

Overcoming emotional eating

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#### 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.



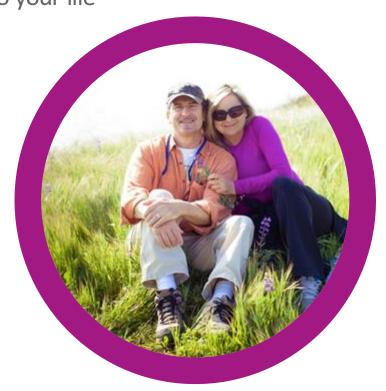
What emotions do you find trigger emotional eating?



#### 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





#### 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



### 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?



#### 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



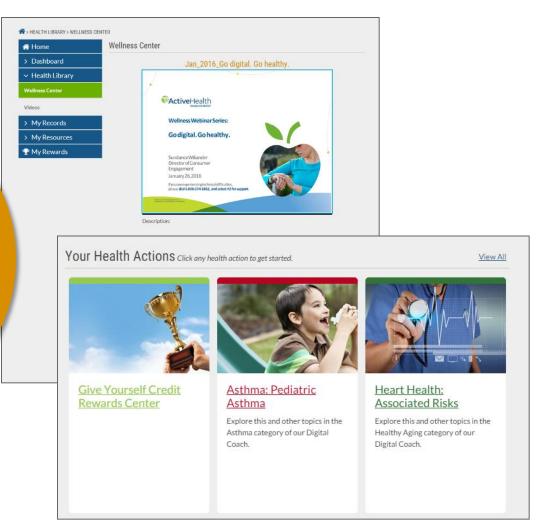
- What is emotional eating?
  - 4 questions
    - Self-soothing
      - Deep breathing
      - Different distractors
    - Using emotional eating to your benefit
- Accepting setbacks

What strategies are you going to try?



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### Thank you















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