

What Stage of Recovery Am I In?

Those working to recover from eating disorders often feel much ambivalence and vacillate between stages of recovery as they move forward. To get an idea of what stage you are in, complete the following checklist:

Precontemplation Stage

- I don't really think I have a problem.
- I am aware I have a problem but am not willing to change.
- Things are pretty much under control.
- I can stop doing this when I want, I just don't want to right now.
- My eating disorder is working for me and I'm not so sure I need to change things.
- I have no complications from my eating disorder, or if I do, they are minimal or unimportant.
- My eating disorder helps me to control my weight and I'm not so sure I want to give this up.
- My eating disorder helps me to feel in control.

Contemplation Stage

- I am aware I have a problem but am too afraid to change.
- I feel defensive and/or angry when people try to talk to me about my eating disorder.
- My symptoms have begun to feel too severe, too disruptive and/or too costly.
- I am constantly weighing the pros and cons of changing or not changing.
- There are days when I have had enough and want nothing more than to stop my symptoms.
- There are days when I feel scared to give up my eating disorder.
- I have a strong sense that the eating disorder is not working for me.

Preparation Stage

- I am aware I have a serious problem.
- I'm beginning to think it is worth whatever I have to do to get rid of these symptoms.
- I am aware I need to learn and regularly practice specific skills to change this behavior.
- I feel like I am gathering my resources and psyching myself up to do the hard work.
- I am not sure how to change any of this and need to explore alternatives.
- I'm beginning to think I'm going to have to do whatever it takes, no negotiating.

Action Stage

- I am using the strategies and suggestions provided to me by my treatment team.
- I am willing to rely on and trust the expertise of others rather than on my eating disorder.
- I am actively working on normalizing my eating.
- I am actively using strategies to avoid acting on urges to restrict, binge, vomit, abuse laxatives, overexercise, or engage in other eating disorder symptoms.
- I am almost completely convinced that dieting is dangerous and keeps me in my symptoms.

Maintenance Stage

- My eating is normalized.
- I almost never engage in eating disorder symptoms.
- I rarely, if ever, use eating disorder symptoms to deal with distressing thoughts and feelings.
- I realize that I will need to continue to find alternative coping mechanisms.
- I plan ahead for stressful situations to prevent symptoms and make sure I have support.
- I consider what to do if urges or symptoms start to reemerge.