

Practical Exercise 1

First, jot down in your notebook some of the things you think are the advantages of having an eating disorder. If you're struggling to think of any pros, ask yourself what you would find difficult if someone waved a magic wand and suddenly took your eating disorder away.

Next, think about the disadvantages of your eating disorder. What don't you like about it? How does it affect you, your work, your relationships?

Now weigh up the advantages and disadvantages and make a note of what you have learned through doing this exercise.

To help you complete this exercise, look at Samantha's completed worksheet:



Samantha's Worksheet 1: Advantages and Disadvantages of Having an Eating Disorder

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I can eat what I want and not gain weight• It's familiar and in some ways it's easier to be bulimic, maybe I should just accept this is the way I am• Bingeing helps me cope with feeling anxious• It makes my boyfriend feel needed, he's always trying to help, I really feel cared for• If my exams don't go well I have an excuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At times it feels like my eating disorder is controlling my life; I'm sick of it• In reality it makes me feel completely miserable and alone• I'm unable to enjoy food like other people• I've hardly any friends because all my time is spent either bingeing and throwing up or exercising like mad• Physically I feel rubbish, my throat is permanently sore and I sound like I smoke twenty cigarettes a day• I'm always broke, all my money goes on food

Summary



What have I learned from doing this exercise?

I didn't think there were any advantages to having bulimia and I'm surprised by how many answers I came up with. It makes sense to me why I have found making changes difficult. In reality I hate having bulimia.