EATING DISORDERS
The Journey to Recovery Workbook

Laura J. Goodman and Mona Villapiano
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DEDICATION

To our many courageous clients, we dedicate this book. You have taught us much about your unique journeys to recovery. As others traverse their roads, know that your wisdom will guide and your hope will light their way.
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Over the years we have worked with hundreds of people with eating disorders. For many of our clients, the struggle to overcome these illnesses was intense, exhausting, and immensely challenging. For others, the battle for health and life continues.

What we noticed was that many clients have the energy, will, and motivation to work between sessions to learn new information, practice strategies, and master skills for living. Some clients are able to find and assimilate information on their own. Others are lost and out at sea, not knowing what to do. Many are so seduced by the eating disorder's voice that they cannot learn or try anything which might challenge the eating disorder's preeminence in their lives.

Furthermore, many treatment providers are trying to get more done in less time. They do not have the availability of intensive treatment programs that introduce clients and their loved ones to the psychoeducational information about their illnesses or the strategies and skills needed to combat the eating disorder's control over their lives. People with eating disorders don't have as much time to practice their newfound skills in safe treatment settings.

Therefore, we wanted to develop a workbook which would encourage self-paced learning and practice for people with eating disorders. If you are in therapy you might discuss with your therapist whether or not to use this workbook between your therapy sessions to augment information-gathering and the process of your therapy. For those of you who are attempting to understand whether or not you may have an eating disorder, or if you do not have access to treatment, this workbook may help you better understand your illness and guide you to steps you might take on your own journey to recovery.

For therapists and other treatment providers, this workbook offers: ready-made between-session tasks for your clients to practice, topics for discussion within the session, and opportunities to help your clients widen their network of support in the community. For many, this workbook, with its anecdotes and personal accounts from many people who have struggled with eating disorders, may offer hope, a sense of connection, and direction.

For those of you who provide treatment and know that your clients need more than you, or any treatment provider, could provide, the use of this workbook could help your clients proceed with their work, develop a sense of mastery and accomplishment outside of the therapeutic office, and foster connection with the outside world in meaningful and supportive ways. Such an adjunctive piece of work will likely enhance your clinical work and foster each client's efforts at recovery in the world.

We hope clients and therapists alike will find this workbook a helpful adjunct to your work together.

To those of you for whom this workbook is your first effort, or one of many efforts, at understanding or confronting your eating disorder, we hope it will guide you toward the help and compassionate understanding that you need to begin your Journey to Recovery.
Acknowledgments

Approximately two years ago I approached my colleague and friend, Mona Villapiano, with an idea for a book. I had a vision, and needed some help turning this vision into a reality. With Mona's interest, we began to pursue this vision. Thanks to many people, we have successfully turned this vision into a reality. I would like to personally thank all the people that helped make this happen.

First of all, I would like to thank my former and current clients for all you have taught me over the years. Without you, I could not have made this happen. I would also like to thank all those individuals who devoted their time and energy to share their personal stories, poems, and illustrations. Your works are truly inspiring and are an invaluable component of this book. To Susan Christopherson, Beth Mayer, and Linda Gelda, thank you so much for the time spent editing our manuscript. Your insights and comments were greatly appreciated. To Albert Villapiano, I thank you for your knowledge of computers and your patience with Mona and me. You have been a lifesaver on more than one occasion! Tobin, I thank you for your understanding, compassion, and love. If it hadn't been for your encouraging words and incredible patience, I don't know if I could have completed this project. Soon our lives will be able to return to "normal" (whatever that may be). Taylor, you are too young to understand how you have helped me with this project, but thoughts of you inspired me to keep working. My desire to spend time with you kept me writing whenever I felt the need to procrastinate! Finally, to my dear friend and colleague, Mona Villapiano. Writing this book has been an experience I will always treasure! I thank you for your commitment to the field of eating disorders, and all I have learned from you over the years.

–LAURA J. GOODMAN

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To my co-author and dear friend, Laura Goodman, thank you for asking me to participate in this project with you. It was an arduous but exceedingly worthwhile journey.

—Mona Villapiano

We would like to thank Jared Epps for his work on the illustrations throughout this book. Now a freshman in college, majoring in interior design, Jared has spent these past three years recovering from his battle with anorexia nervosa. Determined to find recovery, Jared is now able to use his illustrations to share the powerful experiences he faced in his journey. In addition to his expression through art, Jared has volunteered his time to help others better learn about eating disorders. His interviews can be seen in *Good Houskeeping Magazine* (August 2000), and as a part of a film developed for the First National High School Eating Disorders Screening Program. He has also provided local television interviews on WCVB TV-5 in Boston. We wish Jared well in his future endeavors, and thank him immensely for his work on the books.

We would also like to thank Allison Villapiano for her illustrations. A senior in high school, Allison has had the honor of having her artwork chosen for display in her town’s education center and here in this book. We appreciate your willingness to use your creative talents to document our ideas.
Introduction

When we began to think about writing this workbook, it was with these thoughts in mind. People with eating disorders need more support than we, as therapists, can give due to the restrictions on available time and resources. Even if all the time and resources needed were available to each client, much of the work to be done must be the work of learning, reflection, practice, integration, and connection within each person’s outside world. All of this cannot be done in the therapist’s office. People with eating disorders need to feel empowered in their recovery process and in their world. They need to own and embrace their steps toward recovery; otherwise, gains and movement toward health will be fleeting and environmentally dependent.

People with eating disorders, like all people, flourish when they feel a sense of agency. This means they feel empowered as agents of their own change process while accepting and understanding the natural process of things. Recovery is personal. It unfolds at the pace and timing of the individual guided by some predictable and understandable principles of change. Each person benefits if she is supported at each stage of her recovery process. She must be allowed and encouraged to experience the full impact of her feelings and needs at each step along the way. She will not benefit if her process is short-circuited or circumvented by those who are in too much of a hurry to let the process unfold. The caveat to this, of course, is if she is in medical or psychiatric crisis, treatment providers, families, or the courts must take over to protect her life until she is ready to protect her own. Except in cases of imminent risk, she will travel her journey to recovery at her own pace and in her own time. Each treatment provider and loved one’s task is to support and enhance the process . . . the unfolding of this journey.

Our second thought was, how can we help each person with an eating disorder understand where she is along the stages of change? Where is she in her process? What is the natural unfolding that should occur if we support her at each stage? If we are loved ones, how can we know what will be supportive and helpful at each stage? If we are treatment providers, how can we adapt our interventions to her needs at each step along her personal journey?

Our answers came from the work of James Prochaska (Prochaska, Norcross, & DiClemente, 1994) and his colleagues. Dr. Prochaska determined through years of research on people who were trying to overcome smoking and alcohol addictions, that all people change in expectable ways. The stages of change are the same no matter what problematic behavior people are trying to overcome. Most importantly, all people must go through each stage. No one stage is more important than another, and often people need to cycle through the stages multiple times before change for good can occur.

This stage theory, with its research support, seemed to bolster what we already knew but lacked empirical support for until now. This stage theory gave credence to those most uncomfortable stages of change where clients want and need to hold onto their symptoms in the face of declining health. It gave solace and support to treatment providers, loved ones, and even to those with eating disorders them-
selves that wanting and needing a symptom, despite powerful evidence of its destructive quality, must be understood, affirmed, and digested before it is possible to move onto the next stage of change.

Along with this theory and empirical evidence, we also embraced the work of another pioneer in the world of treatment. This is the work of Dr. Marsha Linehan (1993). Dr. Linehan concluded, after years of research and clinical study, that many of her clients did not know how to tolerate and cope with the distress of life. Although she was looking specifically at clients with Borderline Personality Disorder, her conclusions are relevant to many people with other psychiatric diagnoses or other problematic behaviors. In fact, learning to tolerate distress is a skill all people need to learn. One need not have been diagnosed with a psychiatric disorder to find benefit from her work. So too, a psychiatric diagnosis is not needed to find benefit and relevance in the work of Dr. Prochaska and his colleagues.

We, therefore, set out to provide in workbook form, information, exercises, and growth-producing challenges for people with eating disorders. People at all stages of change will find strategies and skills to enhance their ability to tolerate the distress of life without reverting to the destructive and hurtful behaviors and conclusions of the past.

We also wish to provide hope to those of you who are now suffering with eating disorders. We hope this workbook will be your benevolent companion as you work to counteract the negative and destructive internal voices of the eating disorder. We encourage you to use this workbook between therapy sessions (or as one of your supports if you are not in therapy), to assist you in becoming the loving and caring agent of your own life.
How This Workbook Works

Workbooks are meant to provide you with information and practice. This workbook asks you to be an active participant in your recovery process. If you read this book it may be helpful. If you read and interact with it, doing the exercises and sharing some of the tasks with a family member or loved one, it will be even more helpful.

Because this workbook is meant to provide information and participatory exercises to many different people at many different stages of change, all the information and all of the exercises may not be relevant or helpful to you at this time.

We encourage you to read and do what you are ready to read and do—to sample what the workbook has to offer. We do not encourage you to attempt to digest this workbook all at once. Interestingly, this workbook can be rejected, ingested, spit out, or thrown up like food. You can eat too much at once and feel ill or you can long for more and refuse yourself another bite. Watch your approach to this workbook—it may parallel your approach to food. Know that you can come back to certain sections at a later date; if some of it is too hard, you either need help and support with it, or you need to leave it and take in a part of it that is more digestible. It is best eaten in small and manageable chunks.

Eventually you may ingest the whole thing, if it is the right thing for you. Or you may take in the portions that are right for you and leave the rest. Invite others you trust to sample it with you.

As you sample this and other offerings in your life, you will find the right pace and timing for your work. We wish you a safe and productive journey to recovery.
Guiding Your Journey:
The Tree and the Web

Before you begin your own journey to recovery, it is important to understand the role your eating disorder has served. That is, although coined an illness, eating disorders are coping mechanisms. As destructive as they are, eating disorders serve individuals by leaving them feeling protected from something larger and more terrifying than the eating disorder itself.

THE TREE

Eating disorders themselves are never the issue; they are symptoms of a larger issue. On the following page, you will find the diagram of a tree (Figure 1.1). In the diagram, you will notice the tree has many roots; some will be exposed (like those in the deep woods), and some will be covered (like those in a landscaped yard). We have placed the eating disorder in the middle of the trunk of the tree.
In the spaces provided, write what you believe are the roots (some underlying issues) of your eating disorder. Some may be well hidden like the covered roots. Others may be easily seen and understood like the exposed roots. Please feel free to draw grass to cover those roots you feel are not exposed. On the branches write how the eating disorder has had an impact on you (e.g., weight loss, weight gain, isolation, diminished sexual thoughts and feelings, greater control). Also on the branches write the purposes of the eating disorder. For example: “it decreases my sexual thoughts and feelings”; “I feel powerful and superior when eating less than others”; “I feel finally in control of something in my life”; “now my ‘outside’ matches my ‘inside’”; “I feel empty and devoid of warmth”; “I feel fat and repulsive”; “I’m drying up and dying”; and “I finally feel free of others’ expectations.” At the end of your journey, you will find another tree. Record what you believe are the roots and branches of your eating disorder again. Did you learn anything new as you progressed through your journey? Do you now have a better understanding of your eating disorder and its purposes? These are only a few of the questions you may want to consider.

Once you have diagrammed your tree, look carefully at the words that you have written on the roots. These are the reasons for the eating disorder, as you understand them. The eating disorder has protected or shielded you from these issues. Now look carefully at the words you have written on the branches. The branches represent the purposes or the “pros” of the eating disorder. This is why your eating disorder may be hard to give up. It has served one or many purposes.

Sadly, your eating disorder (i.e., your protection . . . your shield) does not come without cost. For some its cost weighs in forms such as loss of friends, or a missed prom or other events. For others it results in lost wages, financial distress, or miscarriages. Although it serves a purpose, its costs can be dear and long lasting.

**THE WEB**

On the next page you will find the beginnings of a web (Figure 1.2). At its core is your eating disorder. The boxes growing out of the core of the web depict its various “costs.” The illustration will help you draw your web. Our goal is to help you see the costs, or the “cons,” of your eating disorder. What have you lost as a result of your eating disorder?

The web will help you see what price you pay for the eating disorder. We hope your Journey to Recovery will eliminate the costs and reap you bountiful rewards in health, safety, and happiness. However, this won’t happen until you find another, more healthy and adaptive way, to protect and shield yourself (as represented by the roots) and meet the purposes or pros the eating disorder was meant to meet (as represented by the branches). Your journey through this workbook will help you find more healthy ways to protect yourself while furthering these purposes. As well, it will eliminate the costs you now pay for meeting these needs.
References

9 Chapter 9 Men's Issues

which reinforces this dissatisfaction? Y N