

What is the DSM IV Diagnostic Criteria for Bulimia Nervosa?

The DSMIV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Volume 4) provides guidelines and criteria for mental disorders. In terms of eating disorders the DSM IV provides diagnostic criteria for anorexia, bulimia and eating disorders NOS (not otherwise specified). It is important to remember that someone can still have an eating disorder or body image issues and not meet the diagnostic criteria.

- A. Recurrent episodes of binge eating. An episode of binge eating is characterised by both of the following:
 - (1) eating, in a discrete period of time (e.g. within any 2 hour period), and amount of food that is definitely larger than most people would eat during a similar period of time and under similar circumstances
 - (2) a sense of lack of control over eating during the episode (e.g. a feeling that one cannot stop eating or control what or how much one is eating)
- B. Recurrent inappropriate compensatory behaviour in order to prevent weight gain, such as self-induced vomiting; misuse of laxatives, diuretics, enemas or other medications; fasting; or excessive exercise.
- C. The binge eating and inappropriate compensatory behaviours both occur, on average, at least twice a week for 3 months.
- D. Self-evaluation is unduly influenced by body shape and weight.
- E. The disturbance does not occur exclusively during episodes of Anorexia Nervosa.

Specify type:

Purging Type: During the current episode of Bulimia Nervosa, the person has regularly engaged in self-induced vomiting or the misuse of laxatives, diuretics or enemas.

Non-purging Type: During the current episode of Bulimia Nervosa, the person has used other inappropriate compensatory behaviours, such as fasting or excessive exercise, but has not regularly engaged in self-induced vomiting or the misuse of laxatives, diuretics or enemas.

References:

American Psychiatric Association. (1994). Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (4th Ed.) United States of America: American Psychiatric Association.