

## Monte Nido and Affiliates

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### *About Monte Nido*

The atmosphere at Monte Nido and Affiliates is professional and structured, but it is also warm, friendly, and family-like. They use highly dedicated staff, many of who are recovered themselves, thus serving as excellent role model's. Situated in tranquil home-like settings, surrounded by nature, the residential programs offer an environment to calm the system, attend to mindfulness practices and connect to nature. Their open kitchens and organic gardens help clients regain a nurturing relationship to food. With only 6 – 12 clients at one given time, Monte Nido and Affiliates offers highly individualized and intensive treatment by a multi-disciplinary team approach including an Attending Physician, Psychiatrist, Dietician, Clinical and Program Director and Primary Therapist. Under the direction of Carolyn Costin, recovered herself, and having treated eating disorders for over the past 30 years, Monte Nido and Affiliates offers several levels of care including residential and transitional living, to day programs and intensive outpatient services. The philosophy and environment at Monte Nido and Affiliates inspires people to commit to overcoming obstacles that are interfering with the quality of their lives and helps promote living the authentic life they were meant to live, away from their eating disorder symptoms. Monte Nido and Affiliates is contracted with most major healthcare insurance providers.

### *The Monte Nido and Affiliates Philosophy* **Full Recovery is Possible!**

Eating and exercise disorders are progressive and debilitating illnesses requiring medical, nutritional and psychological intervention. Individuals suffering from these disorders often need a structured environment to achieve recovery. Monte Nido believes that individuals who suffer from eating disorders can become fully "recovered." In fact, it turns out that many people select Monte Nido and Affiliates as their treatment program of choice because of its belief in being fully recovered and its open use of recovered staff.

It is daunting, if not overwhelming for an individual who is suffering to think he or she will never really be over their illness. When you know you can be recovered, that the illness can be gone, a thing in the past, it offers encouragement to suffer through what it takes to get well because all the suffering will eventually come to an end. Clients consistently tell the Staff that the Monte Nido and Affiliates philosophy combined with the fact that they actually get to see and work with recovered staff members was key in their getting well.

The Founder and Executive Director, Carolyn Costin, recovered herself from anorexia nervosa since 1976, has held the position and spoken out openly for over three decades that being fully recovered is possible. She has treated countless individuals who are now fully recovered and several have gone on to become eating disorder therapists themselves. "I saw my first eating disorder client in 1978. It did not occur to me to say anything but I made it through this and so can you. I felt if I recovered from it then why couldn't everyone? It did not occur to me that there would be different schools of thought on this subject. There was no one around who even treated eating disorders whom I could turn to and ask. No one told me to do it another way."

At Monte Nido they shoot for the long-term goal of being fully recovered. They feel that the use of the terms “recovery” and “recovering” are ambiguous. Someone could use either of these terms and be abstinent from all eating disorder behaviors, but another person might say she is in recovery or recovering yet still be underweight, restricting calories or even still bingeing and purging. Clients who are still in treatment will use these terms because it means to them they are in the process of getting better.

How to define “recovered” is another thing altogether. There is no real consensus in the field except all would agree that to be recovered there must be an absence of symptoms. However, this is not really sufficient for if one is plagued by thoughts of restricting calories, tormented by body dissatisfaction, unable to eat with others or eat in restaurants, then it is hard to claim one is recovered. Monte Nido and Affiliates believes that their task is larger than just helping someone recover from the symptoms. In fact, this is where Monte Nido and Affiliates think there is a big difference between “recovering” and “recovered”. When one is “recovered” from an eating disorder, it truly is a thing in the past that is no longer there. One does not fear or is not tempted into relapsing back into the illness. Although defining the term “recovered” has been difficult for the field Monte Nido and Affiliates believes it is important to know when healing an eating disorder, where they are headed. In her book, “100 Questions and Answers about Eating Disorders, Costin writes a definition for “being recovered”. At Monte Nido and Affiliates they share the definition with clients and work hard to set clients on the path to achieve it.

“Being recovered to me is when the person can accept his or her natural body size and shape and no longer has a self destructive or unnatural relationship with food or exercise. When you are recovered, food and weight take a proper perspective in your life and what you weigh is not more important than who you are; in fact, actual numbers are of little or no importance at all. When recovered, you will not compromise your health or betray your soul to look a certain way, wear a certain size or reach a certain number on a scale.”

Becoming recovered does not happen from doing any specific thing. It does not happen on a certain day. It will not happen the day someone leaves a treatment program. Being recovered is a gradual process and gets stronger and stronger over time. There is no one who can proclaim this for anyone else. When you are recovered, it is you who really knows.

How professionals view the disorder and the treatment cannot only affect the nature of the treatment, but the actual outcome itself. Norman Cousins, who learned firsthand the power of belief in eliminating his own illness, concluded in his book *Anatomy of an Illness*, “Drugs are not always necessary. Belief in recovery always is.” If clients and clinicians believe clients can reach this place of being fully recovered, Costin suggests they have a better chance of achieving it. Many clients come to Monte Nido and Affiliates after years of struggling with the illness. They are exhausted, defeated and quite hopeless. They are filled with hope when they see professionals who have made peace with their food and body issues and through modeling prove their eating disorder is a thing of the past. It truly is a “been there done that, not intimidated by it, I made it so can you” attitude. The staff at Monte Nido and Affiliates exudes confidence in understanding and dealing directly with the eating disorder symptoms while offering hope and inspiration to its clients that they too can become fully recovered.

A growing body of research has backed up the Monte Nido position. Various studies have shown that although it takes time, people with eating disorders do not have to deal with the issue for the rest of their lives. They do not need to keep relapse at bay one day at a time but rather, with appropriate treatment, can become fully recovered where both the behaviors and the thoughts are things of the past.