

CONNECTION

EATING DISORDER RECOVERY HAPPENS THROUGH CONNECTION



THREE PROFESSIONALS SHARE EATING DISORDER TESTIMONIES OF RECOVERY & RESILIENCY

As a professional treating eating disorders and a survivor of an eating disorder, this week means many different things. It is a time to educate the community and offer resources. It is a time to network and build relationships with others fighting the good fight. It is a time to reflect on how far I have come over the past six and a half years walking my personal recovery journey.

Recovery has allowed me to think clearly and graduate college. It has allowed me to nurture a healthy relationship, wear the white dress without dreaded body image, and eat cake on my wedding day. Recovery allowed me to embrace pregnancy and birth my beautiful son into this world. It has allowed me to connect with others on their journeys, advocate for them, and walk with them on their paths of healing. Recovery has given me my life back. It has given me freedom.

National Eating Disorder week is a time to celebrate. It is a time to speak my truth in the hopes that it is a glimmer of hope for someone in the throes of their own personal hell. Reaching out may be one of the hardest things you have ever done but to feel true happiness and find recovery is a gift that you will forever hold onto. I encourage you to take the first step in walking away from this struggle and walking towards growth, change, and healing. Don't let the demon silence or isolate you any longer. You don't have to live in this hell forever. There is hope. There is light. You can make it.

I HAVE HAD THE GREAT PRIVILEGE OF WORKING TO HELP ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS RECOVER FROM EATING DISORDERS FOR OVER 30 YEARS. WHEN I FIRST STARTED WORKING IN A HOSPITAL WITH PEOPLE WITH SEVERE EATING DISORDERS, I QUICKLY RECOGNIZED THE ENTRAPMENT AND THE PAIN THAT THEY EXPERIENCED DAILY.

I AM THANKFUL FOR THE NEWLY DEVELOPED BEHAVIORAL TREATMENT APPROACHES WHERE I HAVE BEEN PRIVY TO WITNESS RECOVERY OVER THE YEARS. WHAT IT TAKES IS PERSEVERANCE THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF BEHAVIORAL STRUCTURE AND LEVEL OF CARE. TRUST IN THE TREATMENT TEAM AND HOPE FOR A LIFE FREE FROM THE DAILY BERATEMENT OF CRITICAL AND MANIPULATIVE EATING DISORDER THOUGHTS.

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There was a time when life seemed so hopeless. When feeling was hard, draining, and overwhelming. When the good was almost impossible to see and so far out of reach. Recovery changed this into a life worth living. It is a daily choice to be in the moment and experience the sun rise and sun set, my children growing, love, life changes, aging, and relationships. It isn't always easy staying in these moments. By nature, I fear the future and obsess about the past, it is a choice to focus on the present. I now know that I won't do it all perfect and that is okay. Some days I have insecurities, body image issues, anxiety, and stress. Some days "I am not enough!" Some days life throws me a million curve balls, and all seems dark.

Recovery gives me light, the path through it, and without ED I have the choice to be where my feet are and experience a life, I never thought possible. A life of joy, family, love, and most of all purpose.

There is something special about life after an eating disorder. Engaging in life while recovered tastes that much better. It feels like such a privilege. You experience life with a different lens. You savor your good moments with so much gusto because you know how much they've cost you.

When we are in the midst of our eating disorder everything is robbed from us. Daily tasks are hard, to impossible, to accomplish. Activities and people we once loved seemed so distant, blurry, as if we can't reach them or feel them. It is as if every positive emotion is sucked away from our soul and only a deep dark hole is left in its place. So, when recovery is achieved, the goodness of life tastes that much sweeter.

There was a time in my life when I couldn't see past my eating disorder and thought, "This is it. This will be my life forever." There was no point in fighting, because in my head I had already lost. However, somewhere inside me there was a light that believed in more. It was a small glimmer that in all honesty seemed very dim, compared to all the darkness I felt. I decided to hold on to that light and I am so glad I pushed through. Because as it turns out, that wasn't life, it was my hell. Now, years later I get to experience the greatest of emotions when I look at the life I've built. Seeing my children play. Holding my husband's hand. Doing my makeup. Dressing up and not hating my body. Dancing with pride. Having a purpose I love. All of that is just some of the magic I get to live now. I look at my life in recovery and I'm truly amazed at what we can experience when we choose HOPE.

INTERNATIONAL EATING DISORDER AWARENESS WEEK
FEBRUARY 28 - MARCH 4 2022

Esperanza = Hope