



CONNECTION

EATING DISORDER RECOVERY HAPPENS THROUGH CONNECTION



THANKSGIVING PRACTICE FEAST "RECOVERY BY DOING" IN ACTION

Holiday celebrations provide many opportunities for *Recovery by Doing* with patients at Esperanza Eating Disorders Center.

"Celebrations are supposed to be joyful occasions. All too often that is not the case for eating disorder patients," says Susan Mengden, PhD, CEO and Clinical Director of Esperanza EDC.

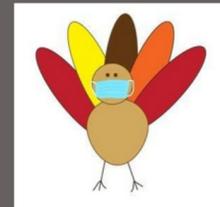
Halloween candy provides the first opportunity of the season to "practice" for a holiday. Candy is often thought of as a "bad" food. As a result, some eating disorder patients avoid it all together, while for others it is a binge food. "*Recovery By Doing* means we teach our patients to give themselves permission to eat all foods in moderation. Exposure to feared or avoided foods reinforces the philosophy that all foods fit," Dr Mengden continued.

Thanksgiving can be an especially difficult holiday for eating disorder patients. Add family dynamics to this holiday that is all about the food and it can be a day patients dread instead of one to be embraced. Giving our patients an opportunity to practice a complete Thanksgiving feast in advance gives them tools to help them through the actual holiday meal.

Tables are beautifully decorated with a Thanksgiving theme and there is special focus on gratitude before and during the meal. As with Halloween candy, some will have the tendency to under eat, while others may express high urges to binge during or after the meal. Clinicians are there throughout the meal to provide guidance to help overcome those urges by helping them use therapeutic skills..

Walking through a practice Thanksgiving celebration gives our patients an opportunity to experience triggers in advance and prepare strategies to deal with them. Helping participants practice mindful mechanical eating increases their confidence as they move toward the holiday. Our hope is that the intentional practice of all of these examples of *Recovery By Doing* will allow our patients to approach the holidays with a sense of empowerment and preparedness.

Based on individual needs, The Emotional Overeating Program will offer onsite and virtual options beginning November 17th. For additional information connect with us at (210) 253-9753.



Click the link to see more about the pre-holiday feast and hear the mantra used before meals in both english and Spanish.

<https://youtu.be/ibmaMFwYmlo>



ESPERANZA = HOPE