

## The Real Issues

This list covers the most common issues that clients with eating disorders have identified contributing to their illness. Read through this list and see if it helps you identify parts of your eating disorder puzzle.

### 1. Poor Self-esteem

- I am afraid of myself and being out of control.
- I'm not worthy.
- People don't like me
- I can't trust my own judgements or make decisions.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Need for distraction

- When I'm bingeing or throwing up I don't think about anything else.
- I need something that distracts me from my thoughts and feelings.
- Worrying about my weight keeps me from worrying about other things.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Fill up emptiness

- Something is missing in my life and I try to fill it with my eating disorder.
- I feel empty inside and bingeing takes me away from that temporarily.
- Eating fills up my emptiness.
- All my eating disorder rituals help me fill up a void in my life.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Belief in a Myth

- I will be happy and successful when I am thin.
- Thinner people are happier.
- I have to be thin to be attractive and desirable.
- Losing weight will solve all my problems.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. Drive for Perfection

- I have to be the best at everything, whether it is taking a test or dieting.
- I have the willpower to do things others can't do.
- I'm either fat or thin.
- If I can't win or be the best, I won't try.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## The Real Issues

### 6. High-Achievement Oriented

- I feel constant internal pressure to work hard and achieve.
- I can only achieve a good body through my eating disorder.
- I am driven everywhere else and use my bulimia as a release.
- Restricting is a real achievement, mind over matter, literally.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### 7. Desire to be Special/Unique

- I get a lot of attention for my willpower over food.
- I don't know who I would be without my eating disorder.
- My eating disorder causes others to worry about me and take care of me.
- My eating disorder makes me stand out and be different.
- My low weight is the only special thing I have.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### 8. Need to be in Control

- I have to be in control of my body, and what goes in and out of it.
- My eating disorder helps me feel in control of my "out of control-ness".
- My eating disorder behaviors keep my feelings under control.
- My eating disorder is the one thing no one has control over but me.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### 9. Desire for Power over Self, Others, Family, Life

- My eating disorder gives me power over my body.
- I feel powerless most of the time, except when it comes to my eating disorder.
- My eating disorder gives me power over others.
- It is powerful to be able to resist food, like a saint or a monk.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### 10. Desire for Respect and Admiration

- I finally got respect from my peers when I lost weight.
- I wanted to be admired and tried restricting to lose weight, but I couldn't do it, so I had to throw up.
- When I binge I am rebelling because I know I will never get the respect and admiration that people get for being thin.
- People respect my ability to restrict food.
- \_\_\_\_\_

## The Real Issues

### 11. Difficulty Expressing Feelings

- I don't know how to express my anger, so I binge and purge.
- I feel like I swallow my feelings when I binge.
- I can't deal with conflict or confrontation so I resort to my eating disorder.
- Restricting helps me shut down and deny my feelings.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### 12. Need for a "Safe Place to Go"/ Lack of Coping Skills

- My eating disorder is a special world created to keep all the bad out.
- If I follow my own imposed rules, it helps me feel safe.
- My eating disorder helps me get taken care of without asking for help.
- My eating disorder has helped me avoid taking on adult responsibilities.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### 13. Lack of Trust in Self and Others

- I don't trust people so I isolate from them with my eating disorder.
- I don't trust anybody, I use my eating disorder as my best friend.
- I can never make a decision; bingeing and purging provides procrastination.
- It is easier just to follow my eating disorder rules than trust myself or anyone else.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### 14. Intense Fear of Not Measuring Up

- I know I can't compete, so I let my eating disorder take me out of the running.
- I won't have anything if I don't have my eating disorder.
- I'm constantly comparing myself to everyone.
- I am terrified of being fat.
- I am terrified of being deprived.
- I am terrified of being deprived and of being fat.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_