

Week 7

Summing Up:

Where You Are Now and
Where Do You Go From Here

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In the last session of the program, women usually come in with a visible change in appearance, and this is reinforced by therapists and group members. We ask them to relate the reactions from others to the exaggeration of their attractive behaviors and the change in their appearance. We reinforce the notion that factors other than weight constitute attractiveness and get more attention.

The rest of the session is spent reviewing each woman's progress and discussing what she still needs to work on. We frequently give out a questionnaire to help them assess this and to provide feedback about the group for use with future groups (see Table 9.1).

Even though some group members may have stopped binge eating entirely by now, we tell them to expect relapses. We define the relapse in positive terms, in that it is a cue that they need to work on something, that they need to practice their new skills. We point out that progress seldom

goes in a straight line but has its ups and downs. Above all, we tell them not to panic when they relapse. They are to see each relapse as an opportunity to come up with new coping skills. They are not to engage in all-or-nothing thinking such as "I messed up—I guess I will never be able to give up binge eating." Relapsing does not take away the progress they have made so far. It is a cue to review their skills and nourish themselves in ways that do not require food.

We also encourage them to refer to their notes frequently and to reread them from time to time. We ask them to continue filling out the binge-purge diary and to use the alternative coping responses. We schedule a follow-up session for 10 weeks following the end of the group. We usually end the group with a closing exercise in which every woman tells each group member what she perceives that woman has given to the group and what kind of gift she would like to give that person. This helps group members to say "goodbye." It also reinforces the gains made in the group so far and suggests future directions for each individual. For example, "You have given this group courage for trying new behaviors even though you were afraid, and if I could give you a gift, I would give you the ability to see your beauty from within and without as others see you."

In the follow-up session, we again review each member's progress, work on current problems, and suggest further directions for growth.

SUMMARY

1. Discuss the homework from the last session. How did others react to the changes in appearance other than weight and the exaggeration of attractive behaviors?
2. Review each person's progress and what changes she sees in herself and others. You may wish to give the Group Evaluation Form (see Table 9.1) to help them assess changes and future directions.
3. Prepare them for relapses.
4. Schedule a follow-up session and ask them to continue filling out the binge diary.
5. Do a closure exercise to help them say "goodbye."

Table 9.1. Group Evaluation Form

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. What changes have occurred in your eating habits since you started the group?

2. What other changes have you noticed in yourself since the beginning of the group?

3. Please indicate whether there has been an increase, decrease, or no change

in the following behaviors since you started the group:

	DECREASE	NO CHANGE	INCREASE
Number of binges			
Number of purges after binge eating			
Amount of caloric intake with each binge			
Length of binge			
Eating three meals a day			
Weighing self daily			
Number of whole days with no binge			
Using coping responses other than binge eating			

4. What aspects of the group did you find most valuable?

5. What did you find least valuable?

6. Please rate the following topics in terms of how helpful they were to you:

	VERY HELPFUL	SOMEWHAT HELPFUL	NOT HELPFUL
Bulimic Basics			
Health Hazards			
Alternative Coping Responses			
Changing the Way You Think			
Fat Facts			

Strategies for Confronting a
Binge

Perfectionism ("I shoulds")

Nourishing Yourself Without
Food

Ego Tripping

Assertiveness ("yes" & "no")

Anger

Societal Pressures to Be Thin

Body Image

Binge Diary

7. What topics would you have liked to see added to the group?

8. Would you recommend this group to anyone else? Why or why not?

9. What suggestions do you have for future groups?

10. What kind of additional help do you think you will need after this group?

11. Additional comments:

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