**The Potential Negative Impact of Nostalgic Reverie for Relapses in Eating Disorder Psychopathology and Behaviours**

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**Background**

Nostalgic reverie for the past-self has been shown to be an effective catalyst for behaviour change among individuals living with addiction (Wohl et al., 2018). Nostalgic reverie prompts action by creating a disconnect or self-discontinuity between the current and past selves, which elicits psychological discomfort within an individual. Among those living with addiction, this unease motivates the individual to restore their sense of self by changing their behaviours (i.e., to establish self-continuity; Kim & Wohl, 2014). In the current research, I extend existing knowledge by assessing the effects that nostalgia has among those in recovery from an eating disorder.

Anecdotal evidence suggests nostalgia for when an individual had an eating disorder is a common and a frequent part of the recovery process, which could have some positive benefits. However, a potential problem with nostalgia is that the individual may also feel nostalgic for the positive reinforcement one experienced when engaging in disordered eating (e.g., receiving compliments on one’s appearance). The net result of thinking of one’s eating disorder often in this way could be associated to a greater probability of relapse. The purpose of the present study was to assess the effects that nostalgic reverie has for people in recovery with eating disorders. In sum, I hypothesized that nostalgia for the positive reinforcement of disordered eating will be predictive of relapse among people in recovery from disordered eating, especially among people in recovery who have more (versus less) perfectionistic tendencies and who overvalue appearance as core aspect of their self-concept.

**Methods**

Participants will be recruited from Amazon’s Mechanical Turk system (MTurk) who are in recovery from a diagnosed eating disorder. Participants will be assessed on the extent of their nostalgia for the positive reinforcement that occurred as a result of their disordered eating behaviours. They will also be asked to describe what they are nostalgic for specifically. Participants will also be assessed on what stage of recovery they are in, how long they have been in recovery, their number of relapses, and their reasons for re- engaging in disordered eating or reasons for their continued abstinence. Other variables such as appearance overvaluation, motivations for dieting, self-discontinuity, optimism, rumination, perfectionism, and self-similarity will also be measured for exploratory purposes.

**Future Research**

The goal of the present research is to better understand the effects of nostalgia, which can be conceptualized as temporal self-comparisons, for recovery. It is important to assess nostalgia in this context as it could help to enhance eating disorder theory, which does not account for any kinds of temporal self-comparisons. Eventually, the treatment of people living with eating disorders will also benefit from the knowledge of how nostalgia works in this context. Future studies will focus on the common themes of nostalgia that those in recovery describe that they experience often. I also plan to conduct longitudinal studies to track recovery ups and downs as well as nostalgia frequency and content overtime to obtain prospective data and eventually experience sampling data.