



Recovery

Introduction

This book has been created to help you understand more about recovery, what it involves and how you can take steps towards it.

We have consulted with young people and professionals to make sure that this book is written for you and contains the right material to help you.

In this book is a diagram of change and recovery. You can use the diagram by yourself or with someone else to help or support you figure out where you are in your recovery.

The six different stages of recovery are colour-coded to help you use the book and the diagram more easily. The book includes statements that match each stage. You will also find some lined spaces for you to write in statements that are more personal to you and your life, or to write about your experiences or thoughts as you go along.

Orange - Understanding Recovery

Red - Contemplation (thinking about changing)

Purple - Determination (deciding to make a change)

Green - Action (taking some action to change)

Pink - Maintenance (continuing the action)

Blue - Relapse (continuing the action to change stops)
This isn't the end, it's the step before contemplation begins again.

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Understanding Recovery

Recovery means different things to different people; it's as individual as you are. There are two ways of looking at recovery.

It might mean that you never have an eating disorder thought or behaviour again.

Or it could mean that these thoughts and feelings still occur for you but they happen less frequently or they have less impact on your life.

Looking at it as a process might be easier for you as this way is more open to change.

The Chambers Dictionary defines it as this:

Recover: to get or find something again; to regain one's good health, spirits or composure, to regain a former and usually better condition.

Recovery: an act, instance or process of recovering, or a state of having recovered, in any sense.

Eating disorder specialist, Dr Tony Jaffa explains:

"It is helpful to have the goal of eventually being free from your eating disorder, but in the meantime to accept that first, you will need to learn to live with it more successfully. This means recognising the eating disordered thoughts and feelings and being able to accept that they are there without necessarily acting on them. It means being an OK weight, it means leading as normal a life as possible and not losing sight of your dreams and goals. "

"Fighting an eating disorder isn't about losing control, it's gaining it"



What might recovery involve?

Recovery means accepting that you have a problem.

This can be one of the hardest things to do.

Recovery means asking for help.

Help and support is available.

Recovery might involve you having to be hard on yourself while also being kind to yourself.

This might seem like a contradiction but here's an example. You may have to be hard on yourself to limit bingeing or purging or by increasing your food intake but also be kind to yourself when you don't fully manage a challenge you have tried.

Recovery is often one step forward, two steps back.

Sometimes it can feel like you are getting nowhere or you are in a downward spiral but it is possible to pick yourself up and feel and act differently.

Recovery will be hard work; we won't pretend that it's easy.

It is hard work to fight against an eating disorder. Gathering support around you can make the fight easier.

Recovery might involve you having to investigate painful thoughts and feelings that you feel it safer to leave alone.

It is often these thoughts and feelings that are making the eating disorder strong. If you can begin to understand and try to resolve these thoughts and feelings, your eating disorder will become weaker.

Recovery can result in you feeling safe and in control.

You can learn to use control in a positive way.

Recovery might involve you having to let go of part of yourself.

You may feel like you need your eating disorder to keep you safe, that you can't deal with stuff without it or there won't be any personality left when you recover.

There are positive ways to cope and keep safe.

Your personality will be there and will develop through recovery.

Contemplation Statements

I know that recovery can be slow, difficult and complicated.

I know that others may not understand this.
I can try and explain this to those close to me.

I know that recovery is mental and physical.

I know that when others say I look well, they mean that I look healthy.
I know that I may recover physically before I do mentally.

I understand that recovery has ups and downs.

Just because I'm having a 'down' day, it doesn't mean that I'm not making progress.

I accept that I have a problem.

My eating disorder does not define who I am as a person.

"Weight is just a number, it's not what you're worth"



Determination Statements

I want to change for the better.

I have worked out what the eating disorder is taking away from me and my close family and friends.

I can think of the positives of recovery.

feeling awake
being happier
enjoying life
getting on with my family
getting a job
driving

I know that it is alright not to feel 'ok' all of the time and that I do not have to put up a front to those who care for me.

I believe in the positives of recovery.

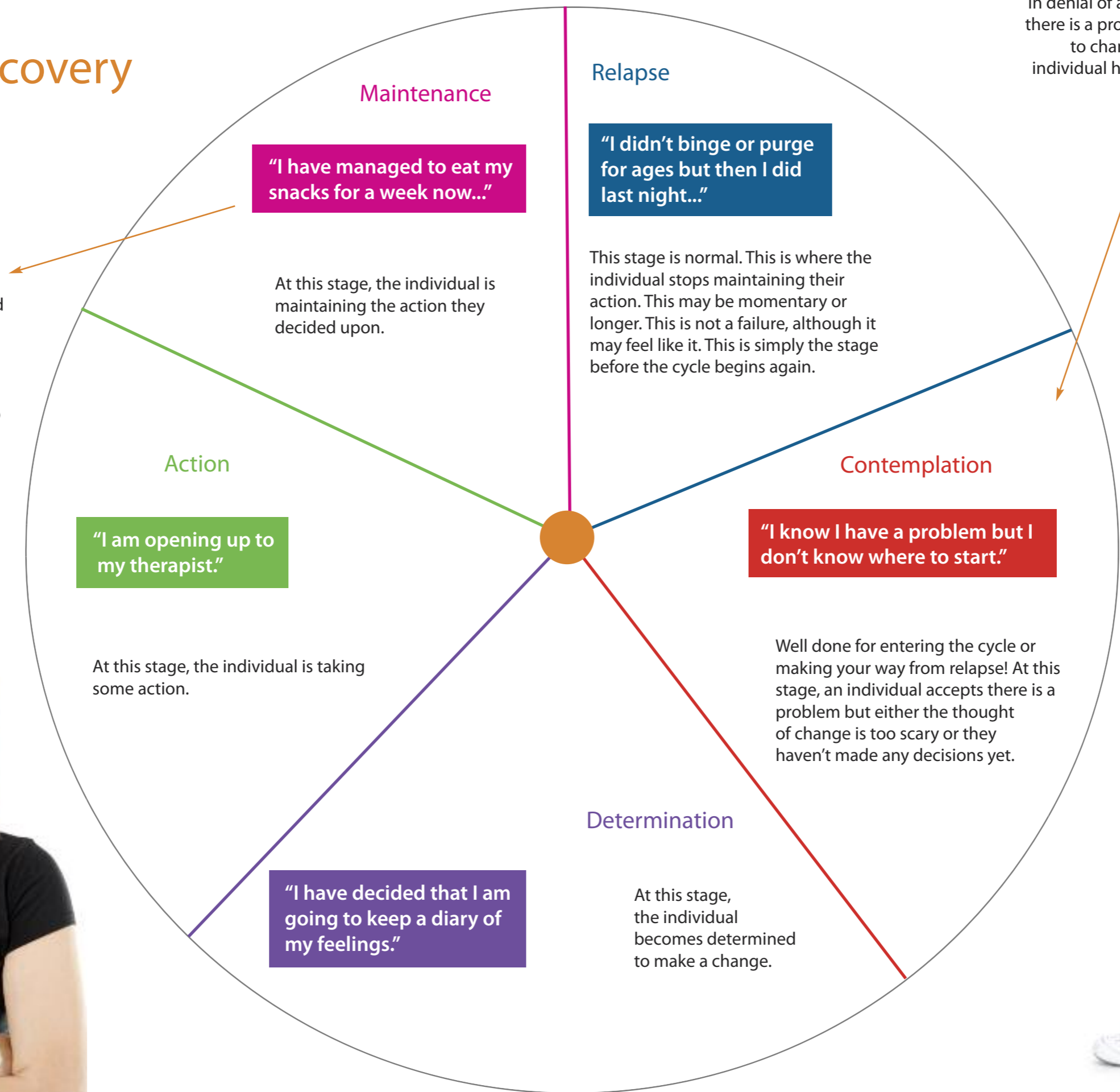
I remind myself of these with those close to me.

"Recovery taught me so much about myself. I learned about the people I love, the person I am and how much I want to live and be happy. These are the things I am going to hang on to."



Diagram of change and recovery

Permanent
 You may be told that you have reached physical recovery or that you have reached the end of treatment. This does not necessarily mean you are recovered. Only you truly know when you have exited the cycle. It is down to your individual perception.



Pre-contemplation
 This is the stage where people will be in denial of a problem or know that there is a problem but are unwilling to change it. At this stage, the individual hasn't entered the cycle.



Maintenance Statements

I know when I am having an eating disordered thought and I know how to overcome it.

I can focus on the positive things about myself and not the negative.

I have made myself a list of positives that I use to contradict the negatives.

I know that no one is perfect.

I know that I can't be and I don't need to be.
I don't expect others to be.
It's okay for myself and others to make mistakes.

I am putting my positive coping strategies into action.

I believe that I'm an individual.

And that's okay.
And I have a right to an opinion.
And it's okay to change my mind about things.

I believe that I deserve to be loved, respected and treated well.

I know recovery has ups and downs and I know how to deal with the downs.

Relapse Statements

I understand that relapse is often a part of recovery.

I know that relapsing does not mean failing.

I can try again.

I will ask for support.

“Hang in there.
Believe in yourself.
Ask for help and
you will begin to
see the light at the
end of the tunnel!”



Tips for raising self-esteem and working towards recovery

Treat yourself kindly. Keep a journal. Express your feelings and don't be afraid to ask for help.

If you don't feel able to say what you need or want to, write your feelings down and show them to someone. This is an easier way to express yourself, if you can't find the words to explain how you are thinking and feeling.

Write about your life without an eating disorder.

Take an assertiveness course. Find out more at your local college or information service.

List things you can do and the positive qualities about yourself and praise yourself for them.

Write your feelings down, write a poem about your thoughts, feelings and emotions. This helps clear your own head and can help you to feel less confused and anxious.

Give up playing the "Yes but" game.

Learn a new skill. Develop new aims and goals to work towards. This will help you to focus your energies on achieving positive outcomes.

Write a letter to your eating disorder.

If you are feeling low, ring a friend, take a relaxing bath, read a book, paint a picture, listen to some music.



How **beat** can help

There are a number of ways that you can contact us for help and support. People have often told us that they were really worried about contacting us, but were pleased when they did.

We don't judge you or tell you that you have to stop, we understand how hard things can be for you. We listen to what you have to say, offer suggestions that might help, give you information about eating disorders and support you if you are struggling.

Call us - 0845 634 7650
Email us - fyp@b-eat.co.uk
Text us - 07786 20 18 20
Visit us online - www.b-eat.co.uk/fyp
www.b-eat.co.uk/YoungPeople/Recovery
Visit our WAP site - www.b-eat.mobi
on your mobile

We are open 16.30 - 20.30 weekdays and 13.00 - 16.30 Saturdays.
Closed Sundays and open 11.30-14.30 Bank Holidays.

To request us to call you back, text "Callback" and your name to
07786 20 18 20.

