

## STORIES OF RECOVERY FROM REAL MEN WITH REAL EATING DISORDERS

### RosewoodCenters

36075 S. Rincon Road  
Wickenburg, AZ 85390

Phone : 800.845.2211  
Email : [info@rosewoodranch.com](mailto:info@rosewoodranch.com)  
Website : [RosewoodRanch.com](http://RosewoodRanch.com)





## // STORIES OF COURAGE

Misrepresented as a woman's disease, eating disorders in men often go undiagnosed, and finding treatment geared toward men can be challenging. The men who share their stories in this booklet courageously sought treatment for their eating disorders. They hope to inspire other men and boys to do the same.

10 to 25% of People with Eating Disorders are Male



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## //Recovery Stories



**Andrew**

"My eating disorder had taken everything in life that I loved so much including my dream of becoming a United States Marine."



**Matt**

"Not surprisingly, my performance on the [basketball] court began to drop significantly, but I still continued to exercise compulsively and cut more and more calories."



**Beau**

"She then explained that in order to be a part of the wedding I had to lose some weight. I immediately took to the challenge..."



## //A Marine Obsessed with Weight Loss

My name is Andrew. For the past five years I have battled anorexia nervosa.

My eating disorder (ED), like many, started when I was seventeen, a young eager teenager waiting to start life. The day I turned seventeen I raced down to the Marine Corps recruiter to enlist in the United States Marine Corps. Upon signing papers for my enlistment my recruiter asked my weight; surprised, I told him. He then proceeded to call me fat and told me that to enlist I would need to lose “X” amount of pounds. For the next three months I exercised and ate less, until I was able to enlist.



This pattern of exercise and eating less continued for the next year until the time I graduated from high school. See, losing the initial weight was not good enough for me. In my mind, the more weight I lost the faster I could run and the “healthier I felt.” But inside, this extreme level of dieting was killing me. The unfortunate thing is that society looks at eating disorders as only a woman’s illness, when in all reality it effects everyone, no matter their gender, age ,or ethnicity. Society’s thinking allowed my eating disorder to go unnoticed. Most people thought I was just healthy.

Recovery is possible,  
One Step at A Time.”

Andrew, Rosewood Alumni

For the next three years I struggled to maintain my eating sobriety, and for this period my eating disorder prevailed. ED had taken everything in life that I loved so much including my dream of becoming a United States Marine. ED sent me to the hospital on four occasions, all of which I was near death. This eating disorder has sent me to two treatment centers, including Rosewood. If it wasn’t for the TV show INTERVENTION and Rosewood I wouldn’t be alive today.

Today my life is amazing. I have an amazing girlfriend. I’m currently attending nursing school for my RN. And most of all, I’m able to actually accomplish something. Recovery is possible, One Step at A Time.

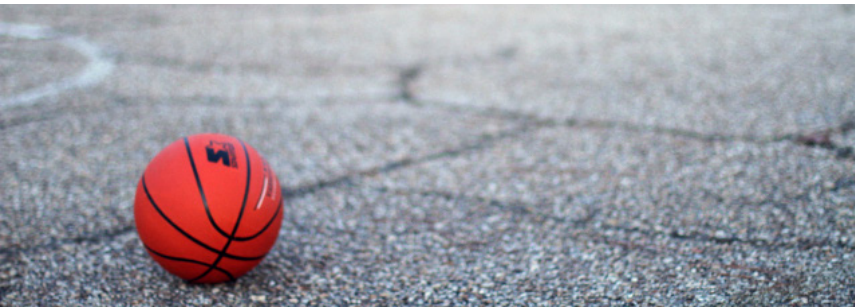
~Andrew B.



## //A Basketball Player with an Unhealthy Home Environment

Hi, my name is Matt and four years ago my life took a turn for the worse and not only changed my life, but the life of everyone around me.

I was a tall, athletic guy beginning my freshman year of high school. Making my decision to attend my high school was one of the hardest decisions I have ever made, mostly because I wanted to attend the local Catholic high school where most of my friends were going, but because of my parents financial arguments I chose to attend a public school. In the beginning I was optimistic about attending



my school because I was well known for being a fairly talented basketball player. Unfortunately this optimism was short lived with most of the kids on the team treating me like an outsider because I was not from the area.

Along with school, I feel that my family life was beginning to turn from bad to worse. My mom continuing to send me to counseling for “my problems.” My relationship with my mother was strained. I found living with her to be very difficult and feel that it was harmful to my well being. I feel that our relationship negatively impacted my self-confidence and self worth.

With my family and school life continuing to worsen, I began to isolate myself from my friends, dad, and others that were close to me. After the basketball season ended, I began spending most of my time working

out in the gym. Along with my long gym sessions, I began counting calories and cutting out foods like chips, peanut butter, and other “unhealthy” foods from my diet. By the end of my freshman year I had lost nearly four inches off my waist, in just three months. Because of my basketball schedule I spent most of summer playing and practicing in summer leagues and camps, but that didn’t stop me from continuing to workout on my free time and cutting more foods from my diet. Not surprisingly, my performance on the court began to drop significantly, but I still continued to exercise compulsively and cut more and more calories.

By the time summer had ended and my sophomore year had begun I had lost all connection with my friends and family. But my friends and family weren’t the only thing I lost; I also began to lose my mind. I remember sneaking out of my house during the night in order to run around in my neighborhood just to burn a few hundred calories more. With my diet consisting of a few hundred calories a day and massive amount of weight loss, my father decided to take me into the doctor to uncover what was going on. At the time, I knew my Dad

**I didn’t really know what anorexia was except it only happened in women, but I was very wrong.”**

**Matt, Rosewood Alumni**

wasn’t prepared for what was in store. Entering the doctor’s office I remember weighing in close to 135 pounds. Considering my height of 6’2” and my age being sixteen, I was well below normal for my BMI. After being weighed the nurse took my blood pressure and pulse, with my heart rate being extremely low and my pulse at thirty, the doctor came to inspect me immediately. By the end of his inspection I can still

## //A Basketball Player with an Unhealthy Home Environment, cont.

remember when he told my father and I that I was anorexic. At first, I didn't really know what anorexia was except it only happened in women, but I was very wrong.

Because of my anorexia I was forced to stop all physical activities including basketball and was sent to see a dietician in order to help me gain weight. My first appointment with the dietician was very stressful considering she wanted me to begin eating like a normal teenager again, but that never happened. Along with me not following my meal plan, I also refused to stop exercising. When my parents and

doctor saw that I was continuing to slide backwards they agreed that hospitalization or a treatment center would be the only option in order to save my life. After doing extensive research on treatment centers that would accept my insurance, my father found Rosewood Ranch. I can still recall the cold, windy night my Dad and step-mom drove me to Rosewood; I was afraid, terrified, sad, and extremely angry. Little did I know, Rosewood would be the force that ended up saving my life. When I first entered Rosewood, four days before Christmas, I weighed a measly 126 pounds, but my pulse of twenty-eight and blood pressure of 75/45, was the most concerning.

My time spent in treatment was by far the most difficult but rewarding experience I have ever encountered...but at Rosewood I learned to enjoy life again and began to face the things that needed to be addressed. I learned to look at things in a new and positive way. When my time at Rosewood ended after two and a half months, I was finally discharged and sent home. My time in recovery has not

been easy at all. In fact, I was admitted into another treatment center last year. My struggle with anorexia goes much deeper than food. It wasn't just an adolescent phase or a way to act out. It was something that controlled my life and stole my self-worth and confidence. It has prevented me from achieving my personal and academic goals. It has ruined relationships with my family and friends, left me isolated, and nearly killed me. Finally after a year of ED free behaviors and continuing to follow my meal plan I have finally begun to enjoy my life. In the beginning I thought recovery had to be perfect, but it is far from that. Recovery is like riding a bike for the first time, at first you fall off a few times, but once you get the hang of it you never forget how good the feeling is.

~Matt D.

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Matt, Rosewood Alumni



## //A Perfectionist's Coping Mechanism

My eating disorder, “ED,” and I became friends without me even knowing what an eating disorder was. It started back in 1989 when I was just ten years young. I came from a vain Latin family where beauty mattered and thin seemed to be the only option. Spending most of my adolescent life with my family in South America, a weigh-in when I arrived was anything but “normal.” Earlier that year my favorite relative had announced she was engaged. She and her fiancé scheduled their nuptials in early June of 1989. I remember experiencing so much excitement that maybe I would be asked to be apart of her wedding.



I idolized her, not only was she beautiful, but she always had a way of making me feel like I belonged. She always made time for me when she visited. I recall she would fly in early from South America to see me perform in my vocal and piano recital every year and was always in the front row to cheer me on. The love I had for her was irreplaceable.

I remember the day she arrived I made this huge sign to welcome her at the airport. The whole ride home she sat in the front seat speaking to my mum and was elated to share all the details of the wedding. Upon arriving at our house she shared that she wanted me to be apart of her wedding party. I remember the excitement and joy as I jumped, and maybe cried a bit, from the news of the invitation. She then explained that in order to be a part of the wedding I had to lose some weight. I immediately took to the challenge and knew I could not let her down.

The following day I told my mum not to pay my lunch tuition for the

remainder of the year and that I was only going to eat salads for every meal. My mum recalls the “challenge,” she had never seen me more determined to accomplish something. I had always had issues of perfectionism whether it was with music, school, or cleaning my room. My eating behaviors quickly became an obsession. I simply hid my food or just did not eat.

How can you comprehend competitive behavior at such a young age? Aren’t we all taught that healthy competition is okay? What about when healthy competition is no longer healthy? When school adjourned I was prepared to do my usual weigh-in when I arrived at my uncle’s lab. I had lost fifteen pounds! I knew that I had done well and I wanted to continue my success. I was never over weight as a child. As a matter of fact, I was very active. I had this newly found achievement making me believe that food was the enemy and I continued to restrict throughout my adolescence.

Throughout the years ED was my coping skill. ED fed my confidence and made me

**Throughout the years ED was my coping skill. ED fed my confidence and made me feel like I was always in control. //**

**Beau, Rosewood Alumni**

feel like I was always in control. No matter how much emotional pain I was in, ED numbed me. If I had only recognized that ED taught me to isolate, and that being alone was the only way to avoid any pain what so ever. I was in this very dark place from my childhood through my adult life all due to a “challenge” that started twenty-two years prior.

## //A Perfectionist's Coping Mechanism, cont.

How could I break the cycle? I had been in and out of treatment centers for depression and my bulimia since I was fifteen. In February 2010 I collapsed and realized that I needed recovery. I needed it, I wanted it, and I asked for it. That was my “ah ha!” moment! Every one of us comes from different circumstances



and family dynamics. I understand that my mum did not have it easy either as a child or as a parent, however I do tell her often that I needed a mother and not a friend. I have learned that approach in any circumstance is never easy, especially when you or someone you know is deliberately harming themselves. My best advice is to be kind with your words and always approach situations as if you were the other person. Make time to connect with your parents or vice versa. Recovery is hard! If you are struggling, ask for support! You are worth it and recovery is worth it! One of my favorite quotes is, “Fate determines who comes into our life, it’s our attitude and actions that determine who stays in our life.” I always reflect on this quote because without my recovery my meaningful relationships would not be meaningful. I do not want to go back . . . and I cannot ever go back.

~Beau H.



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Beau, Rosewood Alumni

## //An Unexpected Gift

After eight very long years, two court appeals, and endless medical complications, my body was failing and my hope extinguished as I was denied the treatment that I so desperately needed to save my life. My story didn't end there... help came from the most unexpected of places. I was offered treatment by the Dr. Oz show at Rosewood Ranch Centers in Wickenburg, AZ. With the support of a caring and compassionate treatment team at Rosewood and the many amazing peers who walked a similar path, I was able to reclaim my life.

~Bryan B.



Help came from the most unexpected of places. I was offered treatment by the Dr Oz show at Rosewood Ranch Centers in Wickenburg, AZ... I was able to reclaim my life. //

Bryan, Rosewood Alumni

## //A Man Determined to Stop Binge Eating

My name is Robert and I was a patient at Rosewood Ranch and Rosewood Capri. I know that suffering from an eating disorder is very difficult and it is a long, grueling process to overcome, but the folks at Rosewood really know what they are doing. On December 18 of 2013 I was a very broken man, clinging to life and

I know that suffering from an eating disorder is very difficult and it is a long, grueling process to overcome... //

Robert, Rosewood Alumni

ready to give up. A power greater than myself led me to Rosewood and it couldn't have come at a better time. I have been suffering from binge eating disorder for thirty-one years and it has almost killed me twice. I have hurt everyone that I love with this disease, because they had to watch me slowly kill myself with my eating. I stayed in the Rosewood system for eighty-six days and I am so grateful they took me as a patient. I have not compulsively eaten in 130 days and I feel like Rosewood and the good Lord has saved my life. Rosewood has given me the knowledge, and my higher power, Jesus Christ, gives me the strength I need to succeed. If anyone has second thoughts about this program I would be glad to tell you more of my experience. I know I would not have lasted too much longer if were not for these people. Love to you all and may god bless you.

~Robert M.



## //A Man Fights His Anorexia

I'm Derek and I'm in recovery from anorexia. It's been an adventure and shock to my system being a guy in treatment. I have a great respect for all past and present members of my treatment team. I was scared when I first got to the Ranch as I had no idea what to expect; I had never been in in-patient treatment before.



The hardest part for me was sharing with others since guys don't share their feelings. I did connect with a few people and started to share but always had a smile on my face as I am a people pleaser. As time went on I opened up very little. I then transitioned to Capri, the Intensive Outpatient (IOP). I put the most effort into IOP and started working more towards recovery. I did have to go back up to Capri a few months later and got a wake up call to start to put effort into my treatment. I have been through a lot and had to return to treatment in October 2012. I had a different outlook and attitude because I was dying.

I was never diagnosed as a kid because I was a guy and guys don't get EDs. There is a stigma that guys are immune to EDs but that is far from the truth. Guys need to know the signs and notice if friends are showing them, and they also need to dismiss the stigma that this is a rich, white girl's disease. Guys are just as susceptible to eating disorders but not as willing to ask for help due to shame. I want guys to know

there's nothing to be ashamed of and that your life is worth more than ED could ever promise or give you. You are never cured, but you can be recovered. It takes hard work and at times you may feel like giving up but your life is worth more than the disease that's trying to kill you. It's been tough to hide it from everyone and just adds stress to an already stressful health issue. I can only say that the sooner you get help the more life you'll have to live and be happy.

~Derek

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Derek, Rosewood Alumni

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## //FREE ONLINE EATING DISORDER ASSESSMENTS

Are you concerned that you or someone you love struggles with an eating disorder? In a continued effort to make eating disorder diagnosis and treatment more accessible, Rosewood Centers for Eating Disorders offers three online eating disorder assessment tools. Our simple, interactive forms are highly convenient and available online at all times. To take our complimentary assessment, scan the QR code or visit us online at [rosewoodranch.com/free-eating-disorder-assessments/](https://rosewoodranch.com/free-eating-disorder-assessments/).



## //FREE ONLINE INSURANCE ASSESSMENT

Get help confirming your insurance coverage for eating disorder treatment by taking our online insurance benefits assessment. It is quick, complimentary, and confidential. A Rosewood utilization review team member will contact you within one business day to discuss your coverage options. To submit an assessment request, scan the QR code or visit us online at [rosewoodranch.com/insurance-benefits-assessment/](https://rosewoodranch.com/insurance-benefits-assessment/).



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## // ABOUT ROSEWOOD

Rosewood is one of the only eating disorder treatment programs for men, women and adolescents to offer a complete range of care for all stages of recovery, from the most serious cases, to residential and Behavioral Health In-Patient Facility, to transitional and outpatient services.

We are accredited by the joint commission, and accredited by, or a member of, many respected organizations within the industry.

Rosewood treats the full continuum of eating disorders including Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa and Binge Eating Disorder, as well as co-occurring addictions and co-occurring disorders. Our complete care program offers our clients the best possible chance for success and lifelong recovery. We understand the intricate medical, emotional, and psychological complications associated with someone with an eating disorder. Our well-established model of care, experienced multi-disciplinary staff, and intimate warm setting make Rosewood uniquely qualified to effectively treat men, women and adolescents struggling with eating disorders.



**ROSEWOOD.**  
**CENTERS FOR EATING DISORDERS**

11 REASONS PATIENTS & PROFESSIONALS CHOOSE ROSEWOOD

- 1. Rosewood Leads the Way - Pioneers in Eating Disorder (ED) Treatment
- 2. Rosewood Offers Gentle Solutions - Nurturing, Healing Atmosphere
- 3. Rosewood Helps Clients Get Needed Care - Insurance Utilization Experts
- 4. Rosewood Believes in Family - Focus on Family Healing
- 5. Rosewood Values Providers - Open Communication & Partnership
- 6. Rosewood Adheres to Best Practices - Multidisciplinary, Evidence-Based Therapy
- 7. Rosewood Goes Deep - Innovative Experiential Therapies
- 8. Rosewood Fosters 1-on-1 Connections - Individualized Treatment
- 9. Rosewood Treats the Whole Person - Co-Occurring Disorders & Addiction Treatment
- 10. Rosewood Offers Stability & Continuity - Full Continuum of Care
- 11. Rosewood Follows Through - Strong Alumni & Aftercare Program

CONDITIONS WE TREAT

- ANOREXIA NERVOSA
- BULIMIA NERVOSA
- BINGE EATING DISORDER

CO-OCCURRING CONDITIONS

- DIABETES
- BARIATRIC CANDIDATES
- ADDICTION & SUBSTANCE ABUSE
- ANXIETY/DEPRESSION/TRAUMA
- OTHER MOOD DISORDERS
- PSYCHIATRIC CONDITIONS

// more alumni testimonial excerpts

My life was falling apart... it is now free of my eating disorder. I have never felt this whole. Rosewood taught me how to love, laugh, and live again. I worked out my deepest family secrets (at Rosewood). I feel alive again, like the real me is starting to shine through. I am thankful every day for receiving treatment at Rosewood.

Visit [RosewoodRanchReviews.com](https://RosewoodRanchReviews.com) for more testimonials.