

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-73904-7 - Beating Your Eating Disorder: A Cognitive Behavioral Self-Help Guide for Adult Sufferers and their Carers  
Glenn Waller, Victoria Mountford, Rachel Lawson, Emma Gray, Helen Cordery, Hendrik Hinrichsen  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

**Beating Your Eating Disorder: A Cognitive Behavioral  
Self-Help Guide for Adult Sufferers and Their Carers**

---

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-73904-7 - Beating Your Eating Disorder: A Cognitive Behavioral Self-Help Guide for Adult Sufferers and their Carers

Glenn Waller, Victoria Mountford, Rachel Lawson, Emma Gray, Helen Cordery, Hendrik Hinrichsen  
Frontmatter

[More information](#)

# Beating Your Eating Disorder: A Cognitive Behavioral Self-Help Guide for Adult Sufferers and Their Carers

---

## Glenn Waller

Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Vincent Square Eating Disorders Service,  
Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust, and Eating Disorders Section,  
Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London, UK.

## Victoria Mountford

Principal Clinical Psychologist, Eating Disorders Service, South London and  
Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, London, UK, and Honorary Research Fellow,  
Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London, UK.

## Rachel Lawson

Senior Clinical Psychologist, South Island Eating Disorders, Canterbury District Health  
Board, and the Anxiety Clinic, Christchurch, New Zealand.

## Emma Gray (née Corstorphine)

Consultant Clinical Psychologist/Service Coordinator, The British CBT & Counselling Service,  
and Fellow at the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London, UK.

## Helen Cordery

Trainee psychotherapist at the John Bowlby Centre, London, UK, and former specialist  
registered dietitian working with eating disorders.

## Hendrik Hinrichsen

Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Clinical Lead, Sutton & Merton IAPT,  
South West London & St. George's NHS Trust, and Visiting Research Fellow,  
Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London, UK.



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-73904-7 - Beating Your Eating Disorder: A Cognitive Behavioral Self-Help Guide for Adult  
Sufferers and their Carers  
Glenn Waller, Victoria Mountford, Rachel Lawson, Emma Gray, Helen Cordery, Hendrik Hinrichsen  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,  
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521739047](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521739047)

© G. Waller, V. Mountford, R. Lawson, E. Gray, H. Cordery and H. Hinrichsen 2010

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception  
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,  
no reproduction of any part may take place without  
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2010

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

*A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data*

Beating your eating disorder : a cognitive-behavioral self-help guide for adult  
sufferers and their carers / Glenn Waller . . . [et al.].

p. cm.

ISBN 978-0-521-73904-7 (pbk.)

1. Eating disorders--Treatment--Popular works. 2. Cognitive therapy--Popular works.  
I. Waller, Glenn. II. Title.  
RC552.E18B44 2011  
616.85'26--dc22

2010017814

ISBN 978-0-521-73904-7 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or  
accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to  
in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such  
websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

---

Every effort has been made in preparing this book to provide accurate and up-to-date  
information which is in accord with accepted standards and practice at the time of  
publication. Although case histories are drawn from actual cases, every effort has been  
made to disguise the identities of the individuals involved. Nevertheless, the authors,  
editors and publishers can make no warranties that the information contained herein is  
totally free from error, not least because clinical standards are constantly changing through  
research and regulation. The authors, editors and publishers therefore disclaim all liability  
for direct or consequential damages resulting from the use of material contained in this book.  
Readers are strongly advised to pay careful attention to information provided by the  
manufacturer of any drugs or equipment that they plan to use.

---

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-73904-7 - Beating Your Eating Disorder: A Cognitive Behavioral Self-Help Guide for Adult Sufferers and their Carers  
Glenn Waller, Victoria Mountford, Rachel Lawson, Emma Gray, Helen Cordery, Hendrik Hinrichsen  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

# Praise for *Beating Your Eating Disorder*

“Decades of clinical experience come to light in this plain-speaking self-help text for both sufferers and carers. There’s no sugar-coating here, just a pragmatic and evidence-informed step-by-step approach for gaining control of your own eating disorder. Through the use of rich vignettes and colorful analogies, the authors provide a context for recovery. The chapter on motivation is a unique contribution that allows both sufferers and carers to self-appraise their readiness for change. The book is infused with hope for recovery provided the reader is prepared to dig-in and do the work necessary for a successful self-help journey.”

**Cindy Bulik, William Jeanne Jordan Distinguished Professor of Eating Disorders, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA.**

“Comprehensive and thorough. The information is provided in an approachable and forthright style. The authors clearly describe what is involved in overcoming an eating disorder and encourage the reader to do the necessary work.

It doesn’t underestimate the effort it will take, but rather gives very helpful, practical and evidence based information. The book is equally helpful for families and friends of someone working to beat their eating disorder – giving them the support they need to be a powerful ally in recovery. Most importantly, this book gives hope that life without an eating disorder can be lived to the full.”

**Susan Ringwood, Chief Executive, beat, UK nationwide self-help organization for sufferers of eating disorders.**

“This clearly written self-help guide for adults with eating disorders successfully translates the best available treatment we have – cognitive behavioral therapy – into a user-friendly and highly practical self-help approach. It is thorough and detailed without being overly long, and the material is presented in a fresh, interesting way. This excellent book is highly recommended for adult sufferers

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-73904-7 - Beating Your Eating Disorder: A Cognitive Behavioral Self-Help Guide for Adult Sufferers and their Carers  
Glenn Waller, Victoria Mountford, Rachel Lawson, Emma Gray, Helen Cordery, Hendrik Hinrichsen  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

**vi**     Praise for *Beating Your Eating Disorder*

---

with eating disorders who wish to use a self-help guide for the first step, and hopefully the only step that will be necessary, in overcoming their eating problems.”

**James Mitchell, Christoferson Professor and Chair, Department of Clinical Neuroscience and Chester Fritz Distinguished University Professor, University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences, USA.**

“The writers communicate in a clear, direct, compassionate and honest voice, enriched by extensive clinical experience, that will help the reader to feel understood, to understand what maintains their eating disorder, and to have the courage to experiment with learning to eat healthily again.

This is a valuable resource for people with eating disorders considering change, for carers who feel lost, and for therapists who are seeking to help their clients build a foundation for enduring change.”

**Tracey Wade, Professor of Psychology, Flinders University, Australia.**

“This is the long-overdue book that adult sufferers of an eating disorder and their carers have been waiting for. It has been masterfully written from a wealth of practical experience and will without doubt become a mandatory resource. It surpasses any of the other self-help guides in quality and scope, and will ensure that those who read it are impelled to act.”

**Stephen Touyz, Professor of Psychology, The University of Sydney, Australia.**

Contents

<i>Preface: read this bit first</i>	<i>page</i> xi
<i>Who is this book for?</i>	xi
<i>What is this book about?</i>	xii
<i>Final points before starting</i>	xii
<i>Who are the authors of this book?</i>	xiii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xiv
<i>About the authors</i>	xv
 <b>Section 1 Getting started</b>	 <b>1</b>
First things first: staying physically safe and well enough to use the help provided in this book	1
<b>1 Who is this book for?</b>	<b>3</b>
“Do I have an eating disorder?”	3
“Does my eating problem really deserve any attention?”	5
“What can I do if I care for or live with someone with an eating disorder?”	7
“Why should I use self-help, rather than getting more formal help from a professional now?”	8
“So what do I do now?”	8
<b>2 The key elements of cognitive behavioral therapy and the self-help approach</b>	<b>10</b>
What is cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)?	10
The key elements of CBT	10
Your journey through CBT: some landmarks	11
What is CBT self-help?	12
“I’m not sure that I’m ready to change”: a quick word about motivation	14

**viii**    Contents

<b>3</b>	<b>How to use this book</b>	<b>15</b>
	Read it all	15
	If you are a sufferer	15
	If you are a carer	15
	Whoever you are	16
	<b>Section 2 For the sufferer</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Am I making a fuss about nothing?</b>	<b>19</b>
	Some important definitions	19
	Myths to dispel	20
<b>5</b>	<b>Motivating yourself to treat your eating disorder</b>	<b>23</b>
	Motivational states	23
	The pros and cons of having an eating disorder	25
<b>6</b>	<b>Is now the time to act?</b>	<b>29</b>
	Life circumstances	29
	The balance between the pros and cons of your eating disorder	29
	Accepting responsibility for change	30
<b>7</b>	<b>Getting started with CBT</b>	<b>33</b>
	Becoming your own therapist	33
	What to expect	34
	Giving yourself the best chance of success	35
	Summary	41
	<b>Section 3 The CBT self-help program</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Start here: how to use this program</b>	<b>47</b>
	If you are a sufferer	48
	If you are a carer	48
	Practicalities	48
	Anxiety and safety behaviors	49
	Final tips on maximizing your chances of success	50
	What do I need to get started?	51
	The CBT plan for change	52
	Building your own road map to recovery	56
<b>9</b>	<b>The practical steps of CBT for your eating disorder</b>	<b>58</b>
	What if it is not working? Overcoming “therapy interfering behaviors”	59
	Step 1: Developing and maintaining your motivation	59
	Step 2: Developing a regular, balanced pattern of eating	60
	Step 3: Challenging your thoughts and anxieties about weight	71
	Step 4: Addressing negative thoughts and feelings about your body	83
	Step 5: Addressing residual difficulties	91
	Step 6: Maintaining the gains	92
	Where to next in this book?	93

<b>Section 4 For carers</b>	<b>95</b>
10 <b>Am I to blame for the eating problem?</b>	97
Stop blaming yourself	97
Why didn't I notice before?	98
11 <b>What can I do to support the sufferer?</b>	99
Dealing with emotional distress	99
Should I feel so stressed and impotent?	99
How do I talk to the sufferer?	100
Dangers of collusion	100
What about the rest of the family?	101
What can I do if I am worried about the sufferer?	102
How to ask for help and who to ask?	102
Where can I get information?	102
Getting help for yourself	103
How can I keep the sufferer interested in change?	103
I am a friend of the sufferer: how can I help?	105
Sufferers with chronic disorders	106
Supporting the sufferer while they are following the self-help program outlined in this book	106
<b>Section 5 Transitions into more formal help</b>	<b>109</b>
Before you go any further	109
12 <b>Thinking about getting more formal therapeutic help</b>	111
What has stopped me seeking help before, and what might stop me now?	111
13 <b>Starting the process of getting therapeutic help</b>	114
Who should I talk to?	114
Preparing for your assessment	115
How do I involve my carers	116
What treatment will I be offered?	116
Coping with waiting	117
Attending your first session of CBT	118
14 <b>What to look for in a good CBT practitioner</b>	120
The therapeutic relationship	120
Accreditation/registration	121
Willingness to talk about method	121
Willingness to talk about the process of therapy	123
15 <b>The role of carers in the transition to more formal help</b>	124
What can I do to help my loved one get help?	124
So why is it so hard to help my loved one?	125



<b>Section 6 Letting go of the eating disorder</b>	<b>127</b>
16 <b>The journey of recovery</b>	129
Are there healthier alternatives to my eating disorder behaviors?	130
Who am I if I do not have my eating disorder?	131
What if I can't make all the changes now?	131
Can I stay "a bit anorexic/bulimic"?	132
What if the eating disorder comes back?	133
17 <b>Relapse prevention</b>	136
Forewarned is forearmed	136
Planning for the future – getting your life back	139
Review sessions	139
A word of warning: the risks of weight loss	140
Dealing with other issues	141
18 <b>Have I done myself permanent damage?</b>	142
Bone structure	142
Fertility	143
Will my eating disorder have had an impact on my children?	144
19 <b>Carers need to move on too</b>	145
Understanding the sufferer's perspective	145
Who is this new person?	145
What can I do if I think I see the eating disorder returning?	146
Who was to blame for the eating disorder?	146
<i>Conclusion: eating normally again</i>	147
<i>For the sufferer</i>	147
<i>For the carer</i>	147
<i>Appendices</i>	149
<i>References and further reading</i>	189
<i>Index</i>	191

# Preface: read this bit first

## Who is this book for?

If you are an adult who suffers from an eating disorder, this book is designed to help you overcome your eating problems. It is designed to help you regain control whether you have anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, or an atypical problem (where you have some of the symptoms but do not meet all the criteria for one of those better-known diagnoses). You might have been directed to this book by a clinician (e.g., your family doctor might have recommended it, or a specialist clinician might have suggested that you try it while you wait for more formal treatment). However, many sufferers will never have received a formal diagnosis, but will know that they are not happy with their eating and their associated thoughts and feelings. This book is for you, whether or not you have a diagnosis.

If you are a carer, relative, partner, friend or child of a sufferer, this book is designed to help you advise, support, and work with the sufferer as she or he works to overcome the eating problem. This process includes learning how to cope with your own level of stress and concern, because you are likely to be severely affected by the sufferer's experiences. If you can deal with your own feelings, then you are in a stronger position to support the sufferer.

Our aim is to help any adult sufferer to eat normally again, without being plagued by worries about their shape or weight, and without feeling that you are out of control. If that is too much to imagine, then we aim to help you get as far along that path as you are ready to go right now. This book is not aimed at adolescents with eating problems, because the evidence is that such sufferers benefit more from a family-oriented approach. However, there are lessons in here that might be useful ones to add to the family perspective.

This book will *not* be enough for you if you have serious complications from your eating disorder. For example, we strongly recommend that you should seek professional support from your doctor if:

- you are very depressed or feel hopeless all the time
- you have physical symptoms of your eating problem that place you in danger (see the start of Section 1 on staying safe)
- you are using self-damaging behaviors (e.g., self-cutting, binge-drinking)
- you have a young child who you fear might be suffering as a result of your eating problems

You might still be able to use this book, but only when those other issues are dealt with and you are safe and stable.

You might be afraid that going to your doctor will be difficult or embarrassing, but if you go to your doctor with a clear idea of your concerns then she or he has a much better chance of helping you. You will not be the first sufferer or carer that your doctor has seen and there are very clear guidelines that your doctor can use to help in your care and support. One such recommendation is that many sufferers should be encouraged to try a self-help book ahead of any referral to specialist services. A good example is the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guideline on eating disorders for professionals, which is available online at: <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/CG9/niceguidance/pdf/>. There is a linked version of this document for sufferers and carers, which we recommend that you read. This version is available online at: <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/CG9/publicinfo/pdf/>.

**What is this book about?**

The self-help approach outlined here is based on the strongest evidence-based approach that currently exists for working with adults with eating disorders – cognitive behavioral therapy, also known as CBT. This form of therapy is not an easy solution to your problems, but it has been proven to have the strongest and/or fastest impact on most types of eating disorder (other than anorexia nervosa) among adults, and is more effective than most other forms of therapy for these disorders. Recent evidence also supports this approach with anorexia nervosa, although the evidence base is not as large.

**Final points before starting**

It is important that you remember that there are no miracle cures for eating disorders. If there were then it is pretty likely that you would already have found one that worked for you. Doing CBT is not easy – it is hard work. You can probably bet that the harder you work at it, the more likely this approach is to work for you.

So remember, simply owning this book is not the same as using it. Too many of our patients have bought books like this and then waited for them to be helpful, rather than putting them into action. You would be better not to buy this book (or any other) than simply have it sitting on a shelf. For this book to help you, you need to read it and use it. Using this book means learning how to do CBT and applying it to yourself – to take on the role of being your own therapist. There are many tasks in this book that you will find hard, but remember that the reward is that you get to eat normally again and to lead a life where every thought, feeling, and decision is not influenced by what you eat, your shape and your weight.

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-73904-7 - Beating Your Eating Disorder: A Cognitive Behavioral Self-Help Guide for Adult Sufferers and their Carers  
Glenn Waller, Victoria Mountford, Rachel Lawson, Emma Gray, Helen Cordery, Hendrik Hinrichsen  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

If your eating disorder were an easy problem to solve, you would have solved it already. Eating disorders are real, serious and complex problems. That complexity makes them difficult to resolve, but with the right approach it is possible to overcome them.

So a key thing to remember is that overcoming your eating disorder is going to be a complex and challenging task, and that it will require you learning to eat healthily again in order to succeed. That will mean working to develop an appropriate structure to your eating, and then changing the content of what you eat. Your thoughts, feelings, relationships, and motivation will all be important, but working on them without working on your eating (from the beginning) is unlikely to help you to escape your eating disorder.

**Who are the authors of this book?**

We are clinicians with many years of experience in working with the whole range of eating disorders, using CBT to help people with eating disorders to eat healthily and to feel good about themselves. Our goal in writing this book is to make this approach available to many sufferers (and their carers) who find it difficult to get clinical help, for whatever reason.

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-73904-7 - Beating Your Eating Disorder: A Cognitive Behavioral Self-Help Guide for Adult  
Sufferers and their Carers  
Glenn Waller, Victoria Mountford, Rachel Lawson, Emma Gray, Helen Cordery, Hendrik Hinrichsen  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

# Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the many colleagues, trainees, and patients who have helped us to shape our ideas and the program that we have outlined here. We would also like to thank all of the editorial and production teams at Cambridge University Press for their encouragement, patience and assistance throughout the preparation of this book. Although others have played a valuable role, particular thanks are due to Richard Marley, Katie James and Frances Peck.

We would like to dedicate this book to our families.

# About the authors

**Glenn Waller** has worked in the field of eating disorders for over 20 years. He works as a Consultant Clinical Psychologist for the Vincent Square Eating Disorders Service, Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust, where his clinical specialty is cognitive behavioral therapy for eating disorders. He is also Visiting Professor of Psychology at the Institute of Psychiatry, King’s College London. He has published over 200 peer-reviewed papers and 20 book chapters on the pathology and treatment of eating disorders, and has presented his work at many national and international conferences. He is also the lead author of a book on cognitive behavioral therapy for eating disorders (Waller, G., Cordery, H., Corstorphine, E., *et al.* [2007]). He is a member of the international Eating Disorders Research Society and the British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies, and is a Fellow of the Academy for Eating Disorders. He is registered as a practitioner with the Health Professions Council.

**Victoria Mountford** is a Principal Clinical Psychologist with the Eating Disorders Service, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and an Honorary Research Fellow at the Institute of Psychiatry, King’s College London. She has both published and presented widely on eating disorders and has a particular interest in body image in eating disorders. She is currently involved in large treatment trials to evaluate the use of psychological therapies, including CBT, in anorexia nervosa. She is also co-author of a book on cognitive behavioral therapy for eating disorders (Waller, G., Cordery, H., Corstorphine, E., *et al.* [2007]). Victoria is an accredited member of the British Association of Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy and the British Psychological Society, and is a registered practitioner with the Health Professions Council.

**Rachel Lawson** is a Senior Clinical Psychologist at the South Island Eating Disorders, Canterbury District Health Board in New Zealand, and is in private practice with the Anxiety Clinic, Christchurch, New Zealand. She has published research on eating disorders and regularly teaches about this area. She presents at national and international conferences on eating disorders.

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-73904-7 - Beating Your Eating Disorder: A Cognitive Behavioral Self-Help Guide for Adult Sufferers and their Carers  
Glenn Waller, Victoria Mountford, Rachel Lawson, Emma Gray, Helen Cordery, Hendrik Hinrichsen  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

**xvi**    About the authors

**Emma Gray (née Corstorphine)** was Consultant Clinical Psychologist/Clinical Manager with the Oxford and Buckinghamshire Eating Disorders Service until recently. She left this post to expand her private practice (The British CBT & Counselling Service) and her family. She has published peer-reviewed papers and a book chapter on eating disorders and has presented papers and workshops at national and international conferences. She is also co-author of a book on cognitive behavioural therapy for eating disorders (Waller, G., Cordery, H., Corstorphine, E., *et al.* [2007]). She is a member of The British Psychological Society and the British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies. She is registered with the Health Professions Council. She is a Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute of Psychiatry, King’s College London.

**Helen Cordery** had been a dietitian for about 17 years at the time of co-writing this book, 12 of which had been spent specializing in working with people with eating disorders. This work was mainly within the National Health Service (NHS) and within a variety of settings (with outpatients, and on both in-patient and day-patient units). She is currently in the process of training to become an attachment-based psychotherapist.

**Hendrik Hinrichsen** is a Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Clinical Lead for the Sutton & Merton IAPT Service based in Wimbledon, London. He is also a Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute of Psychiatry, King’s College London. Dr Hinrichsen has both published and presented research on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) for eating disorders and anxiety disorders, and he is the co-author of a book on CBT for eating disorders (Waller, G., Cordery, H., Corstorphine, E., *et al.* [2007]). In 2003 and 2009, he was a joint recipient of South West London Excellence Awards for clinically relevant research and working in partnership. Dr Hinrichsen is registered as a professional psychologist with the Health Professions Council, and he is fully accredited by the British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP).