



**Part 1:
Challenges of
Recovery**

Physical Health

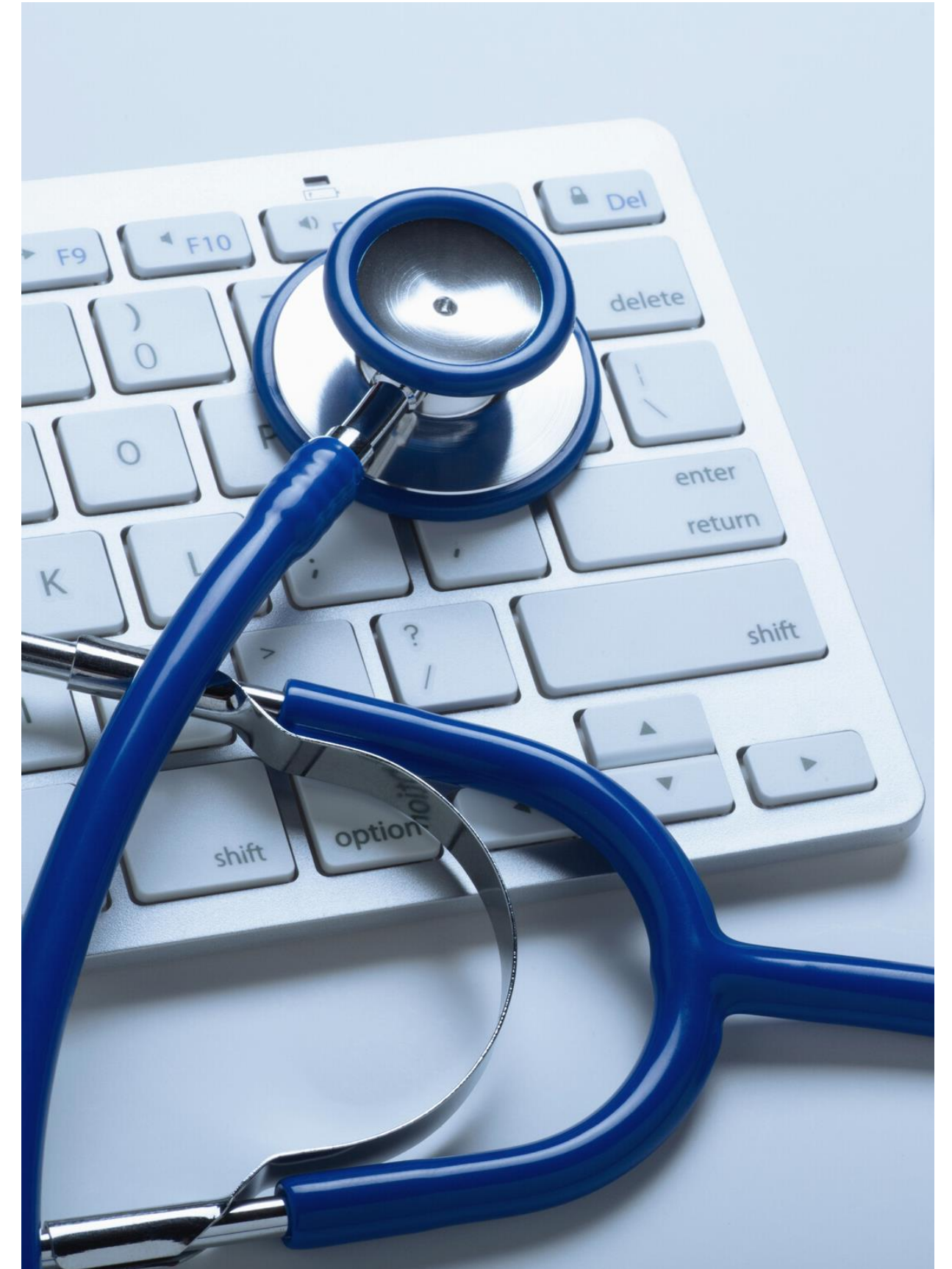


BODY BRAVE
recovery for **every** body

Affects on Quality of Life

- Have one of the highest impacts on health-related quality of life of all psychiatric disorders
- Cause problems with identity formation, self-esteem and social connectedness
- Anxiety, depression and substance abuse are common co-morbidities
- Disrupt developmental trajectories (affecting entry into the workforce and increasing dependence on social assistance)

**DISORDERED EATING
BEHAVIOURS CAN HAVE
SEVERE PHYSICAL
IMPLICATIONS,
EVEN IF THEY ARE NEVER
DIAGNOSED AS AN
EATING DISORDER.**



WHAT IS RESTRICTION?

- Dietary restriction is a term used to define 'undereating' in the biological sense
- Can be a reality for folks engaging in:
 - fasting
 - skipping meals
 - suppressing their appetite
 - depriving themselves of food as a compensation for binge eating



Cardiovascular

- body begins to break down its own tissue - often muscles, with the heart being the most important
- drop in heart rate (bradycardia) and blood pressure (hypotension) - increasing risk of heart failure
- reduced resting metabolic rate

Warning Signs:

- fatigue/lack of energy
- fainting
- shortness of breath
- chest pain

The background of the slide features a collage of brain MRI scans in various orientations (sagittal, axial, and coronal). The scans are in grayscale, showing the internal structure of the brain. A dark teal rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the word 'Neurological' in white text.

Neurological

- some neurotransmitters (like serotonin) are produced in our gastrointestinal tract (95% of our serotonin at least!)
 - when our digestive system is affected, so is our mood on a neurological level
- brain doesn't get the energy it needs - leads to difficulty concentrating, issues falling asleep, increased irritability, and mood swings

An X-ray image of a human knee joint, showing the femur (thigh bone) at the top, the tibia (shin bone) at the bottom, and the patella (kneecap) in the center. The joint space and surrounding bone structure are clearly visible.

Additional

- hormone levels: sex and thyroid hormones can fall leading to menstruation issues as well as increase bone loss (osteopenia, osteoporosis)
- Anemia: lack of red blood cells to carry oxygen to body's tissues
- nutritional deficiency, impacting:
 - oral health: tooth decay, gum disease, sores in mouth
 - skin and vision health
 - immune functioning: decrease in infection-fighting white blood cells

WHAT IS BINGE EATING?

- Recurring consumption of large quantities of food very quickly, even when someone is not hungry, or past the point of fullness
- Often accompanied with feeling out of control when eating, and/or feel a sense of shame or guilt



Cardiovascular

- metabolic syndrome is a condition that includes a cluster of risk factors specific for cardiovascular disease
 - high blood pressure (hypertension)
 - impaired fasting glucose
 - high triglyceride levels (dyslipidemia)
 - low HDL cholesterol levels (increases risk of heart disease)
- these risk factors can increase the risk of stroke, heart attack, and heart disease

A photograph of a person's midsection. They are wearing a white t-shirt and blue jeans. Their hands are clasped together and pressed against their lower abdomen, suggesting they are experiencing discomfort or pain. A dark teal rectangular box is overlaid on the image, containing the word 'GASTROINTESTINAL' in white, bold, uppercase letters.

GASTROINTESTINAL

- gastrointestinal concerns including:
 - heartburn
 - acid regurgitation
 - difficulties swallowing (dysphagia)
 - bloating, abdominal pain
 - diarrhea



Additional

- nutritional deficiency, impacting:
 - oral health: tooth decay, gum disease, sores in mouth
 - skin and vision health
 - immune functioning: decrease in infection-fighting white blood cells
- impacted mood: low energy, tiredness, sluggishness
- menstrual dysfunction:
 - amenorrhea, oligomenorrhea

WHAT IS PURGING?

- Purging can include different types of compensatory behaviour:
 - self-induced vomiting
 - use of laxatives/diuretics
 - insulin misuse/mismanagement
 - excessive exercise



Cardiovascular

- depleting your body of electrolytes (includes chemicals like potassium, sodium, chloride, etc) causing electrolyte imbalances
 - can lead to irregular heartbeat, heart failure

Sources: Crow et al. (2009); Morris et al. (2017);
Tith et al. (2020); Messerli-Bürky et al. (2010).

A close-up photograph of a person's midsection. They are wearing a light-colored, possibly white, t-shirt. Their hands are clasped together and pressed against their stomach, specifically in the upper right quadrant, suggesting abdominal pain or discomfort. The lighting is soft and natural.

GASTROINTESTINAL

- slowed digestion (gastroparesis) can lead to:
 - stomach pain, bloating
 - nausea, vomiting
 - fluctuations in blood sugar
 - blocked intestines
 - bacterial infections
- pancreatitis: an inflammatory condition in which the digestive enzymes attack the pancreas
- esophageal inflammation/rupture

A close-up, shallow depth-of-field photograph of several dental handpieces. The handpieces are metallic, primarily silver and chrome, with some black and orange accents. They are arranged diagonally across the frame, with the foreground handpiece in sharp focus and others blurred in the background. A dark teal rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the word 'DENTAL' in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

DENTAL

- tooth decay/erosion due to exposure to stomach acid, can lead to:
 - sensitivity
 - teeth becoming transparent
 - changes in shapes/length of teeth
 - yellow/orange/brown teeth as second layer (dentin) becomes exposed
- swollen salivary glands (sialadenitis)



Additional

- severe dehydration
- edema (swelling caused by excess fluid) - often noticed in hands, arms, feet, ankles, and legs
- hormone levels: sex and thyroid hormones can fall leading to menstruation issues as well as increase bone loss (osteopenia, osteoporosis)
- Russell's signs: scratches on the back of your hand from inducing gag reflex.

A close-up, blue-tinted photograph of medical equipment. In the foreground, a syringe with a needle is visible, showing measurement markings on its barrel. Behind it, a stethoscope is partially visible. The background is blurred, showing more medical supplies.

ADDRESSING THESE PHYSICAL CONCERNS IN RECOVERY



Heart Health

- Many cardiovascular complications are reversible or treatable with proper treatment

If you are struggling with disordered eating:

- Talk to your doctor about any chest pain or discomfort you feel
- If you can, share your concerns with your doctor so they can monitor the appropriate vital signs (Heart Rhythm, Heart Sounds, Murmurs, Jugular Venous Pressure, and Recurring Chest Pain)



Stomach Health

- GI or discomfort for a short term during recovery - you may still experience gas, bloating, cramping, indigestion, and constipation

If you are struggling with disordered eating:

- Explore options for working with a dietitian as you navigate recovery to help support your nutritional needs
- Talk with your doctor about these GI concerns so that they can be tracked through your recovery, and then dealt with if they persist

A teal background with several white toothbrushes and a white tooth. A dark teal rectangle is overlaid on the left side, containing the text 'Dental Health' in white.

Dental Health

- damage to teeth from purging can be permanent, especially when bones are also being weakened by malnutrition

If you are struggling with disordered eating:

- If you are concerned with your dental health and have access to dental care, request a oral health risk assessment
- Sheena's Place webinar: [Dental Care Tips While Experiencing an Eating Disorder](#)

Questions?

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