

A Guide to Coping Strategies

To improve body image:

- Put away your scale
- Laugh it off
- Dress to feel comfortable
- Walk proud
- Dispose of all the “when” and “what if” clothes that no longer fit
- Start mornings by focusing on yourself (shower, do your hair, brush your teeth)
- Recognize that your thinking about your body may be distorted
- Realize that you are not being singled out because you think you may have gained weight
- Be comfortable and familiar with your body

To cope with eating

- Change the subject when other people talk about food, weight, body size or shape
- Set a routine: eat three well-balanced meals that are satisfying.
- Eat with people who do not bug you about eating
- Have a back-up plan for eating if you cannot eat a meal
- Develop a support system for times when eating has been a problem (e.g., holidays)
- Limit alcohol consumption
- Occupy yourself after a meal
- Walk away from the table after meals
- Plan healthy snacks
- Eat a balanced diet with a variety of foods
- Make meals ahead of time
- Plan meals a day ahead of time
- Make a date to eat with someone
- Eat every 2-3 hours
- Make a shopping list and stick to it
- Set a time for eating
- 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
- 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
- Talk to and pet animals
- Don't take extra money with you when you go out
- Exercise in moderation
- Shop
- Take a nap

- Clean (for yourself, not others)
- Talk to someone supportive
- Avoid the kitchen when you walk in the door
- Take a walk before coming into the house in the evening
- Listen to music
- Take a warm shower or bath

To deal with feelings after a binge

- Forgive yourself
- Allow yourself to feel forgiven
- Find something else to do
- Get away from your eating place
- Talk to someone else: you may or may not talk about your eating behaviours
- Nurture yourself even if you do not feel like it
- Try positive self-talk
- 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)
- 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
- Take a self-defence class
- Allow yourself to feel angry
- Ask for help and support
- Allow yourself to be good enough, not perfect
- Accept compliments without reservations
- Take a self-awareness or assertiveness class

To tell yourself you are 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 down your feelings
- Encourage yourself with self-pep talks
- Tell yourself that you are normal
- Tell yourself that you need to eat to keep your energy level up
- Review your strengths

- Mark in the 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
- Remember the positives of not getting involved with symptoms
- Make a transition from work to home with quiet time

To nurture/reward yourself

- Shop for yourself
- Exercise in moderation
- Take a bath
- Set money aside for a goal
- Vacation
- Play a game of pool
- Wear clothes that have special meaning for you
- Wear perfume/cologne
- Ask someone else to give you a foot or back massage
- Play video games
- Get your nails or hair done
- Listen to music you like
- Snuggle
- Have lunch with a friend- make food secondary
- Window shop
- Buy yourself flowers
- Call a friend
- Read a novel
- Play a sport
- Pretend to be a child, then consciously return to being an adult
- Go to a movie
- Attend a sporting event
- Pat yourself on the back
- Read a comic book
- Tell yourself you have done well
- Allow yourself to relax and do nothing
- Buy new makeup
- Steal time for yourself even when you are busy

To deal with feeling isolated

- Be a volunteer
- Go somewhere you can be with people even if you do not want to talk
- Call a supportive person
- Join a group game
- Make eye contact with people around you; smile and be open to others approaching you
- Plan activities with friends and family
- Read to someone else

- Develop a hobby and go to specialty meetings
- Join a choir or a band

To deal with tension

- Accept your feelings as they are
- Cry, scream, let it out
- Make yourself a “scream room”, where you can be loud
- Shout into a pillow
- Designate a pillow as someone you are mad at and talk to it
- Punch a pillow or your mattress
- Be assertive about your rights
- Avoid small upsets that accumulate to a big blow up
- Exercise but remember that exercise cannot replace saying what is bothering you
- Use humour
- Learn to relax; use abdominal breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, or other relaxation techniques
- Practice saying your feelings to a mirror or tape recorder
- Keep a journal
- Change the subject
- Do simple stretches or yoga

To hold your own assertively

- Expect and extend courtesy to and from everyone, even your family
- Acknowledge the other person’s rights
- Say what you want but be willing to negotiate
- Say what you need and insist on your rights
- Assume you are on equal standing with everyone
- Allow yourself time outs to feel mentally stronger
- Keep good eye contact but do not stare
- Keep yourself open to other people by looking around
- Use your support system and ask for positive feedback
- When things are not going well, do not assume it is all your fault
- Clarify what is going on; ask other people
- Accept your own feelings; choose if you want to act on them.

BANA PTE Group material (week 12)