How to minimize the risk of setbacks

- Stick to a pattern of regular eating.
- Avoid dieting, especially rigid and extreme diets and ones that exclude lots of foods.
- Maintain weight within your goal weight range.
- Beware of engaging in unhelpful body checking or body avoidance.
- Maintain and develop other life interests.
- Use problem solving to tackle life problems.

Circumstances that might increase the risk of a setback

- Life changes and difficulties; changes to usual routine (e.g. vacations, Thanksgiving).
- Weight loss or weight gain.
- Pregnancy and after pregnancy.
- Low mood and/or the onset of clinical depression.
- Wedding day (being the focus of attention; pressure to look good).

‘Early warning signs’ of a lapse

Be on the lookout for your ‘eating disorder DVD’ starting up. The following early warning signs form part of the first ‘track’ of the DVD:

- Changes in eating, especially eating less, skipping meals or snacks, delaying eating, eating ‘diet’ foods.
- Restarting reading diet or fashion magazines and/or visiting related websites.
- Restarting or increasing body checking or avoidance.
- Restarting or increasing making shape comparisons.
- Weighing outside set time.
- Increasing exercising.
- Having the urge to vomit or use laxatives.
- Having the urge to binge eat.
- Increased preoccupation with food and eating.
- Increased dissatisfaction with shape and weight, and a strong desire to change shape or weight.
- Weight dropping below a……. pounds.

If you spot any of these early warning signs, react quickly and positively by taking ‘time out’ to think about what is happening and plan a course of action.

Dealing with triggers and setbacks

- Identify trigger.
- Deal with external triggers (life) by problem solving (see Overcoming Binge Eating).
- Beware of labeling a set-back as a ‘relapse’ (when one is back to square one).
- Nip setbacks in the bud by following guidelines from treatment (in Overcoming Binge Eating); e.g., restart monitoring; adopt pattern of regular eating; plan eating ahead and review eating pattern; weigh yourself each week and interpret carefully; avoid following rigid and extreme dietary rules; question ‘feeling fat’; analyze binges; use distraction activities and problem solving; reduce problematic body checking or avoidance.
- If pregnant/after pregnancy, then ask midwife to give information on what is usual re weight and eating, and the typical time taken to lose the weight gained in pregnancy.
- As a general guideline, do the opposite of what the eating disorder mindset (or ‘DVD’) makes you want to do (i.e., “Do the right thing”). Get involved in other aspects of your life, such as socializing (thereby putting in other healthier DVDs).
- Other: ____________________________________________________________________________________
- Other: ____________________________________________________________________________________

If the above has not worked within four weeks, consider seeking help.

If your body mass index drops below a……. pounds for two consecutive weeks, seek help.