

Relapse Justification

Relapse justification is a process that happens in people's minds. If a decision has been made to stop the eating disorder behavior but the behavior still has strength, the game gets tricky. The addicted part of the brain invents excuses that move the eating disordered person close enough to relapse situations that accidents can and do happen. You may remember times when you were planning to stay free of your eating disorder behavior and such a situation happened.

Use the questions below to help you identify justifications your eating disorder brain might use. You can then interrupt the relapse process.

Accidentally or Other People

Does your eating disordered brain ever try to convince you that you have no choice or that an unexpected situation caught you off-guard? Have you ever said to yourself?

- An old friend called, and we decided to get together.
- I had friends come for dinner.
- This is a party.
- Other _____.

Catastrophic Events

Is there one unlikely major event that is the only reason you would engage in eating disorder behavior? What might such an event be for you? How would using your eating disorder improve the situation?

- My spouse/girlfriend/boyfriend left me. There was no reason to use conscious eating.
- I just got injured. It ruined all my plans. I might as well go back to my eating disorder behavior.
- I just lost my job. Why not?
- My family is falling apart. Why not?
- Other _____.

For a Specific Purpose

Has your eating disorder brain ever suggested that using your eating disorder is the only way to accomplish anything?

- I'm gaining weight and need to restrict my eating (or purge).
- I'm out of energy. I'll function better.
- I need my behavior to meet people more easily.
- I can't enjoy _____ without my eating disorder.
- Other _____.

Depression, Anger, Loneliness, and Fear

Does feeling depressed, angry, lonely, or afraid make using seem like the answer? Is it really?

- I'm depressed. What difference does it make if I practice my eating disorder behavior or not?
- When I get mad enough I can't control what I do.
- I'm scared. I know how to make this feeling go away.
- If he/she thinks I've used my eating disorder, I might as well do it.
- Other _____.

Eating Disorder is Cured

Does your eating disordered brain ever try to convince you that you can do it just once or just a little?

- I'm back in control. I'll be able to stop when I want to.
- I've learned. I'll only do a little bit and only on occasion.
- Other _____.

Testing Yourself

Would you brain like to prove you could be stronger than your eating disorder? It's very easy to forget that being smart, not being strong, is the key to staying free of eating disorder behavior. Have you ever thought?

- I'm strong enough to try it again – just a little.
- I want to see if I can say "no" to binging (or purging, abstinence, etc.).
- I want to see how this feels not that I've stopped.
- Other _____.

Celebrating

Both the eating disorder brain and other people may encourage you to fall for the following:

- I'm feeling really good. One time won't hurt.
- I'm doing so well. Things are going great. I owe myself a reward.
- This is such a special event that I want to celebrate.
- Other _____.