

Information Handout

Professional Version | US English

Cognitive Behavioral Model Of Bulimia Nervosa (Fairburn, Cooper, Shafran, 2003)



Description

Bulimia nervosa is characterized by frequent episodes of binge eating as well as episodes of compensatory behavior to prevent weight gain. This behavior can include self-induced vomiting, misuse of laxatives, or excessive exercise.

Fairburn, Marcus & Wilson (1993) proposed that a dysfunctional system for evaluating self-worth is central to the maintenance of bulimia nervosa. Instead of evaluating one's self-worth based on a broad range of criteria they argue that people with bulimia judge themselves "largely, or even exclusively, in terms of their eating habits, shape, or weight (and often all three) and their ability to control them." The 'problems' of bulimia nervosa, such as weight-control behavior and preoccupation with weight, are seen as resulting from this primary mechanism. Binge eating episodes are understood to be a result of negative reactions to 'slips' in attempts to adhere to rigid dietary control. An additional factor maintaining binge eating in those individuals who practice vomiting or the use of laxatives is the mistaken belief that these practices are effective strategies to minimize weight gain. The cognitive behavioral model of bulimia nervosa presented here illustrates these processes central to the maintenance of the disorder.

Fairburn, Cooper & Shafran (2003) developed a transdiagnostic model of eating disorders, of which these maintenance cycles of bulimia nervosa form a part. To account for a broad range of eating disorder presentations the transdiagnostic model includes four additional maintenance mechanisms which operate in *some* individuals:

- Clinical perfectionism.
- Core low self-esteem (persistent and pervasive negative self-beliefs that are viewed as part of the individual's self-identity).
- Mood intolerance (difficulty coping with strong mood states).
- Interpersonal difficulties.

One interesting characteristic of the full transdiagnostic model is that *"The patient's specific eating disorder diagnosis is not of relevance to the treatment. Rather, its content is dictated by the particular psychological features present and the processes that appear to be maintaining them"*.

Instructions

This is a Psychology Tools information handout.

Suggested uses include:

- Client handout – a psychoeducation resource.
- Discussion point – to provoke a discussion and explore your client's beliefs.
- Therapist learning tool – to improve your familiarity with a psychological construct.
- Supervision tool – to develop formulations and knowledge.
- Teaching resource – a learning tool during training.

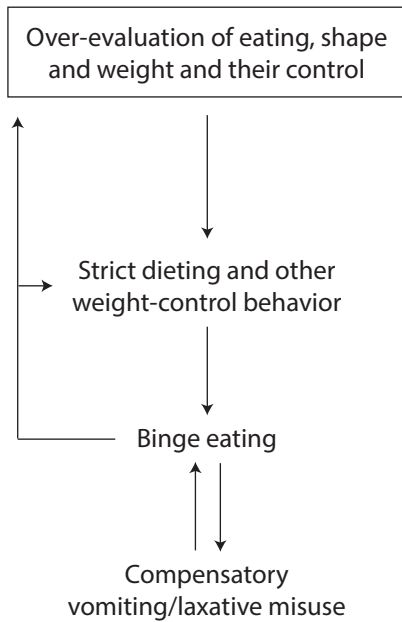
References

Fairburn, C. G., Cooper, Z., Shafran, R. (2003). Cognitive behaviour therapy for eating disorders: a “transdiagnostic” theory and treatment. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 41, 509-528.

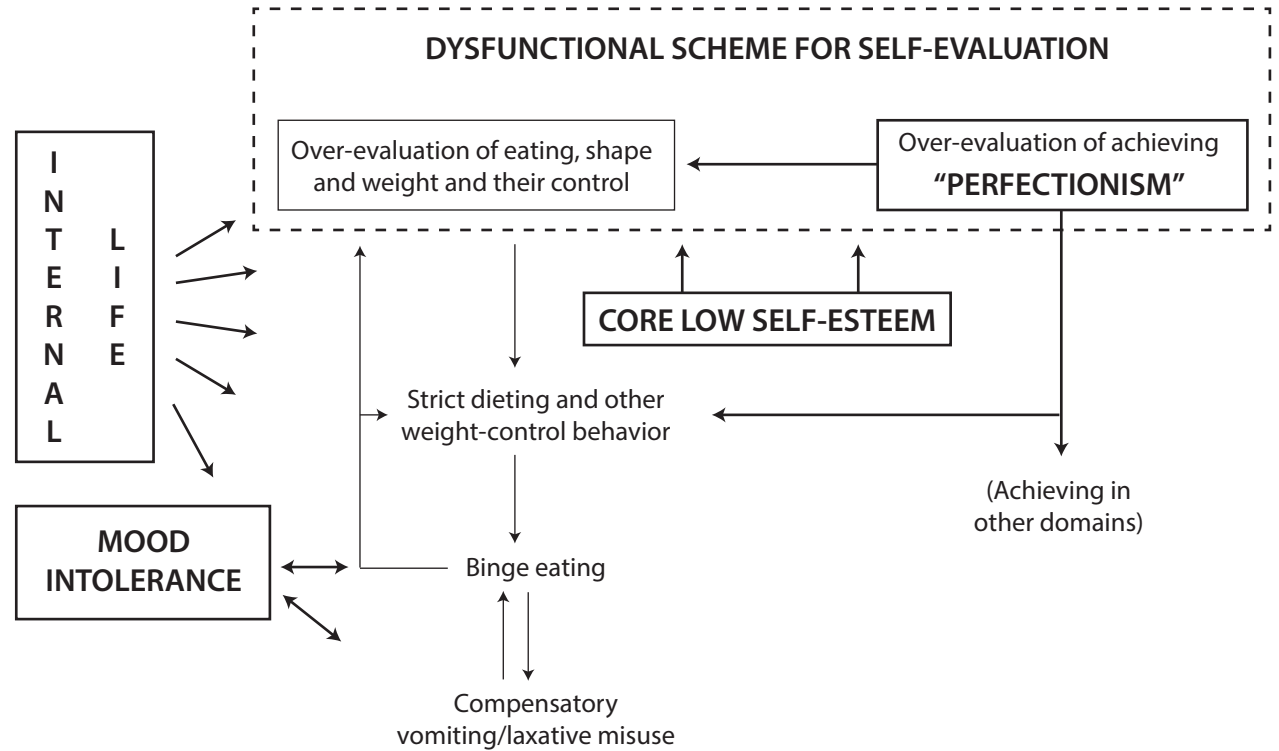
Fairburn, C. G., Marcus, M. D., & Wilson, G. T. (1993b). Cognitive-behavioral therapy for binge eating and bulimia nervosa: a comprehensive treatment manual. In C. G. Fairburn, & G. T. Wilson (Eds.), *Binge eating: nature, assessment and treatment* (pp. 361–404). New York: Guilford Press.

Cognitive Behavioral Model Of Bulimia Nervosa (Fairburn, Cooper, Shafran, 2003)

Core model



Extended model



Psychology Tools develops and publishes evidence-based psychotherapy resources. We support mental health professionals to deliver effective therapy, whatever their theoretical orientation or level of experience.

Our digital library encompasses information handouts, worksheets, workbooks, exercises, guides, and audio skills-development resources.

Our tools are flexible enough to be used both in-session and between-session, and during all stages of assessment, formulation, and intervention. Written by highly qualified clinicians and academics, materials are available in digital and printable formats across a wide range of languages.



Resource details

Title: Cognitive Behavioral Model Of Bulimia Nervosa (Fairburn, Cooper, Shafran, 2003)
 Type: Information Handout
 Language: English (US)
 Translated title: Cognitive Behavioral Model Of Bulimia Nervosa (Fairburn, Cooper, Shafran, 2003)

URL: <https://www.psychologytools.com/resource/cognitive-behavioral-model-of-bulimia-nervosa-fairburn-cooper-shafran-2003/>
 Resource format: Professional
 Version: 20230721
 Last updated by: EB

Terms & conditions

This resource may be used by licensed members of Psychology Tools and their clients. Resources must be used in accordance with our terms and conditions which can be found at: <https://www.psychologytools.com/terms-and-conditions/>

Disclaimer

Your use of this resource is not intended to be, and should not be relied on, as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. If you are suffering from any mental health issues we recommend that you seek formal medical advice before using these resources. We make no warranties that this information is correct, complete, reliable or suitable for any purpose. As a professional user, you should work within the bounds of your own competencies, using your own skill and knowledge, and therefore the resources should be used to support good practice, not to replace it.

Copyright

Unless otherwise stated, this resource is Copyright © 2023 Psychology Tools Limited. All rights reserved.