

## 8 Keys to Recovery from an Eating Disorder

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A book review by Tim Brunson, PhD

Few mental pathologies have as much potential to create anguish and an experiential threat as eating disorders. [8 Keys to Recovery from an Eating Disorder: Effective Strategies from Therapeutic Practice and Personal Experience](#) by Carolyn Costin, MA, Med, MFT, and Gwen Schubert Grabb, MA, MFT, is an excellent self-help book intended to help those suffering from this problem by increasing their understanding and giving them hope that recovery is possible.

One of the most striking aspects of this book is the fact that it was written by two therapists who were themselves afflicted by eating disorders. This helps the authors connect with potential readers as they lead them through their personal journeys. They share how they initially developed eating disorders, came to recognize its seriousness, and how they navigated through various stages of recovery.

This book is part of a series of "8 Keys" self-help books published by W.W. Norton & Company. As eating disorders are a very complex problem, which almost always warrants both medical and psychotherapeutic treatment, I was initially concerned as to whether this book could do the subject justice. However, I found that this simplification was extremely effective and most likely just what the average therapy client needs to help them understand the major tenets of the healing process.

The one major theme found throughout this book is a story of hope that recovery is highly probable once a person recognizes and accepts that they have an eating disorder, and that professional assistance is warranted. Again, the personal stories of the authors help give the feeling that recovery is indeed very possible.

This is a book, which I highly recommend. For a person who suspects that this book may apply to them or for those who have been diagnosed as having an eating disorder, it will help them understand what they are going through and address major treatment issues. For family members or friends of the eating disorder sufferer, it will be equally enlightening both regarding their role in inadvertently facilitating the onset of an eating disorder as well as how they can be supportive during the recovery period.

Hypnotherapists and other care-givers can also benefit from reading this book. Even though it is not written in a format, which will specify exact treatment protocols and procedures, it is useful in helping recognize the disorder and know when a client should be referred to another more qualified colleague. Indeed, on several occasions I have been contacted by a person who wanted hypnotherapy assistance in managing their weight and quickly realized that the problem was much more serious than the client realized.

As an eating disorder is predominantly a situation in which many of the auto-regulatory functions of the brain's limbic system have been disrupted and need to be re-balanced, I was somewhat surprised that the authors did not spend more time discussing guided imagery and/or formal hypnotherapeutic treatment. They only addressed this briefly - albeit while omitting the words hypnosis and hypnotherapy. I trust that a more professional treatment manual would correct this concern. Qualified hypnotherapists - to include lay practitioners who possess both the requisite skills in hypnotherapy and psychotherapy - could accelerate a client's progress through the various stages of healing and recovery.

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