

THE ANOREXIA WORKBOOK

How to Accept Yourself, Heal Your Suffering, and Reclaim Your Life
By Michelle Heffner, M.A., and Georg Eifert, Ph.D.

FOR A REVIEW COPY OR INTERVIEW REQUEST CONTACT:
Earlita Chenault at (510) 652-2002, ext. 142 or via E-mail at earlita@newharbinger.com

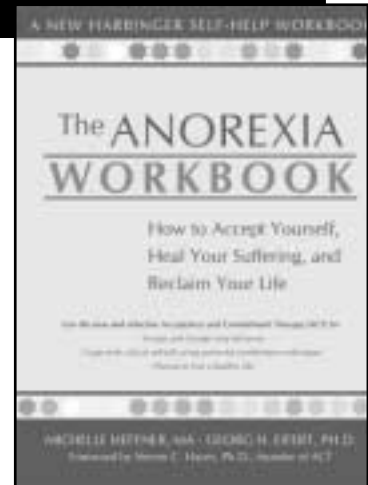
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Therapists introduce revolutionary new treatment to help those suffering from anorexia

With the current public fascination with the eating habits and dramatic weight loss of high profile celebrities many young women measure themselves against an impossible ideal, sometimes with dangerous results. Approximately 1 in 100 U.S. women between the ages of 12 and 30 will develop anorexia nervosa, and many of them are reluctant to seek help from a therapist to treat the disease. The Anorexia Workbook (New Harbinger) is a viable option for those who would otherwise go untreated.

The workbook introduces acceptance and commitment theory (ACT, pronounced act), a promising new intervention for anorexia that, unlike more traditional "thought stopping" treatment techniques, encourages those with the anorexia to accept and observe negative thoughts without reacting to them in a self-destructive manner. The authors, leading ACT researchers, teach readers how to view the obsessive need for control over food as a problem, not a solution; how to better cope with out-of-control emotions and thoughts; and how to re-direct the drive for thinness towards healthier, valued life options.

The only book to use ACT-based techniques to address the particular needs of anorexics, The Anorexia Workbook is both a compassionate and affective approach to treating a condition that, left completely untreated, could have devastating consequences.



THE ANOREXIA WORKBOOK

1-57224-362-7, (paper), \$17.95, 200 pages

New Harbinger Publications, 5674 Shattuck Ave., Oakland, CA 94609

www.newharbinger.com, 800-748-6273

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SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- * Has there been any research to support Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), the approach you use in this book?
- * What makes ACT different from other treatments of anorexia?
- * Why are so many women reluctant to seek help from a therapist for eating disorders/anorexia?
- * How can family or friends help a loved one with anorexia?
- * You have included chapters on values. What are values and why are they important to treatment?
- * What is the particular strength of this book in treating those with anorexia?

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Supplementary Material

[Excerpt]

An Anorexia Self-Test

In this chapter you will learn to assess how much you:

- * Fear and avoid weight gain
- * Feel you need to be thin to be accepted
- * Try to control your weight in order to feel good

You probably have certain thoughts, worries, and concerns about eating, the way you look, and what other people think of you—and you probably feel strongly about some of these concerns. For this reason, it is important to assess how strongly you feel about these thoughts and concerns, what they mean to you, and how you respond to them. In this chapter you will assess in more detail some of your thoughts, worries, and attitudes about eating, the way you look, and what other people think of you.

In 1989, Scott Mizes and Robert Klesges developed the *Mizes Anorectic Cognitions Questionnaire*, also known as the MAC, to assess the extent to which people with anorexia experience specific thoughts and beliefs about eating and weight. Psychologists refer to thoughts and beliefs as *cognitions*.

Completing this questionnaire is one way to assess how your personal beliefs about eating and weight compare to beliefs of other people with anorexia. The purpose of this questionnaire is not to establish whether you do or do not have anorexia but whether your thoughts, beliefs, and worries are similar to those of people who have been diagnosed with anorexia. This will clue you in to the severity of your problem.

Keep in mind that everyone is unique. That's why we recommend that you complete the MAC twice: now, and again after you complete this workbook. It's important to see how your personal beliefs and attitudes change *compared to where you are today*. Completing this test twice will tell you whether you react differently to your thoughts and feelings about your weight, body, and looks after reading this book and doing the exercises. An additional copy of this questionnaire is provided in Chapter 14 for you to complete when you finish the ACT program.

So here is what we would like you to do now. After reading each of the following statements, circle the number in the column that best reflects how much you agree or disagree with the statement. There are no right or wrong answers, so please don't think about your answers for very long. You should mark your answers quickly and then go on to the next statement.

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Your MAC Results

By following the directions below, you can interpret your MAC scores to assess how similar your beliefs and attitudes are to someone diagnosed with anorexia. The MAC items are divided into four scales:

- * *Total Score*, which assesses your overall attitude about eating and weight
- * *Weight Regulation*, which assesses how much you fear and avoid weight gain
- * *Approval*, which assesses how much you feel the need to be thin to be accepted
- * *Self-Control*, which assesses the extent to which you use weight control to feel good about yourself

Please be aware that everyone is unique and a low score on any of the scales does not mean you are problem-free. It just means that your symptoms in that area are less severe relative to the average person who has been diagnosed with anorexia.

Total Score: Overall Attitude

Add up all the numbers you circled _____

Your total score reflects the overall level of anorexia beliefs that you experience. Research conducted by Mizes and Klesges (1989) has shown that clients diagnosed with anorexia have, on average, a total score of 103 or higher. If your score is approximately 103, your beliefs about eating and weight are consistent with the average client with anorexia. If your score is greater than 103, it indicates that your beliefs are more extreme than those of the average client with anorexia. If your score is lower than 103, it means that your beliefs are less extreme than those of the average client with anorexia.

Accepting Your Thoughts

As you progress through this ACT workbook, you will learn to live with these thoughts. We will not challenge your thoughts or argue against them. The goal of ACT is not to get rid of any thoughts you experience. The goal of ACT is to help you experience these thoughts without needing to diet in response to them. In fact, the more you want to get rid of your thoughts, the more you have them. Instead of trying to replace your thoughts, we will encourage you to simply have them because you have them anyway, no matter what. Confused? That's okay. In the next chapter, we will give you a lot more information, examples, and exercises illustrating and applying the ACT view

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(excerpt from Preface)

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM DR. SONIA

Hormonal eating means eating foods that support your hormonal needs and all of your nutrition needs, helping you maintain a balanced weight and a healthy metabolism through all stages of your life. In the west, a lucrative business has evolved, claiming to correct hormonal imbalances in women. Hormone pills and patches, many of which do more harm than good to women's bodies, and a Western lifestyle of eating including the consumption of processed foods, many of which cause health problems attributed to aging.

Anti-aging in America has involved surgical and other methods to reshape and remove flesh and skin, while in many other countries women rejuvenate their cells, change their weight and appearance, and balance their hormones with combinations of natural whole food plants.

FOUR THINGS TO REMEMBER

I want you to learn as much as possible about:

*Hormones: how they affect our sense of well-being, as well as our health.

*A hormonal diet: how our diets can make an enormous difference to our hormonal balance.

*Food wisdom: how women around the world have used their traditional food wisdom to resolve and prevent their hormonal problems-an approach that is finally available to U.S. women!

*How to spice up your diet: Certain foods work as "Food Wisdom quick-fixes." Women can easily add greens, herbs, spices, nuts, seeds, and teas to their current diets, with surprisingly fast results!

Throughout this book, you will learn to design your own step-by-step approach to food wisdom that will help you make healthy changes as you listen to your body, instincts, and senses.

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Anorexia Self-Test (cont.)

that you cannot win the battle against your thoughts. You'll also see how battling against your thoughts frequently backfires and makes things worse.

Weight Regulation Score

Add up the numbers you circled for the following statements numbered:

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____
10 _____ 11 _____ 12 _____ 13 _____ 14 _____ 15 _____ 16 _____ 17 _____ 18 _____
19 _____ 20 _____ 21 _____ 22 _____ 23 _____ 24 _____ 25 _____ 26 _____ 27 _____
28 _____ 29 _____ 30 _____ 31 _____ 32 _____ 33 _____

Your Weight Regulation Score _____

The weight regulation scale assesses how much a person fears weight gain and engages in behaviors, like exercise and food restriction, to avoid weight gain. Research by Mizes and Klesges has shown that clients with anorexia have, on average, a weight regulation score of 63.

If your score is approximately 63, your weight gain fears and attempts to regulate your weight are similar to the fears and weight regulation behaviors of the average client with anorexia. A score greater than 63 indicates that your fears and regulation attempts are more extensive than the average client with anorexia, whereas a score of less than 63 indicates that your fears and regulation attempts are less extensive than the average client with anorexia.

One thing you may learn from this scale is how actively you respond to your thoughts about food and weight. Right now, your mind is saying "You are fat," and you respond by doing something, like dieting, to prove your mind wrong. That seems like a natural way to respond. It might seem strange at this point to *not* respond to these disturbing thoughts. However, the ACT program will take you step-by-step through thought observation exercises-similar to meditation and mindfulness techniques used in yoga and Zen Buddhism. These exercises will teach you how to just observe your thoughts without acting on them.

As you progress through this ACT workbook, you will learn that letting go of the struggle with thoughts and feelings is possible and frees up time and energy to devote to activities that will enhance the quality of your life. You will move closer to reaching goals in your life that are not associated with your

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body weight and looks.

Approval Score

Add up the numbers you circled for the following statements numbered:

3 _____ 11 _____ 22 _____ 25 _____ 27 _____ 28 _____ 31 _____

Your Approval Score _____

The approval scale assesses how much you feel the need to be thin and attractive to be socially accepted. Research by Mizes and Klesges has shown that clients diagnosed with anorexia have, on average, an approval score of 18.

If your score is approximately 18, you place as much social value on thinness as the average anorexic client. A score greater than 18 suggests that you feel more social pressure to be thin than the average client with anorexia, whereas a score lower than 18 suggests that you feel less social pressure to be thin than the average client with anorexia.

One thing you may learn from your approval scale results is how much you value social acceptance. You may be someone who values having others view you in a positive way. That is who you are, and we are not going to attempt to change that. In fact, as you work through the valued directions chapters of this ACT workbook, we will encourage you to identify what you value about social approval and develop a plan to meet your need for social approval. We are particularly interested in how you see yourself in relationships-as a child, spouse, friend, parent, sibling, coworker. Being thin is only one way to feel accepted, and you may discover other ways to satisfy your need for social approval.

Self-Control Score

Add up the numbers you circled for the following statements numbered:

4 _____ 10 _____ 12 _____ 15 _____ 21 _____ 26 _____

Your Self-Control Score _____

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The self-control scale assesses how much feeling in control of eating is tied to how good you feel about yourself. Research by Mizes and Klesges has shown that clients diagnosed with anorexia have, on average, a self-control score of 22.

If your score is approximately 22, your need to control weight and eating as a basis for your self-esteem is similar to that of the average anorexic client. A score greater than 22 suggests that your need to be in control of your weight to feel good about yourself is greater than that of the average client with anorexia. On the other hand, a score lower than 22 suggests that your feeling good about yourself is less closely tied to being in control of your weight than is the case with the average client with anorexia.

One thing you may learn from your self-control scale results is how much you need to feel in control. Ironically, people sometimes notice that the more they try to control their lives, the more out-of-control things get. Throughout this ACT workbook, especially in Chapter 4, we will explore the problem of control more in-depth.

Assessment Summary

Once again, the reason we asked you to assess these symptoms and put a number to them is to give you a baseline of where you stand now. It is possible that you will learn to react differently to your thoughts, beliefs, and worries once you have completed the ACT workbook.

If your scores are lower after you complete the ACT workbook, this means you are not experiencing anorexic thoughts as often or intensely as you do now. You may also notice that you start believing them less. Such changes may bring you some relief. However, keep in mind that the main goal of ACT is not to change or reduce your thoughts, but to help you deal with them in a different way.

Our experience shows that when some people change their behavior and begin to pursue the most important things in life, their anorexic thoughts become less prominent. However, there are other people who still experience anorexic thoughts, although they may not buy into them so much anymore. Indeed, there is no guarantee your anorexic thoughts will ever disappear. Surely, if thoughts were that easy to get rid of, you would have been able to get rid of them by now.