



Note About NH:

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- This publication is designed as an information exchange for survivors of trauma who struggle with a binge eating disorder and their supportive others and professionals. Neither its editor nor its layperson contributors are engaged in the practice of medicine. This publication should not be construed as medical advice concerning any specific facts or circumstances. The contents are for general information purposes only. Please consult with competent professionals concerning your specific questions and needs.

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To New Beginnings

Welcome to the first edition of Nourishing Hearts. This is our newest publication that focuses on recovery from trauma and eating disorders. You are definitely not alone in dealing with these issues.

We are actively looking for writers and artists to share their talents. We're accepting articles, poetry, artwork, photographs, book reviews, personal experiences and more for each edition. If you'd like to share your talents and experiences with other survivors who struggle with eating disorders, please help us make this publication full supportive and educational. You retain all ownership of your submissions and by submitting it, you give us permission to use it for publishing in this particular publication. You can find our submission guidelines on our website at

www.hope4christianrecovery.org/publications.html.

For survivors of trauma with an a binge eating disorder, we offer a support group on the 2nd & 4th (and 5th when applicable) weeks of the month at

8:30 pm Eastern via the Zoom program online.

Recovery is a process that takes time. Sometimes things may seem to get worse before they get better because we are facing those things we need to deal with head on. So it's in the forefront of our minds.

It may feel impossible to deal with everything but it's not. It's doable and when you don't feel strong enough, you are. The journey you are taking is worth it on the far side of the trail. Believe me, I know how tough it can be and how rewarding it is to make it through.

Don't be afraid to move forward. Seek support, talk to those who are supportive of you and who you trust to share the challenges you are facing. Seek help from a counselor who is experienced in trauma and eating disorder treatments. Almost all state require a counseling license, so check if the counselor/social worker or psychologist is a licensed professional. You will want to see if they accept your insure or offer a sliding fee scale is available if you are a self-pay

client.

You can also find peer support at [NEDA](#)—through groups available in person and online for eating disorders. They can be found listed by state.

I hope you will find a place here where you can draw strength and encouragement from others. If I can leave you with one thought as you we start this journey together, remember you are worth everything you do for you, and you are not alone in

your recovery.

To New Beginnings!

Kristen

**To New
Beginnings!**

Do I Have an Eating Disorder?

Many men and women have an eating disorder, and there is significant information to suggest that trauma and eating disorders are common struggles for recovery. They tend to complicate each other, but when a survivor has been traumatized and is dealing with an eating disorder, it is something that tends to need to be addressed together many times.

Maybe you haven't been diagnosed with an eating disorder, but you think you have one, here are some symptoms of eating disorders provided by the [National Eating Disorder Association](#).

Emotional and behavioral

- In general, behaviors and attitudes that indicate that weight loss, dieting, and control of food are becoming

primary concerns

- Preoccupation with weight, food, calories, carbohydrates, fat grams, and dieting
- Refusal to eat certain foods, progressing to restrictions against whole categories of food (e.g., no carbohydrates, etc.)
- Appears uncomfortable eating around others
- Food rituals (e.g. eats only a particular food or food group [e.g. condiments], excessive chewing, doesn't allow foods to touch)
- Skipping meals or taking small portions of food at regular meals
- Any new practices with food or fad diets, including cutting out entire food groups (no sugar, no

carbs, no dairy, vegetarianism/veganism)

- Withdrawal from usual friends and activities
- Frequent dieting
- Extreme concern with body size and shape
- Frequent checking in the mirror for perceived flaws in appearance
- Extreme mood swings

Physical

- Noticeable fluctuations in weight, both up and down
- Stomach cramps, other non-specific gastrointestinal complaints (constipation, acid reflux, etc.)
- Menstrual irregularities — missing periods or only having a period while on hormonal contraceptives (this is not considered a “true” period)
- Difficulties concentrating
- Abnormal laboratory findings (anemia, low thyroid and hormone levels, low potassium, low white and red blood cell counts)
- Dizziness, especially upon standing
- Fainting/syncope
- Feeling cold all the time
- Sleep problems
- Cuts and calluses across the top of finger joints (a result of inducing vomiting)
- Dental problems, such as enamel erosion, cavities, and tooth sensitivity
- Dry skin and hair, and brittle nails
- Swelling around area of salivary glands
- Fine hair on body (lanugo)

- Cavities, or discoloration of teeth, from vomiting
 - Muscle weakness
 - Yellow skin (in context of eating large amounts of carrots)
 - Cold, mottled hands and feet or swelling of feet
 - Poor wound healing
- Impaired immune functioning

If you just read through these symptoms and have concerns, please see your medical doctor. Consider seeking counseling to help you address the emotional symptoms to address what the underlying issues have started this struggle. You are worth exploring this further!

If you were already diagnosed with an eating disorder, please reach out for help if you haven't yet. Eating disorder can take a toll on our bodies that we may not even realize. A good medical check up, exploring what our thoughts and feelings are regarding our bodies and food, and the trauma we've experienced can be incredibly helpful.

Don't be surprised to find that addressing the trauma and/or the eating disorders may bring things up into the forefront of your mind that you've been trying to stuff out of the way perhaps. Sometimes it feels worse before it gets better. You are strong enough to get through this. I know, because many have taken this journey ahead of us.

Submitted by:
Amber

**You are
worth
exploring this
further!**

How Intuitive Eating Helped Me on My Binge-Eating Recovery Journey

Ever since I was a teenager, I struggled with binge-eating. I would eat when I was bored, lonely, or angry. If I felt bad in any way, I would want to eat. Even if I felt physically sick from overeating, I would still want to eat to feel better. (Not very logical, I know).

Basically, lots of things made me want to eat - but most of the time it wasn't because I was *actually hungry*. *Food had just become a coping mechanism for me, a way for me to temporarily feel better when I was feeling bad. (But of course always left me feeling worse off and ashamed and guilty for over-eating).*

One thing that has really helped me a lot on my journey to deal with my binge-eating disorder was a book called "Intuitive Eating" by Evelyn Tribole, recommended to me by an eating disorder specialist years ago.

The main point of the book is simple - eat when you're hungry, and stop when you're full. Don't obsess over diet plans and meal plans. Just listen to your body and your hunger level. Sounds easy enough. It's really hard if your existing habit is to eat all the time. But something about that concept really stuck with me, it made sense. You can't listen to your body if you're obsessing over some external diet plan, or ob-

sessing over counting calories.

Now my goal is to be an intuitive eater, but it's still a work in progress for me. I just didn't flip a switch one day and say "I'm going to eat intuitively from now on". As badly as I hoped that would happen, it just doesn't work like that. I had to learn over time how to recognize my urges to binge as they were arising, and actively make choices to do something else instead. It definitely hasn't been easy for me. I had been binge-eating for so many years, pretty much nothing makes me feel as good as a binge-eating does in the moment. But I know that it's important to choose to do something else instead of binge-eating, even if it is uncomfortable to do so. I try to listen to my body now, and not give into those urges, because I know it's important for my long-term health to make better decisions.

One of the things that really sticks out to me, that helped me really understand intuitive eating, was watching my 5 year old cousin eating at a Thanksgiving dinner years ago. It was dessert time, and all the different pies were being dished out. He was very adamant he did not want any pie, and that he was full, no matter how good all the desserts looked.

To me, that moment was eye-opening. It reinforced the idea that we are born natural, intuiti-

Food had just become a coping mechanism for me...

tive eaters. Like my 5 year old cousin, we are born listening to our bodies, and stopping eating when full, even when there is great food in front of us. But bad habits develop over time, and at some point, a lot of us stop listening to our bodies for hunger cues. Our American culture obsessed with body image and dieting plans can make us focus on external diets instead of internal hunger cues. Plus, for me, I had just developed a habit of using food as a coping mechanism for emotional reasons, instead of eating due to hunger.

For me, I am working very hard to try to listen to my body again. I'm learning to collapse these old, un-

healthy coping mechanisms of using food to deal with feelings, and learning to build new, healthy coping mechanisms in their place. I try to pay attention to what I need emotionally and physically, and look for other ways to meet those needs and feel better, without turning to food. I'm still not 100% recovered yet, but I know that if I just keep listening to my body, eventually everything will fall into place.

Submitted by :
Stacy Warner

Share Your Thoughts!

How are you working on managing your eating disorder?

Mail your responses to our PO Box, or complete the Contact Us form on the bottom of our home page—

www.hope4christianrecovery.org

Hope Recovery
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Shepardsville, IN 47880

*For me, I am
working very
hard to try to
listen to my
body again.*

Clean

When you feel dirty about something you have been feeling riled up about, remember these lyrics as sang by Natalie Grant.

I see shattered
You see whole
I see broken
But You see beautiful
And You're helping me to believe
You're restoring me piece by piece

There's nothing too dirty
that You can't make worthy
You wash me in mercy
I am clean

There's nothing too dirty
that You can't make worthy
You wash me in mercy
I am clean

What was dead now lives again
My heart's beating, beating inside my chest
Oh I'm coming alive with joy and destiny
Cause You're restoring me piece by piece

There's nothing too dirty
that You can't make worthy
You wash me in mercy
I am clean, oh yeah

There's nothing too dirty
that You can't make worthy
You wash me in mercy
I am clean

Washed in the blood of Your sacrifice
Your blood flowed red and made me white
My dirty rags are purified

I am clean

Washed in the blood of Your sacrifice
Your blood flowed red and made me white

My dirty rags are purified
I'm clean, I'm clean, ohhh I'm

Washed in the blood of Your sacrifice
Your blood flowed red and made me white

My dirty rags are purified
I'm clean, oh I'm clean, I'm clean

Oh You made me
You wash me
Clean

Oh You made me clean

Written & Recorded by:
Natalie Grant

CD Title:
Be One

Recording Label:
Curb Records

*Washed in the
blood of Your
sacrifice...*

My Story

I spent my childhood being abused by my parents and their friends. I rarely had enough food then, so when I moved away from there I ate all the time—anything I could get my hands on. I bounced back and forth between anorexic behaviors and bulimia. Later on I made a decision to stop purging, but I kept binge eating and developed a binge eating disorder and food addiction. At that point I was consuming way more on a day than I could work off. My weight escalated from an average size to a severely obese weight that was slowly killing me. One day I woke up in the hospital hallucinating with no idea of how I got there. I later learned that I had been found unresponsive and my oxygen saturations had dropped significantly to cause this. I had to go on oxygen while I slept.

That was the event that changed the rest of my life. I went for a consultation to find out about bariatric surgery. I spent 10 months working on changing my eating behaviors and attitudes. At that point I decided to start counseling for my binge eating. It was at that point I started to discover that my eating very specifically was related to my childhood abuse.

Food had become my best friend and I had been spending excess time alone with this best friend. I hid my food even when I lived alone, so others wouldn't see all of the junk food. I had no clue of the potential it had to take my life. I'm thankful to say that I've reached out for help and have found hope in reaching out. I wrote this letter to food.

Dear Food Troll,

I'm done with you. You've been my best friend forever. I've needed and wanted you more than anything else in my life. I can lose everything because of you, including my life and yet I have chosen you over and over again. You promised comfort and happiness. You promised companionship and peace. Yes, it was good at the start. I spent all my free time with you. I spent all my money on you. In fact, looking back, we were using each other. It wasn't and isn't a healthy relationship. You used me to make money for others, and I used you to feel better. You never were good for me. You tempted me with junk food. You made it look and seem like what you had you had to offer would make me feel better. Sure—for a little while I did feel better, but after a while the guilt and shame would kick in and then I felt worse.

Even today you continue to try to demand attention from me. You try to trick me into believing you. You try to lure me back by calling to my emotions and telling me how good you will taste. Just one bite. Sometimes you tempt me to have more than a serving size, telling me I need more. Sometimes you send me messages from my childhood. That I need to eat if what I have now because it might not be there

That was the event that changed the rest of my life.

later.

I want you to know. That was a long time ago. It hasn't been true for years. No matter what you say to me, I want you to know that I am listening to the truth about you and about me today. I'm not going to live I fear and I'm safe now. I'm an adult now—and I can buy healthy groceries and make good choices today. I'm not a child relying on parents who don't care. I know how to meet my basic necessities.

No matter what you tell me food troll, you are a liar and a fraud who is used to me giving in to your beckoning. No more. As soon as I hear you and recognize your voice, I'm shutting you down. I'm going to challenge what I hear you saying to me. I'm going to challenge what I say to me and counteract it with truth. Just so you know, if I need to call in reinforcements to help me ignore you, I will do that. You are not worth my

health declining, nor are you worth the guilt and shame I experience after listening to you and deciding to eat like I used to.

You tell me I can work out and work off the calories. You tell me that I can skip the following meal to let me have a better time with you now. But you know what? I've learned that once I give in to you, I have trouble stopping, and then I find the other things starting to cause me issues. I'm telling you food troll, you are in the wrong place now. Get out! Goodbye.

Submitted by:
Me

I want you to know that I am listening to the truth about you and about me today.

Fighting Food

Always around
I keep thinking of it.
Fear of the pound
Working to be fit.

Sometimes too much
So much exercise.
Doing so much
Not sure if it's wise.

Hope to change
Improving my health.
Flipping a new page
Finding new wealth.

Using my mind
Choosing to be.
Looking behind
Befriending me.

Tomorrow brings hope
Just what I need.
Learning to cope
I'm taking the lead.

Submitted by:
Anonymous

Recovery - My Journey

Consider Sharing your journey as you recovery from trauma and an eating disorder with us!

MISSION

The mission of Hope Recovery is to provide Christian-based supportive compassion in the lives of trauma survivors by assisting them in recovery, providing support, resources, committed volunteers, and standards of excellence.

VISION

Hope Recovery aspires to provide excellence in service and support while assisting trauma survivors in achieving their recovery goals.

Hope Recovery

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Phone: (765) 505-8908

We're on the Web

www.hope4christianrecovery.org

Subscribing to Nourishing Hearts

Fees:

Free to Survivors of Trauma with an Eating Disorder.

\$4 donations from supporters and professionals is requested to cover the costs of the website.

Donations may be sent to our PO Box, or online.

You Are Not Alone!



When all seems like a struggle, there is hope.