

## **Anorexia Nervosa Stages of Change Questionnaire**

DIRECTIONS: Each of the items below is made up of five statements. For each item, please read the five statements carefully. Then select the statement (or statements) which best describe/s your *current* attitude or behaviour (not how you have been in the past or how you would like to be). If you have any problems, please ask for assistance. Your answers are completely confidential.

### **1. The following statements refer to gaining weight:**

- As far as I am concerned I do not need to gain weight.
- In some ways I think that I might be better off if I gained weight.
- I have decided that I will attempt to gain weight.
- At the moment I am putting in a lot of effort into gaining weight.
- I am working to maintain the weight gains I have made.

### **2. The following statements refer to body weight:**

- As far as I am concerned I do not need to weigh at least \_\_\_\_\_ kg (insert your minimal normal weight).
- In some ways I think that I might be better off if I weighed at least \_\_\_\_\_ kg.
- I have decided that I will attempt to reach a weight of at least \_\_\_\_\_ kg.
- At the moment I am putting in a lot of effort to reach a weight of at least \_\_\_\_\_ kg.
- I am working to maintain a weight of at least \_\_\_\_\_ kg.

**3. The following statements refer to parts of your body which may particularly concern you in terms of weight gain (such as hips, thighs, stomach or buttocks):**

- There is no way I would be prepared to gain weight on these body parts.
- Sometimes I think I would be prepared to gain weight on these body parts.
- I have decided that I am prepared to gain weight on these body parts.
- I am presently trying to gain weight on these body parts.
- I am working to maintain the weight I gained on these body parts.

**4. The following statements refer to your appearance:**

- I do not want to be a normal weight because I would be less satisfied with my appearance at a weight of at least \_\_\_\_\_ kg (insert your minimal normal weight).
- I have occasionally thought about being a normal weight because in some ways I would be more satisfied with my appearance at a weight of at least \_\_\_\_\_ kg.
- I have decided to reach a normal weight because I would be more satisfied with my appearance at a weight of at least \_\_\_\_\_ kg.
- I am presently trying to reach a normal weight because I will be more satisfied with my appearance at a weight of at least \_\_\_\_\_ kg.
- I am working to maintain a normal weight because I am more satisfied with my appearance at a weight of at least \_\_\_\_\_ kg.

**5. The following statements refer to your health:**

- I do not need to be a normal weight because there are no risks to my health when I weigh below \_\_\_\_\_ kg (insert your minimal normal weight).
- I have occasionally thought about being a normal weight because of the risks to my health when I weigh below \_\_\_\_\_ kg.
- I have decided to reach a normal weight because of the risks to my health when I weigh below \_\_\_\_\_ kg.
- I am presently trying to reach a normal weight because of the risks to my health when I weigh below \_\_\_\_\_ kg.
- I am working to maintain a normal weight because of the risks to my health when I weigh below \_\_\_\_\_ kg.

**6. The following statements refer to the importance of body shape and weight:**

- I do not exaggerate the importance of my body shape or weight in determining my happiness and success.
- Sometimes I think that I exaggerate the importance of my body shape or weight in determining my happiness and success.
- I have decided that I need to reduce the importance that I place on my body shape or weight in determining my happiness and success.
- I often try to challenge the importance that I place on my body shape or weight in determining my happiness and success.
- I have succeeded in reducing my tendency to place too much importance on my body shape or weight in determining my happiness and success and want to stay this way.

**7. The following statements refer to fear of fatness:**

- My fear of becoming fat is not excessive.
- I occasionally think that my fear of becoming fat is excessive.
- I have decided that I need to do something about the fear I have of becoming fat because it is controlling me.
- I know that my fear of becoming fat has caused problems and I am now trying to correct this.
- I have succeeded in reducing my fear of becoming fat and want it to stay this way.

**8. The following statements refer to weight loss:**

- I would prefer to lose more weight.
- Sometimes I think that it might be time to stop losing weight.
- I have decided that it is time to stop losing weight.
- I am trying to stop losing weight.
- I have managed to stop losing weight and hope to stay this way.

**9. The following statements refer to body fat versus muscle:**

- I might think about gaining muscle on purpose, but I would never think of gaining fat on purpose.
- Sometimes I think that I may need to gain some fat even though I would prefer to have only muscle.
- I have decided that to be healthy I need to have some fat on my body.
- I realise that I need to have some fat on my body and am working to achieve this.
- I have managed to increase the level of fat on my body which I am trying to maintain.

**10. The following statements refer to the rate of weight gain:**

- There is no way I would be prepared to gain at least 1 kg a week.
- Sometimes I think I would be prepared to gain at least 1 kg a week.
- I have decided that in general it would be best for me to gain at least 1 kg a week.
- I am putting in a lot of effort to gain at least 1 kg a week.
- I am working to maintain my weight but would be prepared to gain at least 1 kg a week if necessary.

**11. The following statements refer to certain shape and weight standards which you may have for evaluating your body (such as only being satisfied with your body when your thighs are not touching, when specific bones can be seen, when your stomach is flat, when you are below a certain weight or when you fit into certain clothes):**

- The standards I use to evaluate my body are not too strict.
- Sometimes I think that the standards I use to evaluate my body may be too strict.
- I have decided that the standards I use to evaluate my body are too strict and need to be changed.
- I am putting in a lot of effort to change the strict standards which I use to evaluate my body.
- I have managed to let go of the strict standards which I used in the past to evaluate my body and am hoping to keep it this way.

**12. The following statements refer to certain foods which you may avoid eating (such as foods high in calories or fat, red meat, dairy products or food where the caloric content is not known):**

- There are certain foods which I strictly avoid and would not even consider eating.
- There are certain foods which I try to avoid, although sometimes I think that it might be okay to eat them occasionally.
- I think that I am too strict in the foods which I allow myself to eat and have decided that I will attempt to eat foods which I usually avoid.
- I am putting in a lot of effort to regularly eat foods which I usually avoid.
- I used to avoid eating certain foods which I now eat regularly.

**13. The following statements refer to daily food consumption:**

- There is no need for me to eat 3 standard-size meals and a snack each day.
- Sometimes I think that I should eat 3 standard-size meals and a snack each day.
- I have decided that I need to eat 3 standard-size meals and a snack each day.
- I am putting in a lot of effort to eat 3 standard-size meals and a snack each day.
- I am working to maintain a current eating pattern which includes 3 standard-size meals and a snack each day.

**14. The following statements refer to time spent thinking about your weight (such as thoughts about becoming fat, counting the calories or fat content of food, or calculating the amount of energy used when exercising):**

- There is nothing wrong with the amount of time I spend thinking about my weight.
- The amount of time I spend thinking about my weight is a problem sometimes.
- I have decided that I need to use strategies to help me reduce the amount of time I spend thinking about my weight.
- I am using strategies to help me reduce the amount of time I spend thinking about my weight.
- I used to spend too much time thinking about my weight which I have managed to reduce and hope to keep it this way.

**15. The following statements refer to certain eating behaviours (such as needing to eat food at a specific rate or time, being unable to eat from a full plate, moving food around on the plate, being unable to eat all the food on a plate, taking longer than others to eat meals, having difficulty eating with others, needing to chew food a certain number of times, not allowing food to touch your lips, needing to eat food in a specific order or needing to stick to the same food plan each day):**

- There is nothing that I need to change about the way I eat my meals.
- I sometimes think that I need to change aspects of the way I eat my meals.
- I have decided that I will try to change aspects of the way I eat my meals.
- I am putting in a lot of effort to change aspects of the way I eat my meals.
- I have succeeded in changing aspects of the way I eat my meals and want it to stay this way.

**16. The following statements refer to feelings associated with eating (such as feeling guilty, anxious or bloated) and not eating (such as feeling successful, in control or spiritually stronger):**

- There is no need for me to change the feelings I associate with eating and not eating.
- I sometimes think that I need to change the feelings I associate with eating and not eating.
- I have decided that I will try to change the feelings I associate with eating and not eating.
- I am putting in a lot of effort to change the feelings I associate with eating and not eating.
- I have succeeded in changing the feelings I associate with eating and not eating and want it to stay this way.

**17. The following statements refer to methods which you may use to control your weight (such as restricting your eating, exercising, vomiting, taking laxatives or other pills). You may select more than one statement for the different methods you use to control your weight. Please indicate which weight control method/s you are referring to in the blank space/s provided.**

- There is nothing seriously wrong with the methods ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) I use to control my weight.
- I have been thinking that there may be problems associated with the methods ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) I use to control my weight.
- I have decided that I will attempt to stop using certain methods ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) to control my weight.
- I am putting in a lot of effort to stop using certain methods ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) to control my weight.
- I have managed to stop using certain methods ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) to control my weight and I would like to keep it this way.

**18. The following statements refer to certain emotional problems (such as feeling depressed, anxious or irritable):**

- I do not have any emotional problems which I need to work on.
- I sometimes think that I may have certain emotional problems which I need to work on.
- I have certain emotional problems which I have decided to work on.
- I am actively working on my emotional problems.
- My emotional problems have improved and I am trying to keep it this way.

**19. The following statements refer to certain characteristics (such as perfectionism, low self esteem or feeling a sense of lack of control over your life):**

- I do not have any problems in the way I approach life which I need to work on.
- I sometimes think that I may have certain problems in the way I approach life which I need to work on.
- I have certain problems in the way I approach life which I have decided to work on.
- I am actively working on problems in the way I approach life.
- The problems in the way I approach life have improved and I am trying to keep it this way.

**20. The following statements refer to relationship problems (such as relationships with family or friends):**

- I do not have any problems in my relationships with others which I need to work on.
- I sometimes think that I may have certain problems in my relationships with others which I need to work on.
- I have certain problems in my relationships with others which I have decided to work on.
- I am actively working on problems in my relationships with others.
- The problems in my relationships with others have improved and I am trying to keep it this way.

## **Administration and Scoring Instructions for the ANSOCQ**

It is essential that the ANSOCQ is administered in a manner that minimises patients' tendency to provide "correct" rather than honest answers (i.e., to over-report their level of motivation to change). The main strategy for encouraging honest responding is to inform patients regarding the low levels of motivation to change that are often experienced by eating disorder patients, thus normalising their own ambivalence or lack of readiness to change. Simply administering the ANSOCQ without such a discussion is unlikely to yield completely honest responding.

Blank spaces (in items 2, 4 and 5) for insertion of the respondent's minimal normal weight should be filled in by the researcher/clinician. For research purposes, the minimal normal weight corresponds to a Body Mass Index of 18.5 (consistent with the lower-range of the normal weight classification by the World Health Organisation). For clinical purposes, the minimal normal weight is that which the treating team have decided upon regarding a minimal weight for the patient's recovery.

Scores on each item of the ANSOCQ range from 1 (for the precontemplation-stage response) to 5 (for the maintenance-stage response), with a possible total ANSOCQ score of 100. If the individual endorses more than one statement per item, the average score for the item is calculated. For instance, endorsing both the precontemplation and contemplation statements would yield an item score of 1.5.

To obtain an overall stage classification score for the individual, average scores are calculated by dividing the total score by the number of items (i.e., 20). Average scores thus range from 1 to 5. The following average scores correspond to the various stages of change:

< 1.5 = precontemplation

1.5 – 2.4 = contemplation

2.5 – 3.4 = preparation

3.5 – 4.4 = action

≥ 4.5 = maintenance

Factor analysis suggests the existence of three factors on the ANSOCQ. Definitions of these three subscales and the items which comprise them are as follows:

- (1) Weight Gain: is comprised of items referring to gaining weight (e.g., readiness to achieve a normal body weight) and includes items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, and 10.
- (2) Eating, Shape, and Weight Concerns: is comprised of items referring to the cognitive, affective, and behavioural aspects of eating, shape, and weight (e.g., readiness to alter the importance of shape and weight in determining happiness and success) and includes items 6, 7, 11, 14, 15, 16, and 17.
- (3) Ego-Alien Aspects: is comprised of items referring to the more subjectively distressing aspects of anorexic symptomatology (e.g., readiness to change interpersonal difficulties) and includes items 8, 12, 13, 18, 19, and 20.