction. Small steps still belong to recovery.

Space to Breathe Therapy
Support • Understand • Empower