



## It's Just About Food, Right?

A common misconception about eating disorders is that it is just about food.

*That food is the issue.* People with eating disorders just don't want to eat, right? Don't they just want to lose weight?

*That food is the cure-all.* Just eat and everything will be OK. Just eat and you'll get better. Just. Eat.

Now, that's not to say that food isn't part of the issue or part of the answer. The utilization of food as a tool to influence weight and self-esteem, to manage emotion, to create [the illusion] of control, is a fundamental part of having an eating disorder. The nourishment that food provides to your body and your mind absolutely is a part of recovery.

But it's not the whole picture. "Just eating" doesn't take away the eating disorder. "Just eating" doesn't automatically erase the deeply held beliefs about your body and your weight. "Just eating" doesn't solve all the issues. It's important to look deeper and identify

what the food really represents for the individual with an eating disorder. What are the thoughts and fears that fuel the eating disorder and keep it around? What are the negative beliefs that make it incredibly difficult just to pick up a fork and just take a single bite? For someone with an eating disorder, each bite can feel like a tremendously difficult task. The heaviest weight one could imagine.

But food is certainly part of it all and is an incredibly important part of achieving recovery. Taking those first scary steps into the unknown, take the first bites of something that terrifies you, learning to be at peace with food, learning to trust food (and your body!) is a huge part of eating disorder recovery.

**For those who have loved ones struggling with an eating disorder or for those wanting to better understand eating disorders, it is important to understand that the issue is so much more than just food, and that digging deeper into what's beneath the eating behaviors is ultimately where recovery begins.**

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