



Overcoming emotional eating

PEBTF

January 2017

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To provide feedback or to receive a copy of today's slides, send an email to jmeister@activehealth.net.



Learning objectives

Overcoming emotional eating

Define emotional eating

Review coping strategies

Explore self-soothing techniques

Discuss different types of distractors

Learn how to use emotional eating to your benefit

Discover how to accept and use setbacks

What is “emotional eating”?

- Eating in response to an **emotional** need rather than a **physical** need
- Eating to **self-soothe** or find relief from difficult emotions
 - A temporary **escape** from an uncomfortable feeling
- **Distracting** yourself from a feeling with food
 - It **quenches** boredom, stress, etc. and offers comfort in the short term

Emotional eating interferes with the ability to develop healthier methods of dealing with feelings.

**What emotions
do you find
trigger
emotional
eating?**

• Coping strategies

- 1 Ask yourself the 4 **overcoming questions**
- 2 Proactively add **enjoyable events** to your life
- 3 **Plan** ahead
- 4 Practice **deep breathing**
- 5 **Deal** with your feelings
- 6 **Practice** different distractors
- 7 **Practice** mindful eating



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4 overcoming questions

1. Am I biologically hungry?

- Yes – Eat
- No – Answer questions 2-4

2. What am I feeling?

- Label which emotion you're feeling.

3. What do I need?

4. Would you please...?

- Ask for what you want or need.

Example

1. Am I biologically hungry?

- No

2. What am I feeling?

- Stress

3. What do I need?

- A bubble bath in candlelight

4. Would you please...?

- Honey, would you take the kids out for dinner?

2 Add enjoyable events to your life

- Feeling soothed/nurtured can allow you to **feel comfort and warmth** so that food loses its number one position in this role
- Helps you proactively manage emotions

**What sorts
of soothing
activities
might you
enjoy?**

3 Plan ahead

- Plan ahead what you'll do to self-soothe when you face powerful emotions
- Soothe the senses
 - Sound
 - Sight
 - Touch
 - Taste
 - Smell
- Soothe by
 - Doing an activity
 - Eating wisely and slowly
 - Giving
 - Encouraging yourself like you would someone else
 - Seeking support

4 Practice deep breathing

Technique:

1. Lie down or sit comfortably
2. Close your eyes, and place one hand on your belly, and the other on your chest
3. Begin to breathe slowly and deeply through your nose—expand your belly, chest and lungs (let the belly push your hand back as you breathe)
4. Slowly breathe out through your mouth

5 Deal with your feelings

- Journal
- Call a friend(s)
- Talk about your feelings into a recording device
- Release anger through pounding a pillow or a punching bag
- Confront the person who is triggering your feelings
- Sit with your feelings and discover how the intensity will diminish with time
- If you have trouble identifying your feelings or coping with them, talk to a counselor



6 Practice different distractors

- Many people use food as their primary distractor from their feelings
- Give yourself permission to take a break from your feelings for a while
- Distract yourself in emotionally healthy ways

**What are
some
emotionally
healthy ways
to distract
yourself?**

7 Practice mindful eating



- What is it?
 - Practice of bringing your full awareness to your experience while eating
- Increases gratitude and gratification in eating
- Encourages you to
 - Slow down
 - Consider your choices
 - Consider your emotions
 - Make healthier choices some of the time

Cravings and urges

- Cravings are part of life
- Cravings often pass when we are unable to quench them for whatever reason
 - Like a train through a station
 - The desire to overeat unhealthy foods also passes with time or by using strategies in this presentation



Use emotional eating as a sign

- Don't think of emotional eating as a failure
- Think of emotional eating as a signal that your life is stressful
 - Recognize that you're using emotional eating as a way to care for yourself
 - Instead, use healthy coping strategies
- It can also be a signal of an unbalanced life
 - Food is fulfilling an unmet need
 - This can signal you to rebalance your life



Accepting setbacks

- Be compassionate when you have a setback
- Give yourself permission to start again
 - With repetitive effort comes success
- Learn from setbacks when possible
 - Then get back to your healthy ways

“It's not whether you get **knocked down**, it's whether you **get up**.”

Vince Lombardi, Football Coach

Summary



- What is emotional eating?
- 4 questions
 - Self-soothing
 - Deep breathing
 - Different distractors
- Using emotional eating to your benefit
- Accepting setbacks

**What
strategies
are you
going to try?**

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