

# ART THERAPY RESOURCES



## ART THERAPY CASE STUDY BACKGROUND: BULIMIA

David currently binges on chocolate bars. Late at night he binges on approximately 10 chocolate bars at a time. David mentioned in his earlier years he would simply eat the chocolate and feel ashamed at eating so much and would vow to never do it again. At about age 15 he started purging behaviour as well. He felt much better immediately after vomiting and felt he was in control of the calories he was consuming by vomiting. This sense of control strengthened his belief that he could continue to binge on chocolate whenever he wanted. He was currently binge eating and purging approximately 5 nights a week. David wants to stop bingeing and purging because he is starting to feel more distressed before and after each binge and purge and no longer feels in control like he used to. He mostly binges and purges on school nights. He is in his final year of school and worried what he will do after school. Final exams are looming and David is feeling increasingly stressed at failing and disappointing his parents. This exercise can help the client identify the physical and emotional feelings that occur prior to, during, and after a binge event. This exercise helps the client notice the beginning of the feelings which may help them become aware of the need to self-regulate their emotions to avoid bingeing.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

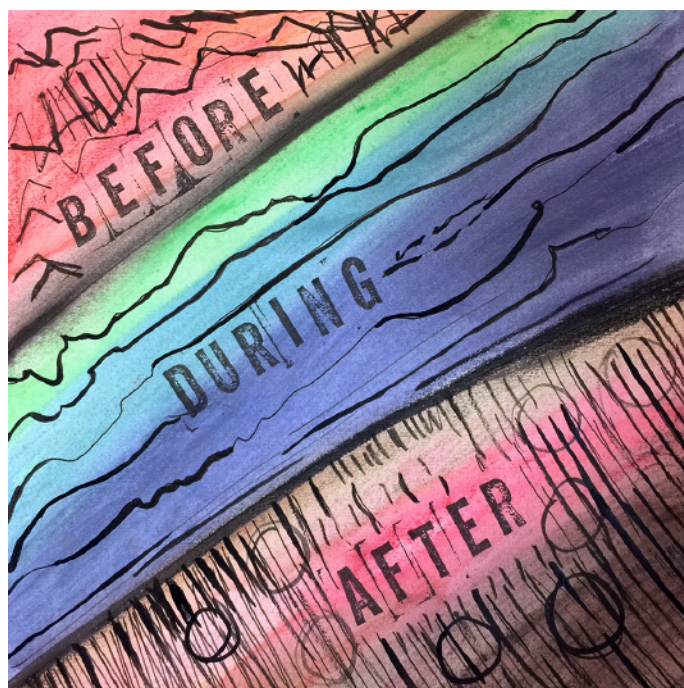
- Ask the client to sit quietly and reflect back on the last time they binged. Explore the circumstances prior to the client engaging in bingeing behaviour. Did any emotions or triggers occur that stand out? Ask the client to create an artwork that reflects these circumstances. They may use shapes, colours, and textures that reflect the overall atmosphere. This may represent stress, panic, or confusion within the situation.
- Ask your client to reflect on their physical feelings and emotions during the binge and create another artwork that reflects any changes.
- Finally, ask your client to reflect on the physical feelings and emotions after the binge. Create another artwork that reflects any changes after the binge.

### EXAMPLE EXERCISE:

The client reflected on the feelings prior to the binge and experienced a feeling of desperation. The client felt that there were no boundaries to their experience and that their mind was racing around without any focus.

During the binge, the panic and desperation would subside as the client was able to only focus on the positive feelings from eating the food. The situation felt contained and under control. After the binge, the client felt disgusted and intense feelings of failure at having binged again.

Through creating the artwork, the client could see the patterns of bingeing was mostly the same in each instance he could recall. This artwork gave the client insight into developing skills around identifying when the feelings of desperation and panic were rising.



NOTE: more details can be found at [www.arttherapyresources.com.au/case-study-bulimia](http://www.arttherapyresources.com.au/case-study-bulimia)