INTRODUCTION

Research suggests that negative affect (NA) is a common antecedent of binge eating, although findings regarding post-binge changes in affect have been mixed, calling into question models of binge eating that posit negative reinforcement functions.

METHODS

Participants
47 women with full or sub-threshold anorexia nervosa (AN) and 121 with bulimia nervosa (BN)

Measures
Participants completed portions of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS), including broad negative affect and the specific facet of guilt. Participants also reported the occurrence of various eating disorder behaviors, including binge eating and SIV.

Procedure
Participants completed a 2-week ecological momentary assessment protocol, providing multiple daily ratings of NA and guilt and recording episodes of binge eating and SIV.

Data Analysis
Only ratings made within 1-hour following a binge eating episode were included. The relationships between diagnosis (AN vs. BN) and SIV (tendency to be present vs. absent) and NA and guilt were tested using linear mixed effects modeling.

RESULTS

Although overall NA decreased during the first post-binge hour, this decrease was not moderated by diagnosis or the presence of SIV. Guilt also decreased during the first post-binge hour, but this change was moderated by both diagnosis and SIV. Specifically, guilt decreased in BN whereas it did not in AN, and the tendency to engage in SIV was related to an increase in guilt, whereas the tendency not to engage in SIV was associated with a decrease.

CONCLUSIONS

These results indicate that both diagnosis and SIV are related to post-binge eating guilt trajectories and suggest that examining moderators and specific facets of NA may be useful for elucidating the functions of binge eating. Guilt, as a specific facet of NA, may be of particular relevance to understanding the emotional experience of binge eating.