

NAVIGATING YOUR COLLEGE TRANSITION DURING EATING DISORDER RECOVERY

BY: ESPERANZA STAFF

Transitioning to college can be an exciting time but if you're in eating disorder recovery, this transition can be challenging. The pressure to fit in often conflicts with concerns about body weight. There can be stress surrounding body image and food. With unlimited food options, late-night study sessions, and social gatherings centered around food, it's easy to feel overwhelmed and anxious about what and when to eat and how your body might change. However, there are ways to navigate this transition while prioritizing your mental health.

Self-compassion can be a game-changer in your recovery journey. It's a powerful practice that involves treating yourself with kindness, understanding, and acceptance.

Kindness can look like: *Holding a gentle space for tolerating you own shortcomings, treating yourself with acceptance like you would a good friend and not hurting yourself with negative talk.*

Also, it is crucial to surround yourself with supportive friends who respect your boundaries and encourage your recovery journey.

Understanding sounds like: *"I make mistakes and so do others – mistakes are allowed and okay."*

During challenging times, it's essential to recognize that you're human and it's okay to make mistakes or face setbacks. Rather than berating yourself for not meeting unrealistic expectations, self-compassion encourages you to embrace perceived imperfections with empathy and understanding. This mindset shift can alleviate feelings of shame and guilt and allow you to approach challenges with a greater sense of resilience and self-worth.

Self-acceptance will be: *Letting go of outside validation coming from personal and on-line interactions.*

Trying to conform to unrealistic beauty standards can lead to feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt. Comparing yourself to others often perpetuates negative self-talk and serves to undermine your progress in recovery. Practice self-acceptance.

College is often portrayed as a time for socializing and making lifelong friendships. While this can be true, not all social situations are conducive to your recovery journey. You might encounter peer pressure to engage in behaviors that are harmful to your mental and physical health such as restrictive eating, excessive exercise, and substance abuse. It's okay to prioritize your health and well-being over societal expectations. Seek out campus resources such as counseling services or student support groups where you can connect with others who understand what you're going through.

Your worth is not determined by your appearance, the number on a scale or any accolades you earn. Your value lies in your unique qualities, talents, and characteristics.

