



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT

Enhanced Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT-E) Groups for Eating Disorders

Enhanced CBT (CBT-E), developed by Christopher Fairburn at Oxford, is a transdiagnostic treatment for eating disorders: one protocol that targets the mechanisms shared across anorexia, bulimia, binge eating disorder, and others, rather than a separate approach for each. At its core is shifting the overevaluation of eating, shape, and weight, the degree to which self-worth rests almost entirely on the body and how one eats. It's structured and directive. In a group, members work the protocol together, adding peer modeling, shared normalization, and accountability.

WHO IT'S FOR, AND WHO IT'S NOT

- A strong fit for medically stable adults ready to commit to behavioral change.
- Not for those medically unstable, significantly underweight, or in crisis.
- This is clinical treatment, not peer support. In crisis? Call or text 988.

What it's for

Adults with bulimia, binge eating disorder, or other specified eating disorders.

Anorexia too, though evidence is more limited and medical stability is required.

Outpatient level of care. The group format suits bulimia and binge eating most.

WHAT TO EXPECT

1 Sessions run 90 minutes to two hours, following the CBT-E protocol in four stages.

2 From a shared formulation and regular eating to the maintaining mechanisms, then the future.

3 Consistent homework: food records, behavioral experiments, honesty between sessions.

CBT-E has strong evidence, especially for bulimia and binge eating disorder.

- A two-site randomized trial found **significant, sustained gains across diagnoses** at 60-week follow-up.¹
- A 2023 map of the evidence confirmed high-intensity CBT beats inactive controls, while noting **group-format research is still limited**.²

MAKING THE MOST OF IT

Regular eating first. The early structure is what later work rests on.

Keep the records. Honest food monitoring is the engine of change.

Honesty over shame. Naming the hard weeks is the work, not failure.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU JOIN

- 1 Is the leader trained in CBT-E specifically?
- 2 How many sessions, and is it a closed cohort?
- 3 What level of care is it for, and is medical monitoring in place?

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If you're in crisis, call or text 988.



Sources

Enhanced Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT-E) Groups for Eating Disorders · references keyed to the numbers on page 1.

- 1 Fairburn, C. G., Cooper, Z., Doll, H. A., et al. Transdiagnostic cognitive-behavioral therapy for patients with eating disorders: a two-site trial with 60-week follow-up. *American Journal of Psychiatry* (2009), 166(3), 311–319.
- 2 Kaidesoja, M., Cooper, Z., & Fordham, B. Cognitive behavioral therapy for eating disorders: a map of the systematic review evidence base. *International Journal of Eating Disorders* (2023), 56(2), 295–313.

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The Group Guide is a directory, not a clinic. This handout is general education, not medical or mental health advice. Listings are written by group leaders and are not endorsements. Confirm details, cost, and fit with any group you contact.