Emotional Eating vs. Mindful Eating
Emotional Eating: What is it?

Eating for reasons other than hunger to “feed” a feeling
  • Boredom, frustration, sadness, stress, happiness, etc.

Eating when you are not physically hungry to fill an emotional void
Emotional Eating: Why do we do it?

- Food tastes good
- It can have a calming effect
- Coping mechanism that provides a distraction from what is really going on

Consequences
- Overeating
- Feelings of guilt, shame or failure
- Negative self-esteem

- Emotional eating is not inherently bad and is OK in moderation
  - Avoid making it a habit
  - Replace it with mindful eating
Mindful Eating

• Being aware of physical hunger and fullness cues
• Being present at meals, avoiding distractions
• Starting with small portions
• Slowing down and savoring food
  • Taking small bites
  • Chewing food well
• Paying attention to food
  • Taste
  • Texture
  • Smell
  • How food makes you feel
Mindful Eating: Putting Into Practice

• Notice and acknowledge that you are eating emotionally

• Try asking yourself questions:
  • Why do I want to eat?
  • Am I really hungry or am I bored/stressed/sad?
  • What do I want to eat right now?
  • How will I feel after I eat this?
Mindful Eating: Putting Into Practice

- Rate your hunger using a hunger scale
  - Try checking in with yourself before, during and after a meal using a scale from 1-10

**The Hunger Scale**

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- Starving and feeling weak/dizzy.
- Very hungry, irritable, low energy, large amounts of stomach growling.
- Pretty hungry, stomach is beginning to growl.
- Beginning to feel hungry.
- Satisfied, neither hungry nor full.
- Slightly full/pleasantly full.
- Slightly uncomfortable.
- Feeling stuffed.
- Very uncomfortable, stomach aches.
- So full you feel sick.
Mindful Eating Exercise

• Take a snack (Ex: raisin, grape, strawberry, piece of chocolate or cheese)
  • Notice the appearance and texture of the food
  • How does it smell?
• Place a small amount of the food in your mouth without chewing it
  • After 30 seconds or so, start chewing slowly
• Afterwards, ask yourself:
  • What did you notice about the texture or flavor before/after you started chewing?
  • How did this experience compare to your typical eating experience?
Mindful Eating Benefits

Mindful eating may lead to:

• Eating less
• Decreased emotional eating
• Enjoying your food more
• Reconnecting to your body’s hunger and fullness cues
• A healthier relationship with food
• Increased self-confidence
• Increased diet quality
Mindful Eating Goals

• Eat without distractions during 3 meals this week
• Take snacks out of the package
• Set your fork down between bites during 4 meals this week
• Check-in at meals using the hunger scale during 1 meal per day
• Practice the mindful eating exercise with a snack this week
Tips to Prevent Mindless Eating

• Eat on smaller plates
• Plan meals and snacks in advance
• Buy single-serve sizes or portion out your snacks
• Order smaller portions when eating out
• Have healthier options available
Healthy Snacking

• Mindful snacking between meals can help control cravings and promote portion control

• Keep serving size in mind

• Aim to include at least two food groups per snack
  • Lean protein
  • Vegetable
  • Fruit
  • Grain
  • Healthy fat
Healthy Snacking Examples

- Apple slices and nut butter
- Low-fat cheese and fruit
- Whole-wheat crackers and tuna
- Half of a sandwich
- Greek yogurt or cottage cheese and fruit
- Veggies and hummus
- Toast and nut butter
- Boiled egg and toast
- Make your own trail mix with dried fruit, nuts, seeds, chocolate chips, etc.
Other Positive Coping Mechanisms

- Physical activity
  - Stretching
  - Walking
  - Jogging
  - Riding a bike
- Reading
- Getting outdoors
- Listening to music
- Talking with friends and family
Questions?

Thank You!