

## Terminology for Mental Health Professionals

By Hattie Rowe  
West Virginia University

As medical knowledge increases, so does responsibility. We are continually enlightened of more sensitive ways to approach conversations with patients. People with eating disorders can be sensitive to others and the vocabulary directed towards them (Kuipers, G., den Hollander, S., van der Ark, L.A., & Bekker, M. 2017). Research has shown that people who have eating disorders focus more on appearance-related words (Myers, Ridolfi, & Crowther, 2015). Staying up-to-date on positive and person-oriented terminology for patients is a responsibility for all who work with individuals who have eating disorders.

The following terms have been proposed by researchers and professionals as more appropriate terms to use in conversation with patients who have eating disorders.

Instead of...	Try...
"Anorexic", "bulimic", "binge eater"	Women, men, patients, individuals <u>WITH</u> anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge-eating disorder
"Refeeding"	"Renourishing" or "Nutritional rehabilitation"
"Bulimic episode"	"Binge-eating episode"
"Struggling [with an eating disorder]"	"Treatment seeking"
"Gold standard"	"Extensively validated treatment"
"Fat", "thin", appearance related words	"Unhealthy weight", health related words
"Unsuccessful attempt"	"Suicide attempt"
"Committed suicide" or "successful attempt"	"Died by suicide"

## References

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