



## What is Eating You? Targeting Emotional Eating!

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Reconnect with Food® at Inner Door  
Center, 1996 - 2010

## Get To The Root Of It All

- Is the bag of cookies or the carton of ice cream you eat each night about food or something deeper?
- Learn why you eat as you do in order to identify what is driving you to overeat.
- Learn how to balance and cope with life's challenges.

## The 3 Beliefs Many Have that are FALSE

- 1. Health and happiness only occur when ideal weight is obtained
- 2. People differ in size because they lack the will power to exercise regularly and restrict their food intake
- 3. Everyone can be thin, happy, and healthy by dieting
- *Obesity treatment is more than ineffective- it is commonly destructive. It can provide individuals with failure experiences, cause them to view themselves as flawed and deviant, confuse perceptions of satiety and hunger, and distract them from other problems. While this does not happen to everyone, it needs to be given more consideration than it has in the past if we want to cause no harm*

## Outside Pressures

- The media portrays overly thin women
- Women directly relate physical appearance to self-esteem
- Female ectomorphs are considered to be attractive and have many friends
- The current American obsession with dieting and slimness is a cultural aberration
- In response to culturally induced pressure, girls as young as eight have been known to diet
- Is this any way to live?

## Consequences of the Obsession with Thinness

- anorexia nervosa
- bulimia (almost always triggered by dieting)
- binge eating
- disordered eating and exercise behavior
- increasing rates of smoking in young girls
- body hatred
- heart valve damage
- leaky stools
- children being abducted from their families for being fat or being subjected to dangerous medical procedures because their parents are fat, etc.
- exportation of ineffective and potentially dangerous interventions to other countries

## Four Reasons for Healthy Body Image

- 1. With self-acceptance the mind and body can really connect, which is a critical component of overall health.
- 2. It is difficult for clients with body dissatisfaction/body hatred to take good care of themselves.
- 3. People need to care about themselves to want what is best for their health, and self-care is necessary for health and well-being.
- 4. Without a sense of peace, for example when people are constantly degrading themselves for their size/habits, making healthy choices is extremely difficult.

## Making the Connection

- Write down all your meals and snacks
- Record your hunger level before and after eating
  - Should eat when hungry and stop when full
- Note the time of day and your emotions
- Recognize if you ate the meal slowly
- Determine if you made healthy choices

## Understand Causes of Personal Stress

- What situations do you find extremely stressful?
  - turmoil in relationships, financial stress, dissatisfaction with your body
- What emotions do you link to situations?
  - Happiness, joy, love, hope, sadness, anger, frustration, anxiousness, boredom, fear, loneliness, shame, doubt
- Is it something more serious from an outside source that needs to be eliminated?
  - Abuse

## Learn How to Identify Where Physical Tension Is Held

- Tension
- Aches and pains
- Parts of body/muscle groups where there is tension, aches, and/or pain

## Identify Emotions Before and After Food Binge

- Write down your emotions prior to and after a food binge
  - overwhelmed, loss of control, need for comfort of familiarity and habit, guilt, shame, unhappiness
- Is food used to comfort or dismiss your feelings?
- Stop being numb towards the situation, identify your emotions and work through them

## Connect to the Meaning Behind Physical and Emotional Issues

- Think of occurrences that cause your emotions felt prior to and after a food binge
- Become self aware
- When do you commonly binge eat?
  - -time of day, emotions
- What happened that day or in the past to cause your emotions?
- Exactly what are you feeling before you take the first bite?

## Connect to the Meaning Behind Physical and Emotional Issues Cont.

- Search through your spiritual side to determine causes for your emotional issues
  - Control
  - Attachment
  - Letting go/surrendering
  - Forgiveness
  - Speaking your truths
  - Engaging into life

## Cope With Your Emotions without Using Food

- Food rituals, restriction and obsessive thinking could be your coping tools
- Re-nourishing helps you prepare to deal with your emerging feelings
- Binge eating, purging, and excessive exercise are common coping methods as well
- Take a time out from your usual behaviors to experience and deal with your feelings and thoughts

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## Intuitive Eating

- Realize your disordered eating is about something deeper
- Heal and learn to tolerate risks with eating
- Try new eating experiences that may be temporarily uncomfortable
- Recognize and manage your feelings and needs
- Value self-care of your body
- Notice vulnerability- if you're too hungry or too stressed for example.

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## Intuitive Eating

Eat for physical instead of emotional reasons

- Will be hard for you to hear biological cues of hunger and fullness at first
- Develop an eating plan to start the process
- Nutrition rehabilitation is needed for your self-care, even if hunger or fullness is absent sometimes
- Necessary nourishment is a non-negotiable priority

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## Intuitive Eating

Rely on internal hunger and satiety cues

- Distinguish between your emotional and physical hunger cues
- Understand your beliefs and interpretations of hunger and fullness
- Address your fears about responding appropriately to fullness and hunger
- Develop the ability to identify your body's physical cue, normalize that cue (& confront your fears), respond appropriately to your hunger
- "When it comes to food the needs of the body, mind and spirit have become distrusted enemies that need to be quelled at all costs." - First Do No Harm

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## Intuitive Eating

Unconditional permission to eat

- Take the judgment and morality out of eating
- Remove your guilt and it is easier to be in tune with your experiences and needs of your body
- Recognize your body needs: energy, carbohydrates, essential fat, and a variety of foods

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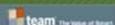
## Mindful Eating

- Mindful eating can transform your relationship to food and eating, improve your overall health, body image, relationships and self-esteem
- Witness sensations, thoughts, and emotions that arise while eating without judgment or criticism
- Engage all parts of your body, heart, and mind, in choosing, preparing, and eating food
- Immerse yourself in the colors, textures, scents, tastes, and even sounds of drinking and eating
- Eating while you're distracted and not tasting keeps you hungry and unsatisfied

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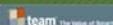
## Mindful Eating Cont.

- Your experience is unique, therefore, you are the expert
- It replaces self-criticism with self-nurturing, and shame with respect for your own inner wisdom
- Reawakens your pleasure
- Helps you realize anything you bring your full attention to will begin to open up and reveal worlds you never suspected existed
- Help connect you to your innate wisdom about what you need from food - not just fuel and nutrients for growth and development, but pleasure, connection and fulfillment as well.



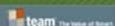
## Physical Activity

- Over time, humans have remained fit due to engaging in physical activity as part of normal life
- Our current lifestyles have us in the awkward position of needing to add "exercise" (and the time to do it) back into our lives – which are already overburdened and overfilled
- Can help you rediscover and reconnect to your body that you have been taught to hate and ignore
- Include activities connected with everyday living that are social, playful and pleasurable such as walking and gardening
- *"if you're fit . . . being 25 or even 75 pounds overweight is perfectly healthy. And if you aren't fit, being slim gives you no protection whatsoever."*



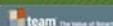
## Develop an Action Plan

- Monitor your eating and moods
- Develop effective stress-handling skills
- Relieve your built up stress
- Exchange your unhealthy habits for healthy ones
- Attend group therapy and/or support groups



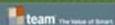
## Develop an Action Plan Cont.

- Find stress relieving methods- What makes you relaxed and genuinely happy?
- Try creative projects- writing, painting, photography, etc.
- Spending time with a pet or loved one
- Meditation and recognizing positives in your life



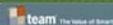
## Develop an Action Plan Cont.

- Practice mindful eating
- Learn to identify what triggers your mindless eating, such as emotions, social pressures, or certain foods
- Choose nourishing foods that appeal to your senses
- Take in colors, smells, observe textures and cooking techniques, recognize delicate flavors
- Enjoy your food and use it for nutrition rather than to block emotions
- Listen to your body to determine physical or emotional hunger



## Specific Example

- It is 8:30pm after your long day of work
- You already ate dinner
- You are at home all alone
- You can't find anything interesting on television
- You feel frustrated about your lack of weight loss
- You wander into the kitchen
- You know you aren't hungry but want to eat anyway
- You are about to eat



## Example Cont.

- You see your food journal on the counter
- You record your hunger level and realize it is low
- You record the time of day and notice you tend to overeat at night
- You record your feelings about the day and recognize your frustration with a failed “diet” and your have been holding back expressing your emotions

## Example Cont.

- You decide your current emotions are boredom and frustration, not hunger
- You begin to think using food to escape your emotions is useless and does not make you feel better
- You want to let go of your stress
- You write a journal entry to explore your feelings in depth
- You feel proud of your creative writing techniques and how you dealt with your emotions

## Health and Size

- Hypothesis that large people are inherently unhealthy while small people are inherently healthy is NOT supported
- HEALTHY WEIGHT = The weight at which a your body settles as you move towards a more balanced lifestyle
- Movement towards a healthier lifestyle will produce a weight that is appropriate for you
- Focus on health rather than weight
- Normalizing eating is likely to improve your overall health by reducing the anxiety, guilt, preoccupation with food, bingeing, and weight cycling commonly associated with restricted eating (dieting)

## Healthy at Every Size

- Few of us are at peace with our bodies, whether because we're fat or because we fear becoming fat.” –H.A.E.S.
- Accept and respect the natural diversity of your body size and shape
- Eat in a flexible manner that values pleasure and honors your internal cues of hunger, satiety, and appetite.
- Find joy in moving your body and becoming more physically vital
- Honoring your body is the best way to improve your health

## Healthy at Every Size Cont.

- Fighting fat doesn't make the fat go away
- Being thinner, even if we knew how to successfully accomplish it, will not necessarily make you healthier or happier
- Stop dieting and being scared of food
- Move on from feeling shame about your body and being preoccupied with your weight
- Recognize that health and well-being are multi-dimensional and includes physical, social, spiritual, occupational, emotional, and intellectual aspects

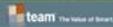
## Resources

- <http://tcme.org/>
- <http://haescommunity.org/>
- [www.megrette.com](http://www.megrette.com)
- <http://www.intuitiveeating.com/>
- <http://www.jonrobison.net>

## TEAM Services

- Visit the Wellness Website
  - [www.yourhealthyteam.com](http://www.yourhealthyteam.com)
  - Call for Wellness Assistance: 1-888-699-3554
- EAP 24 Hour Support Line
  - [www.team-eap.com](http://www.team-eap.com)
  - 1-800-448-TEAM
- Services
  - Counseling
  - Coaching
  - Crisis Intervention
  - Community Resources

**FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL**





## What is Eating You? Targeting Emotional Eating

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**Emotional Eating:** Eating to feed a feeling, rather than eating in response to physical hunger. Eating that is triggered by an emotion instead of hunger.

### Emotional Hunger Vs. Physical Hunger: How to Tell the Difference

#### **Did I eat today or turn away from food for feelings other than hunger?**

→ There are many physical, emotional and spiritual feelings that may cause you to eat.

Physical: Aches, Pains, Tensions

Emotional: Happy, Sad, Fear, Frustration, Anger, Love, Peace, Boredom

#### **Did my hunger come on suddenly, or gradually build up over time?**

→ Emotional hunger comes on quickly and feels like it needs to be satisfied instantly, while physical hunger builds up over time and can wait to be satisfied if needed.

#### **Are you craving one specific food to fill an emotional void, rather than being open to other options that could satisfy your physical hunger?**

→ When eating to feed an emotion rather than physical hunger, specific foods may be craved in order to feel satisfied. When your body is physically hungry, you are more open to any option that will fill your empty stomach.

#### **Can you stop when you are full?**

→ If you are eating to feed an emotional need, you are more likely to continue eating even after your physical hunger is satisfied. Using the Satiety Scale is a good way to assess your level of hunger.

10- Very Full, Feeling Stuffed  
9- Full, Feeling Uncomfortable  
8- Somewhat Full  
7- Food has lost flavor  
6- Satisfied

5- No longer feeling hungry  
4- Physical Desire to Eat  
3- Somewhat Hungry  
2- Hungry  
1- Very Hungry, Irritable, Shaky

#### **Are there any emotional feelings left behind after eating?**

→ Emotional eating can leave behind feelings of guilt, while eating for physical hunger does not. Practice *Mindful Eating* to be aware of how you feel before, during, and after your meal.

**Mindful Eating:** Take your time, breathe, move slowly. Appreciate your food with all five senses. Notice the texture, color, sound, vibrations, and taste of your food. Give thanks for your food and appreciate the experience of eating it.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mon    Tue    Wed    Thu    Fri    Sat    Sun

### My Daily Food Journal

Water:

Hunger Level Before Meal 1-10		Hunger Level After Meal 1-10
	<b>Meal 1- Breakfast</b>	
	<b>Meal 2- Snack</b>	
	<b>Meal 3- Lunch</b>	
	<b>Meal 4- Snack</b>	
	<b>Meal 5- Dinner</b>	
	<b>Meal 6- Snack</b>	
<u>Notes:</u>		

I made this discovery about myself and my relationship with food today: \_\_\_\_\_

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What I plan to do tomorrow to change these patterns that I am noticing with my behaviors and food: \_\_\_\_\_

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How I did Today:     Fabulous         Great         OK  
 Need to Pay Better Attention