

Coping Mechanisms

To Improve Body Image

- Put away your scale.
- Dress to feel comfortable.
- Draw attention to parts of your body you are proud of.
- Walk proud.
- Put away your skinny clothes.
- Start the morning with good grooming.
- Recognize that your thinking about your body may be distorted.
- Realize you are not being singled out because you think you have gained weight.
- Be comfortable and familiar with your body.

To Cope with Eating

- Set a routine - eat three well-balanced meals that are satisfying.
- Make menus for a day ahead of time and post them.
- Eat with people who support healthy eating.
- Develop a support system for times when eating is a problem.
- Plan things to do at times when other people are snacking.
- Occupy yourself after a meal.
- Walk away from the table after meals.
- Plan healthy snacks.
- Eat healthy foods instead of junk foods

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- Make a date to eat with someone.
- Don't buy binge foods.
- Make a shopping list and stick to it.
- Make sure to enjoy more about your meal than just the food.
- Stay away from bathrooms after meals.
- Start the day with breakfast.
- Make decisions about eating and stick to them, make meals ahead of time
- If you have trouble knowing when you are hungry, plan to eat regularly.

To Control Urges to Binge

- Work on hobbies and handcrafts.
- Go for a walk.
- Watch a movie.
- Take a risk. Do something different.
- Play with animals.
- Don't take extra money when you go out.
- Take a nap.
- Clean (for yourself, not for others).
- Talk with someone supportive.
- Avoid the kitchen when you walk in the door.
- Listen to music.
- Take a warm shower or bath.

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To Deal with Feelings after a Binge

- Forgive yourself.
- Find something else to do.
- Get away from your eating place.
- Talk with someone else. You may or may not talk about your eating behaviors.
- Nurture yourself even if you don't feel like it.
- Try self-talk. Say you do not look any different than you did a few minutes ago.
- Get yourself back on track with routine eating.

To Improve Your Self-Esteem

- Start the morning with self-care, grooming to feel your best.
- Acknowledge your feelings.
- Be creative (crafts, music, clothing, etc.).
- Look back on awards and achievements.
- Display a “brag wall.”
- Keep a scrapbook or photo album handy to review proud moments.
- Make a checklist of accomplishments.
- Learn something new.
- Become an expert at something and talk about it.
- Assert your opinion when you feel confident.
- Ask for help and support.
- Allow yourself to be good enough, not perfect.
- Accept compliments without reservations.
- Take a healthy self-awareness or assertiveness class.

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To Tell Yourself You're Okay

- Set short term goals one day at a time.
- Look at the positives of being away from your symptoms.
- Anticipate good times and how you might handle bad times.
- Forgive yourself.
- Keep a diary and write your good and bad feelings.
- Encourage yourself with self-pep talks.
- Tell yourself that you are normal.
- Tell yourself you need to eat to keep your energy level up.
- Review your strengths.
- Mark a calendar every day you keep symptoms in control and look back at your own improvement.
- Allow yourself quiet time.
- Get satisfaction from relationships rather than from food.
- Tell yourself your number one priority is your health.

To Deal with Feeling Isolated

- Be a volunteer.
- Go someplace where you can be with people even if you do not want to talk.
- Call a supportive person.
- Join in a group game.
- Join an exercise class.

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- Make eye contact with people around you; smile and be open to others approaching you.
- Plan activities with friends or family.
- Read to someone else.
- Develop a hobby and go to specialty meetings.
- Join a choir or a band.

Information gathered from the University of Wisconsin Psychiatric Institute and Clinic