

Introduction

This Book and How to Use It

If you have a problem controlling your eating, this book is for you—whatever your age, whatever your gender, and whatever your weight. *Overcoming Binge Eating* will provide you with a readable and authoritative account of binge eating problems and how to overcome them. Part I presents the most current facts while Part II comprises a self-help program based on the latest version of the most effective treatment available. This “enhanced” program can be used by anyone with a binge eating problem so long as he or she is not substantially underweight (see p. 124).

The original version of *Overcoming Binge Eating* was published in 1995. Since then Part I has become established as a trustworthy source of information on binge eating problems. Meanwhile the treatment program in Part II has been investigated in numerous clinical trials, making it possibly the most extensively tested self-help program for any problem. Time after time it has been found to be a potent source of help, either when used on its own or when used with external support (guided self-help). As a result the program has become established as a leading treatment for binge eating problems. In recognition of this, *Overcoming Binge Eating* was awarded a Seal of Merit from the U.S. Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, and in the U.K. National Health Service doctors can prescribe the book as if it were a form of medication.

But time moves on, new knowledge is acquired, and with the new

knowledge comes advances in treatment. As a result this version of *Overcoming Binge Eating* is essentially a new book. I have thoroughly revised Part I to ensure it continues to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date account of what we know about binge eating problems. It now addresses all types of binge eating problems including those seen in anorexia nervosa. It also provides much more information about dieting, body weight, and body image.

I have also substantially modified Part II in light of advances in treatment and in particular the development of a new “enhanced” version of the trustworthy evidence-based treatment. CBT-E includes a new way of conceptualizing eating problems, improved ways of regaining control over eating, a more sophisticated approach to the addressing of concerns about shape and weight, and much more emphasis on relapse prevention. These new developments have been incorporated into the self-help program. The program in this version of *Overcoming Binge Eating* is, in essence, a self-help version of CBT-E.

If you have a binge eating problem, you may be tempted to go straight to Part II of the book. This would be a mistake. You need to read Part I first (at a minimum read Chapters 1, 4, and 5) as this will help you understand your problem and why it has become so self-perpetuating. This understanding is essential if you are to benefit from the self-help program. On the other hand, you may be unsure whether you have a binge eating problem. If this is the case, I suggest you read the very same key chapters (Chapters 1, 4, and 5) in Part I to see if you identify with the problems described. If you do, then move on to the beginning of Part II (p. 119), where I discuss the pros and cons of attempting to change.