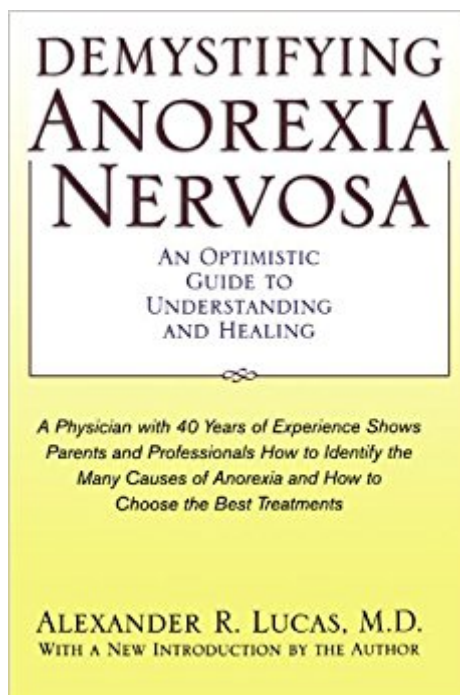




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# Demystifying Anorexia Nervosa: An Optimistic Guide To Understanding And Healing (Developmental Perspectives In Psychiatry)



## Synopsis

Emotionally and physically devastating, anorexia nervosa is the third most common chronic illness in teenage girls, striking one in every two hundred (boys only make up 10% of all cases). And while there are many books on the subject, most are either personal accounts of recovery or attempts to explain the disease from only one perspective, be it psychoanalytic, behavioral, cultural, or biological. Now, in this much-needed resource, Dr. Alexander Lucas draws on 40 years of experience mostly at the Mayo Clinic to offer clear guidance and authoritative advice on how to overcome anorexia nervosa. Based on his own unique research with thousands of patients, and striking a careful balance between psychological, cultural, and biological approaches, Dr. Lucas demystifies this seemingly irrational disease and guides parents through the harrowing process of recovery. The book defines anorexia, illustrates how it can evolve and how common it really is, and outlines every part of the treatment process, from the early warning signs that parents should watch out for, to the initial evaluation, to specific treatment plans. Dr. Lucas emphasizes the patient's role in defining the healing process, with the support of the family and medical team. Throughout the book, he counsels optimism, stressing that in spite of the destructive power of the disease, most who suffer from anorexia nervosa fully recover and are able to live normal, healthy, and productive lives. In his new Introduction, Dr. Lucas stresses the need for controlled studies of treatment in anorexia nervosa, and reiterates the hard truth that anorexia will always be a complex disorder that takes time and patience to overcome. For anyone seeking level-headed, medically sound, and comprehensive guidance on the most effective treatments for this life-threatening disorder, *Demystifying Anorexia Nervosa* offers a wealth of reliable, reassuring information. "A clear, informative book for every patient and parent to read and for every physician to recommend."

--Lenore Terr, M.D. "A must-read for patients and family as well as clinicians who want a concise, balanced, and up-to-date discussion of the art and science of the treatment of anorexia nervosa."

--L. K. George Hsu, M.D.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This valuable book for parents and patients provides both scientific information about the illness and a sense of community with the stories of other families who have dealt with the stressor. Clinicians might want to suggest it for bibliotherapy or even have loaner copies for their clients."--Doody's

Alexander R. Lucas, MD, is Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry and former Head of the Section of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the Mayo Clinic. For forty years he has been a recognized authority on anorexia, with a practice that drew patients from around the world.

This book offers lots of information, backed by both scientific sources and the author's personal experience as a physician. But what I appreciated most was the author's calm and reassuring tone. The book lives up to its subtitle, *An Optimistic Guide to Understanding and Healing*. Although Lucas describes admittedly alarming situations in detail, he does not sensationalize the disease. Instead he presents a very human side of both the victims and the loved ones (usually the parents). I found that *Demystifying Anorexia Nervosa* is an excellent complement to Ellyn Satter's books about children's eating and the "division of responsibility" idea. Lucas, like Satter, place great importance on respecting the individual and the individual's desire to make decisions for him/herself. (For those who have not read Satter's books, they describe how to have the right feeding relationship with your child, and also offer excellent practical advice on feeding babies through school age children.)

20 years ago being a parent to an Anorexia Nervosa patient often meant being subjected to scrutiny bordering on assumption that there must be some family "problem", overenmeshment etc. causing the child's illness. Dr. Luca's book sets the story straight and is genuinely helpful to parent's struggling with this disorder in an offspring, e.g. p 17, "Work with patient's) parents focused on

helping them to cope better with Andrea's illness and on assuring them that they were not at fault."This book is written in a very readable style and, reflecting Dr. Luca's academic credentials, it is accurate and informative.I enthusiastically recommend it to my patients & their families.

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