

Our Self-Harm Workbook

Vol. 1



By **Kati Morton, MFTI**

Introduction

In 2011 Sean and I had been toying with the idea of creating an online community for mental health. We wanted to combine our talents; his knowledge of social media and filmmaking and mine of mental health/psychology and therapy. Little did I know that in two years time it would grow to be what it is today, a community of wonderful, bright people of all ages from around the world working together to support one another in our journey towards a *“Healthy Mind and a Healthy Body!”*

In the early days, I thought maybe I would run out of ideas for videos, maybe one hundred people would be watching, or maybe nobody will be watching etc. LOTS of MAYBES! Within a few months though I knew I was onto something. So many people started requesting information. I decided to put out a simple workbook about Eating Disorders and called it Vol. 1. It was/is meant as a tool to help you through tough times (financially and mentally) whether you have access to professional services or not. I am very proud that to date more than 15,000 copies of it have been downloaded through the iBook store & my website KatiMorton.com; **if it has helped just one person, it was all worth it.**

Fast forward to today, our website community is growing, our YouTube channel is growing and we are putting out a LOT of videos. It's all very surreal and I am enjoying connecting with and helping as many people as I can!

We always knew that we would be reaching beyond eating disorders and addressing all facets of mental health, from depression, to bi-polar disorder to self-harm and more. One of the driving forces of our community was the constant request for material addressing self-harm. Self-harm is something that as a mental health professional I deal with on a regular basis and as always, I am happy to be able to share with you what I know. This workbook is titled **Our Self-Harm, Vol. 1** and I enjoyed writing it for you. As always, I am looking for your feedback because my goal is to create a Vol. 2, Vol. 3 and so on.

Happy reading!

- Kati xoxo



If you are in need of mental health services, please contact a licensed professional. If there is an IMMEDIATE CRISIS such as a child or adult currently being abused, suicidal or homicidal thoughts or actions, or any other mental health emergency, CALL 911

Disclaimer

The material included in this workbook is intended for informational purposes only and in no way is meant to substitute for individualized mental health therapy provided in person by a professional.

Kati Morton, MFTI does not provide this information to substitute for individualized therapies. No claim to cure, treat, diagnose or otherwise provide mental or behavioral health care is guaranteed, promised or implied by this book.



Dedication

This workbook is dedicated to all of you who are a part of my online community...

Yesterday, today and tomorrow you give me the strength and love to continue fighting together towards a “Healthy Mind and a Healthy Body!”

xoxo Kati



How to use this workbook

This workbook is easy to use. Here is what you need:

- 1 binder/journal with 5 sections in it
- 1 pencil or pen
- 15 minutes a day
- Post it notes

I want you to consider each of these tasks as sections in your new binder/journal.

Easy enough right?

Start off slowly. I want you to read this workbook and watch the videos once all the way through *without trying to start on your binder*. Decide which task you want to start with and then put the workbook away for the day. Take out your post it notes and create a reminder for tomorrow...

Write this on a post it note:

“Recovery is a process, not perfection. Tomorrow I am starting the process!”

Also write (you don’t have to do this but I’d like you to) *“Even if I don’t yet believe in my own recovery, Kati believes in me.”*

You might not feel that you can do this, but trust me, **YOU CAN**. I have seen so many people start off on this process. I know it is



scary and seems impossible. It may even get worse before it gets better, but believe me when I say that you can feel amazing again. **You can be free to live and enjoy your life!**



Here we go...



IMPORTANT

If you see a YouTube Play button...



*CLICK IT this will open
the video in your web browser.*





Task 1



I want you to create an ***automatic thought record***. This is very similar to writing down your Self-Harm voice versus your healthy voice, but we have to start by figuring out what your automatic thoughts are. Use the table below to help get you started and feel free to create multiple copies and continue to use this anytime you feel the urges get stronger. Place your ***automatic thought record*** in the first section of your binder/ journal.

Step 1 - I want you to take section one of your binder and write “*Automatic Thought Record*”, then place 2 or 3 sheets of loose leaf in that section to start off with. Create two columns. The one on the left write “*SH Voice*” the one on the right “*Healthy Voice*”.

Step 2 - Whenever you find yourself struggling, I want you to take out your binder and open up this section. You will be surprised by how the simple act of giving



your “voices” a place to vent will help you feel less overwhelmed. Further, by fighting the negative voice with a positive ***you are building a foundation of positive thinking*** which I believe is KEY to recovery. We may not believe the positive

voice all the time in the beginning, but this is the place where it will start to live and breathe and be a part of who you are.

SH VOICE (AUTOMATIC THOUGHT)	HEALTHY VOICE (POSITIVE THOUGHT)
I am so stupid	I’m not stupid at all, I actually do well in school
I am so alone	I have friends and family who are there for me
No one cares about me	My friends care and check in on me. So does my therapist.





Task 2



What purpose does your self-harm serve for you? Does it help you feel something physically that you are experiencing emotionally? Does it help you show your emotional pain physically? Is it to see the blood and have the scars? Do you want someone to notice it so you can feel like your pain is recognized? Take some time to think about what it is that you get out of your self-harm. It can even help to think about “why it is that you self-harm” in the way that you do it or where you do it. We can learn a lot about our reason for self-harming by thinking about why we do it on certain parts of our bodies. Know that this may take some time and exploration.
TIP: It can help to remember back to when

we first wanted to self-harm and when we actually did it for the very first time.

STEP 1 - Create a new section in your binder/journal and maybe start by answering the questions I posed at the beginning of this task. Know that you can come back to this later on or even change the purpose you think it serves. This can take time and it may even serve more than one purpose for you. *So know that there isn't one “right” way to do this :)*





Task 3



Creating a distraction plan. Just like we create treatment plans with our therapists or even a suicide safety plan if we are struggling with depression, we have to create a plan for when our urges get stronger. **TIP:** Make sure you are creating this when you aren't feeling triggered, so you can think clearly.

Let's use the *Distress Tolerance model* found in DBT. The whole goal of distress tolerance is to become capable of calmly recognizing negative situations and their

impact, rather than becoming overwhelmed or hiding from them. This makes it possible for us to make wise decisions (from our wise mind) about whether or not we should take action and how we should do so. The best way to distract is by using the **ACCEPTS** acronym to help us come up with options!

Step 1 - Lets create a new section in our journal/binder and get started!



Activities: Think of pleasurable activities like going to the movies, parties, sports, being on the internet, playing music, reading, hiking etc. Lets make sure you put at least 5 options, and they are options that can be done during the day or the night.

Contribute: Help out others in your community! Volunteer at school, church, soup kitchen, local park etc. It helps to give back!

Comparisons: I know this sounds crazy, but comparing ourselves to the less fortunate can sometimes help put things in perspective. So give it a try.

Emotions: This is when we cause ourselves to feel something different by provoking our sense of humor or happiness (*this can be easier when combined with a pleasurable activity*). Also, watching a funny movie or TV show can help too!

Push away: Put this particular situation on the back burner for a while, and force something else (*not stressful or bad*) to the

front of your mind and tell yourself you will come back to the situation later on.

Thoughts: Force your mind to think about something else. Like starting a story or a dream that you wish you would dream. I like to start with *“in a perfect world I would be..”* and let it take me away from the situation at hand. It can also help to have a *“happy place”* like a favorite memory or vacation spot to go to in your mind.

Sensations: This can help a lot when the urges have gotten really bad. Do something that has an intense feeling. Like taking a hot or cold shower, eating something spicy or a really sour candy. This is great when we are out. You can even keep some spicy or sour candies with you just in case.

*Now it's your turn to fill your **ACCEPTS** out with what works for you! Don't forget to update it regularly, because our likes and dislikes can change. Also, if something doesn't work, we need to replace it.*





Task 4



Often times our worst triggers and urges come when we are feeling a lot and our emotions are really intense and all over the place. We can feel angry, frustrated, depressed and anxious all at once! Something that can help us work through these intense feelings is learning to regulate our emotions.

First we have to figure out the story of our emotion. Where did it come from? What caused it? What did I do as a result?

Step 1 - Create another section in your journal/binder. Give yourself plenty of space to answer each of the following questions and know that this is something you can do over and over for different situations, so make sure there is enough paper in this section :)



Take some time and answer these seven questions as best you can.

1. *What was the event that prompted this emotion?*
2. *What was your interpretation of the event?*
3. *What did you feel in your body at that time? Tense? Relief? Or something else?*
4. *What was your body language like? Were your arms crossed? Looking away? Etc?*
5. *What was your action urge? Is there something that you felt you had to do or say right away as a response to what just happened?*
6. *What action did you end up taking?*
7. *Based on all of that, what emotion would you say you were feeling?*

Sometimes it's not just our mind that creates emotions it can be due to our physical well being as well. Being sick or under the influence of drugs or alcohol can make us more vulnerable to acting out of our "emotion mind" instead of using our "wise mind." So check these things as well

to ensure we have a healthy body first. That can make managing our urges that much easier!

Physical Illness: Are you feeling under the weather? Have a runny nose? Are you injured in any way? **Let's get proper treatment for those issues right away.**

Eating: Are you eating healthfully? Are you eating when you are hungry and stopping when you are full? If you struggle with this a lot, we should look into seeing a dietitian or nutritionist.

Avoid Mood Altering Drugs: Obviously these can make our moods very unpredictable. It can also take away our ability to respond versus react.

Exercise: Make sure you get an appropriate amount of exercise (*with the okay from your doctor*). This cannot only release endorphins (*which make us feel happy*) but it can also help improve our body image.



Now that we have made sure we know what emotion it is that we are feeling, and that our bodily health isn't causing it, we can better build our control over our emotions. Try and practice answering those seven questions once a day to better understand how our emotions work. Then we can use the tools we created in Task 3 to better manage them, instead of feeling like they manage us. This can help us reduce how vulnerable we are to negative emotions and to build more positive emotional experiences.

Keep practicing this.

It does get easier!





Task 5



Many of us have had a troubled upbringing. This may entail a childhood filled with fear of abandonment, or even abuse and neglect. Whatever the struggle, it can leave us feeling alone, frightened, or even angry and bitter. Often times we bury that hurt self inside of us and never heal those wounds. It is those wounds that I believe cause the struggles we are dealing with today, and that is why I would like you to take some time and write a letter to that child or adolescent. Try to remember what

it was like to be that age, what you felt, thought, wanted, etc. It can even help to bring out a picture of yourself at that age if you have one. If you have trouble getting started, I provide an example on the next page. (Thank you <http://lorilynhurley.com>)

Step 1 - *Create another section in your binder/journal.* Make sure this section is separate from any others so you can focus solely on this task. Know it can be hard and you can stop and start this whenever you need.



Hi,

There is something I need for you to know.

Your voice is your gift and it's safe for you to use it.

You can trust what you know – what is wrong for you – and you can shout out about it.

If you tell your secrets, they will leave your body and will no longer burden you. What you're carrying isn't really yours, it doesn't belong to you, and you don't deserve it.

Set it free.

Set yourself free.

Open your throat and scream it to the sky, tell everyone who is listening, and don't you worry – not one bit – about how they react.

You don't have to feel other people's feelings for them.

And you don't ever have to make yourself smaller than you are so that other people feel safe.

All of the pain you are holding in your body – the fear, the shame, the guilt – belongs to someone else, something else. It isn't yours.

I see you running and I know that you are trying to run away, but what I need for you to understand is this: You don't have to run away. Turn. Raise your hand. Yell, "Stop!" and feel the power of the Earth rise into your feet, your heart.

Know that your guardians are all around you.

Know that you are a beautiful person.

Know that you are strong.

Know that you did nothing wrong.

Leave the pain on the ground and walk away, toward the blue sky and cool river where you toss in smooth stones, one after the other and watch the ripples dance.

Dig a hole in the ground and yell down it.

Find the clearing in the forest and sing.

Open your throat, coat it with honey.

Open your throat and listen to your sound. Your voice.

There is no one else in this world with a voice like yours. There is no one else who can tell your story.

You were born to do this, my love.

Sleep well. Float in your dreams.

Set yourself free.

You are so immensely loved.

*Signed With Great Respect,
Your Future Self*





More...



The simple act of downloading this workbook means that you are working on your recovery process!!! I am SO PROUD of you and how hard you are working!

Know that WE WILL GET THROUGH THIS & you can beat those urges.
So keep fighting,
YOU ARE WORTH IT!

Kati xoxo



Connect with me!

As you probably know by now, I can be found on most social media platforms. If you have a question please use the hashtag #katiFAQ. I try and answer questions in the order they are received. I would be forever indebted to you if you would take the time to use social media to share my videos, tweets, website etc. *I believe it is through sharing positive information that we will end the stigma surrounding mental health!*

Join my website! It's FREE and a great way to express yourself while getting support from others.



katimorton.com

YouTube This is where it all started. I'd love it if you subscribed. Please share the videos. You never know who you might help.



youtube.com/katimorton

Google+ Please add me to your circles. This allows me to comment back to any comments you leave me on YouTube.



[+KatiMorton1](https://plus.google.com/+KatiMorton1)

Tweet Tweet! I check this throughout the day. Have a question? Use #katiFAQ



[@katimorton](https://twitter.com/katimorton)

Tumblr Ask your questions & reblog some motivation. I'm on here as often as possible. I love me some Tumblr.



tumblr.com/katimorton

Instagram! I post regular stuff from my life. It's just me doing Kati things :)



[katimorton1](https://www.instagram.com/katimorton1)

Facebook! I'm on here too. Of course I try and answer as many questions as possible. Please use the #katiFAQ hashtag as well.



facebook.com/katimorton1

Pinterest! I'm on here a lot but truthfully, it's to post my vids and to look at crafty stuff. Please Repin!



pinterest.com/katimorton1



Free and Confidential Counseling

In the United States

- [National Eating Disorders Association](#) or 1-800-931-2237
- [S.A.F.E. Alternatives for Stopping Self Abuse](#) or 1-800-DONT-CUT (366-8288)
- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) or 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or en Espanol
- [The Trevor Project](#) (LGBT crisis intervention) or 1-866-488-7386
- [Rape Abuse & Incest National Network](#) or 800-656-HOPE (4673)

Australia

- [Lifeline Australia](#) or 13 11 14

Brazil

- [CVV](#) or 141

Chile

- [Teléfono de la Esperanza](#) or (00 56 42) 22 12 00

France

- [S.O.S Amitié](#)

Germany

- [Telefonseelsorge](#) or 0800 111 0 111 (or 222)

Japan

- TELL Tokyo Lifeline in [English/ Japanese](#) or 03-5774-0992 (English)

Spain

- [Teléfono de la Esperanza](#) or 902500002

UK

- [The Samaritans](#) or 08457 90 90 90

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