

Appetite Awareness Model

The goal of AAT is to increase the amount of time that you stay on the Normal Eating Path. Five maladaptive cycles work together as indicated in the diagram to maintain problems with both overeating and binge eating. These self-perpetuating cycles help explain why eating problems become so entrenched and why they are so difficult to change.

The first goal of treatment is to prevent getting too hungry. So, try to start eating only for the helpful reasons (regular mealtimes & moderate hunger) and try to do something else when you have urges to eat at other times and you know you are not hungry. When you follow the helpful cues to eat, you will not be too hungry when you start to eat and it will be easier to eat mindfully and stop at moderate fullness cues. Notice, however that even if you start eating for reasons other than the helpful hunger-based reasons, you can get back on the Normal Eating Path by staying aware and stopping at moderate fullness.

Ignore Hunger Cycle

When you deliberately ignore hunger (because you are dieting) or lack awareness of moderate hunger (usually due to prior dieting), you are likely to start eating when you are quite hungry. Then you are likely to eat more than you need because you can eat much faster than the message can get to your brain that you are no longer hungry. If you eat but only a small amount (you don't go over the neutral line so you trigger some sensation of satisfaction), that may be ok as long as you don't feel deprived (psychologically) but you are likely to get hungry again sooner. It is ok to eat frequent but smaller "mini-meals" as long as you aren't getting too hungry before you eat. However, pay attention if you restrict the types of foods you eat (in addition to amount). If you feel deprived by not eating the type of food you want, you are likely to remain preoccupied with food even if you are not getting too hungry. The only way to reduce preoccupation with food is to eat the types of food that you actually enjoy but to limit the amounts so you do not worry about weight gain.

Emotional Eating Cycle

When you start eating because of emotions (not because it is mealtime or you feel hungry), you are not paying attention to appetite in the first place so you are more likely to eat past moderate fullness. You are also more likely to break a diet rule (comfort foods are usually those which are "forbidden"), which may trigger a binge. Eating works in the short run so the next time you are even more likely to feel like eating when you experience those emotions. Once this pattern is established, it may feel almost impossible not to eat in these situations because you need to feel the numbing or the release of tension and nothing else seems to work as well.

Food Available Cycle

When you start eating because food is available or others are eating (and it is not mealtime and you are not hungry) you are again not paying attention to appetite when you start so you are likely to eat past moderate fullness before you realize it. If you are concerned about your weight, overeating for any reason is upsetting and can trigger the "what the heck" response.

Ignore Fullness Cycle

Regardless of why you start eating, if you are out of touch with moderate fullness cues (from a history of dieting and/or frequent overeating and/or purging), you are likely to overeat before you realize it. If you have come to prefer the overfull feeling, you may not feel satisfied or "full" until you eat a fairly large amount. Each time you overeat, you are more likely to do it again because overeating maintains your lack of awareness of moderate fullness cues.

What the Heck Cycle

When you are quite worried about your weight and you are trying to maintain rigid control over what you eat, once you do overeat you may experience the What the Heck response; you feel you have already blown it. You may experience this as temporarily giving up control (I don't care) or as loss of control (I couldn't stop). This phenomenon seems to occur primarily as a result of the all too human tendency for illogical, dichotomous (all or nothing) thinking. This type of thinking involves labeling things as "good or bad". Once you decide you are bad, then eating more doesn't make you feel any worse; it will not change anything- the episode is already "bad" and there is nothing you can do to make it "good" again. Once you conclude, "it's hopeless-I'll never be thin anyway", then eating more doesn't matter. You have (for the moment) given up the goal (you think "I don't care") so you can eat more. You are ignoring the fact that eating is a continuum, i.e. a little overeating is actually much closer to appropriate eating than it is to a binge. Another type of maladaptive thinking is called "magical thinking"; it is when you try to fool yourself into believing that the calories you eat after a certain point are somehow different from the ones just before-- or just don't count. If you were being logical, you would only feel a little bit bad about minor overeating and eating more would make you feel increasingly bad. Also, you would not set some particular point on the continuum at which you abandon all effort or decide that the calories don't count just because you wish they wouldn't. Giving up or losing control provides an immediate sense of relief from the rigid effort to maintain control, but eventually you feel worse (feel fat/out of control). If you try to compensate for binge or overeating by skipping meals, fasting, dieting more strictly, or purging, you will get too hungry before you eat again and then this cycle will put you back into the Ignore Hunger Cycle.

Planned Binge Cycle (part of the Emotional Eating cycle)

Initially, most individual's binges are unplanned, meaning you just end up eating more than you had planned or more than felt comfortable (the Ignore Fullness Cycle). Then you felt tremendous pressure to purge or compensate in order to relieve the uncomfortable physical feelings of being too full or to get rid of the excess calories for fear of weight gain. However, once you have found a way to compensate when you binge, many individuals find they start to plan to binge (usually at particularly "safe" times) because some aspects of binge eating are positive or at least temporarily relieve certain negative feelings (often tension/anxiety or loneliness). The reason this pattern emerges is that the person has overcome the typical aversion/reluctance to purge and has implicitly given themselves "permission" to purge, at least when the overeating is really excessive. A person who is highly concerned about her weight/shape would obviously not "plan" to binge unless she was also planning to purge. In many cases, planned binges involve larger amounts of food than unplanned binges.

Individuals experience planned binges in different ways. Sometimes planned binges feel like compulsions, or well-established habits that are just too aversive to try to interrupt. Often the person feels increasing anxiety when they attempt to not binge at a regular time, and this anxiety only seems to be relieved by eventually bingeing. Some people report that once they have the urge to binge, it is on their mind until they do it; it interferes so much with doing anything else, they may plan to do it to just to get it over with. Some of these individuals report a period of time (often several days) after a binge in which they feel a real absence, or respite, from their urges to binge before the pressure begins to once again increase.

Planned binges are just a special case of emotional eating. Coping with emotions is the reason you plan to binge. However, we make planned binges a separate notation in the model because the type of intervention needed is somewhat different. Emotional eating is eating that is cued (started) by the presence of some emotional state. The person anticipates that eating will make them feel better or will enhance their already positive state (like when celebrating). When she starts eating, she is not

planning to overeat (or binge/purge). However, if she ends up overeating or eating “forbidden” foods, this may trigger binge eating through the What the Heck response. Then the binge eating may trigger a purge because of the overly full feeling. Thus, for typical emotional eating the first intervention is to work on paying attention to fullness cues so even if you eat a little for emotional reasons, you will not go on to binge and/or purge. While it is preferable to find alternatives to emotional eating so that you eat only when you are actually moderately hungry, we believe that it is important to learn how to do some effective emotional eating (EEE). There is an appropriate place for some emotional eating in a “normal” eating style. Most non-eating disordered individuals do eat sometimes for emotional reasons; they just don’t let it go into a binge/purge episode. The goal of appetite awareness is to get to the point that you feel normal about your eating- not to be so rigid that you “never” eat except when appropriately hungry. Being able to occasionally indulge in a favorite treat or to eat at a birthday celebration along with everyone else is a major part of getting to the point that you feel normal and not “eating-disordered”.

In a planned binge, you have a clear intention ahead of time to binge. You want to eat because you want to feel better. You know that actually you will feel worse after you eat but part of your mind draws the curtain over this awareness so in the moment you can go ahead and eat. If you also have “permission to purge”, you are more likely to plan binges because you can plan to complete the entire binge/purge cycle. You know you will be able to eliminate the worst part of your feelings after bingeing, the fear that what you ate will lead to weight. Therefore, you have less motivation to refrain from bingeing than a person who never purges. Thus, intervention for planned binges is somewhat different. You have to figure out what is the function that such binges are serving for you. Typically, you are trying to create some significantly altered state of consciousness, not just to feel a little better. And, you do not know or are not willing to use other methods to change your “emotional state”. Intervention involves learning alternatives that do not have as many negative effects for you as a binge or binge/purge.

Guidelines for Eating with Your Appetite

1. Try to follow a regular schedule of 3 meals/1 or 2 snacks and, in addition, try to stay within the green marked area.

- Eat as soon as possible once you notice you are definitely hungry.
- Stop at moderate fullness- the point at which you will still feel good but not stuffed in 10 or 15 minutes.
- Examine your thoughts and feelings; this is an ok, appropriate way to eat.
- Remind yourself that your first goal is to eat normally and that later you will evaluate the implications of eating this way in terms of your weight. You cannot make assumptions about what this will mean for your weight because you have not given it a fair test.

2. If you do start eating due to non-hunger cues (emotions, food available) don't catastrophize; just work to stop at moderate fullness.

- If you are full and food is still available, find a way to get away from it.
- If one portion of food (this can even be a special treat) satisfies you then you have used food in an appropriate way and you should allow yourself to do this.
- If one portion does not satisfy you, remind yourself this is emotional eating and no reasonable amount of food will work at this time. It is very unlikely that little more will help- at this point only a binge is likely to be adequate to create the change or "altered state" so you need to try another strategy.
- Remind yourself that using food to cope with feelings makes it more likely that you will use that strategy again. In contrast, refusing to use food and working to find another strategy requires more effort right now but makes it easier to use another strategy next time. Over time, this starts to feel more natural and is less effortful.

3. If you do go past moderate fullness before you are aware of being full or before you are able to stop, don't catastrophize. That will only set off the "What the Heck" phenomenon.

- At first you may only be able to identify moderate fullness on a post hoc basis.
- Remind yourself that you are prone to magical thinking- that more food at this point is somehow different or doesn't count (because you wish so desperately that this was true or because you feel so bad you think you can't make it any worse).
- Remind yourself that the effect of calories on weight is purely linear; there is no point at which it is any different. Overeating may not feel great but you need to feel good about any point in the process at which you can stop. Every time you stop at some point during overeating and do not give up and binge, you make it a little easier to stop next time.
- Remember that you are retraining your satiety (fullness) cues. Gradually you will find it easier to notice moderate fullness and it will come to feel better than overfullness.

4. If you do overeat or binge, do not attempt to compensate in any way. Instead, pay close attention to the aversive aspects of overfullness.

- You need to attend to (NOT IGNORE) these natural negative consequences to help your body learn to prefer the moderate fullness sensation.

Common Barriers to Monitoring Appetite Cues

- Disconnection from hunger and fullness cues
- Shame about eating disorder behaviors
- Denial of eating disorder behaviors (e.g. If I don't write it down it didn't happen)
- Ambivalence about recovery, fear about trusting body signals
- Overwhelmed by completing forms
- Embarrassment about filling out forms in public
- Clients who restrict and do not binge: less motivation to change; ego syntonic behavior

- Perfectionism/self-critical about not filling out forms perfectly

Potential Solutions

Tailor monitoring forms

- Just monitor hunger and fullness levels
- Only monitor one eating episode per day (e.g. the most difficult time of day)
- Have client create their own version (e.g. uses Excel spread sheets, post-it notes, daily planners)
- Make smaller monitoring forms to fit in purse

Normalize fear/ambivalence about monitoring

- Remind client that there is no way to do this perfectly
- Assign client to monitor imperfectly for one week!
- Use the group setting to have other clients relate their difficulties with monitoring
- Use appropriate self disclosure (e.g. everyone gets too hungry or eats past moderate fullness sometimes)
- Expose client to feared material by talking about eating (hunger/fullness, binges, purging, restricting, etc.) verbally (before having to write it down)

Use of Appetite monitoring in conjunction with meal plans

- Consult with the client's nutritionist

Reinforce small steps

- Remind client that it has been a long time that she has been overriding hunger and fullness cues, and that it will take a while to begin to trust them again
- Reinforce any time the client notices appetite cues
- Reinforce client's attempts to use her body to guide her eating

Basic AAT Skills

Prevent Too Hungry: Follow a schedule (planned meals/snacks) that best avoids setting off a strong hunger alarm; once an alarm is set off it is harder to feel satisfied (or to stop eating) at the moderate fullness point; however, if you get off schedule or get moderately hungry in between, go ahead and eat a small snack or eat a bit early (don't try to wait for the next scheduled time because you are likely to get too hungry). Some clients rationalize not eating at planned times by saying they were not hungry at the time. With meals, if you aren't too hungry, you simply eat a light meal. The leader must often clarify that eating with your appetite means you use your hunger cues to help you set up a schedule that will successfully prevent getting too hungry most of the time. You use hunger as a cue to eat in addition to (not instead of) planned meals. Using hunger provides flexibility to respond to atypical situations such as days you feel unusually hungry or you get off schedule.

Consult Personal Guidelines: Before deciding what to eat, ask yourself what will feel good in 30 minutes; balance the value of taste and the feel of foods (how you will feel after eating it) in making decisions, especially about type.

Eat Mindfully: It is critical to stay tuned in to your stomach/body not just taste sensations as you eat as this is the only way to notice the moderate fullness signal so you can use it as a signal to stop. You commit to stopping at moderate fullness even when the food tastes good and you want more. Extend awareness of body sensations for at least 30 minutes after you eat so you can evaluate the "feel" of foods after you have eaten. You are most clear about what would have felt good at that point so you want to preserve this moment of clarity so you can make more accurate predictions next time. This information becomes part of your Personal Guidelines, which you consult before you decide what you are going to eat.

Resist Urges to Eat when not even moderately hungry (FoodA & EmEat); use distraction, urge surfing, or leaving the situation.

Make Conscious Decisions (CD) to Eat: When you have a strong urge for specific foods and predict you will feel deprived if you resist choose Anti-Deprivation Eating (ADE) to keep deprivation low and prevent what the heck responses and/or later emotional triggers to eat. When you have an urge to eat for emotional reasons and you can't come up with an alternative, or you have tried alternatives and the urge keeps returning choose Effective Emotional Eating (EEE), which allows you to utilize the positive effects of food (self-soothe or celebrate) while avoiding the negative effects of binge or overeating. Whenever you make a CD to eat, you try to stop by Moderate Fullness, but if you can't, you stay tuned in while you eat so you can at least stop at the point of diminishing returns (when you first notice a decrease in your desire for more or at the first sign of stomach discomfort).

EATING ASSERTION

excerpt from L.Craighead, *The Appetite Awareness Workbook* (New Harbinger 2006)

People in your environment may not support you in taking charge of your eating. Thus, if you choose to take back your power and eat from within, you may need help with eating assertion: how to assert your rights to regulate your own food intake and to enjoy what you choose to eat. Other people may feel hurt, unappreciated, or negatively evaluated by some of your choices. They may not understand why you want to eat this way, and they may even be moderately inconvenienced at times. You need to explain what you are doing and stand your ground when others expect you to join in social eating that doesn't work for you. Your family and friends may *want* to be helpful even if they are not. They may have no idea how to be helpful, or they may have their own ideas about what will help you. Often, they think they know what you need better than you do. They may criticize or nag you to eat less, which just makes you feel resentful and hurt. Sometimes, they may offer you food and encourage you to eat. This might be a well-meant attempt to convince you that your weight and shape are not as important to them as you seem to think. However, such actions undermine your efforts to take charge of your own eating and feel better about yourself. Fortunately, many people respond very well to empathic assertion which helps you achieve your goal while maintaining the best possible relationship with the person you are dealing with. Here's how to do it.

Step one: Make sure you understand your eating rights. Read the rights listed below:

1. I have the right to take charge of my eating and exercise.
2. I have the right to not feel hungry no matter what my weight is.
3. I have the right to ask for (not demand) reasonable accommodations from others that will help me to exercise and eat based on my own needs.
4. Not exercising my rights can be hurtful in the long run, both to my sense of self and to my relationships with other people.
5. When I don't let other people know what would help me, it is really a form of selfishness. I am denying them the opportunity to change and to experience a more mutually rewarding relationship.
6. I have the right to set boundaries and to limit my relationship with other people when they are not able to support me appropriately.
7. I am responsible for my behavior and my feelings. I am not responsible for how others choose to feel when I am appropriately assertive about taking care of myself.
8. I will be happier in the long run if I exercise my rights appropriately.

****Getting clear on these rights is critical. You will not be able to convince others if you are not clear about your rights, or if you do not believe in those rights.**

Step two: When you make a request, be very specific about what you need from that person or what you want them to stop doing. The following list may be helpful: Ask people to allow you to make all your food decisions. Ask people not to offer food to you even when they are hungry or want to eat. Assure them you will ask for food if you want some. Ask people to allow you to serve yourself whenever possible and to order for yourself. Ask them to substitute nonfood items or activities unrelated to eating when they give you treats or gifts. Indicate that it's fine to ask you to eat out with them, but that they need to let you know where they plan to go or to ask for your input on the choice. Ask people to respect your food decisions even if they do not understand them or agree with them. Ask them not to ask if you are really hungry or if you are not yet full. Ask them not to question your choice of foods or make suggestions about what you should eat. Ask people to agree to a mutually assertive relationship regarding food and exercise. Explain that you will feel freer to ask for their help if they will agree to tell you when they can't help or when your request isn't convenient. They don't need to explain or have an excuse. You understand it will not always be possible for them to be helpful and that you will feel free to ask some other time. Let people know whether or not you welcome offers to share entrees or desserts, or if that sort of offer puts pressure on you to make food choices you wouldn't otherwise make. Explain the basis for how you are trying to eat so they will understand it. Let them know that you value their companionship and understand that eating is an important way to connect socially, so they don't need to avoid asking you to join them for food occasions. Be very clear about the kinds of comments about weight and appearance that are helpful and those that are not. Positive comments about appearance (not weight specific) may be helpful. However, you should make this

choice for yourself. Some people dislike comments about appearance altogether. Comments (even in fun) about weight are never helpful. Even comments that are intended to be positive can be interpreted negatively by people who are sensitive about weight issues (such as “You’ve lost so much weight.”). A vague request to be more supportive is not useful; another person’s idea of being supportive may not be what you have in mind. Do not expect other people to read your mind, even if they know you very well. You must be willing to tell people exactly what will help you, even if you think it sounds silly or seems like it should be obvious to them. Do not assume that people are unwilling to change. Most people who have difficulty being assertive have negative expectations about what others are willing to do. Give others the opportunity to change and start helping you. Some people may choose not to change, but you may be pleasantly surprised to find out how many people are willing to help when you ask in an empathic, nonthreatening way and when you remain willing to remind them patiently while they overcome old habits. If someone wants to change but is having a hard time, ask how you can help them do so. Many people set up a code word or phrase (“remember AAT” would work well in this case). This is an easy and good-humored way to remind someone that they are pressuring you to eat, making you feel guilty about having a treat food, or doing something else that’s bothering you.

Step three: Make sure you understand where the other person is coming from. Instead of getting (or staying) angry, try to find out why they keep doing something that is bothersome to you. Give them the benefit of the doubt—especially when you know they do care about you. Are they feeling threatened that you will become more confident or feel better about yourself? What is their own experience with food, and what does that experience make them believe is the “right” way to eat? Write down what significant others could do that would help, as well as anything they are currently doing that is not helpful to you.

Step four: Rehearse what you want to say and how you want to interact ahead of time. Using the guidelines above, write out empathic assertion statements to use with these individuals to help them understand what is and is not helpful.

Step five: Think about the best time and place to bring up your requests. The first time you bring up a specific issue, it may be best to have a more formal, extended talk. Explain that you are trying to learn a new pattern of eating that has been proven to help many people, and ask specifically for their help and support. Explain the basics of AAT and invite them to ask you for an explanation whenever they do not understand what you are doing. You will probably need to repeat your requests many times before you are able to establish a new way to interact with these individuals about food issues. However, an initial, formal request for help is a good way to get started.

Eating Assertion with Saboteurs You may find that a few individuals actively sabotage your efforts to eat from within. Sometimes you have to be very persistent. When such people see that you are determined to follow this program, they may stop hassling you. Also, as you gain confidence in using your internal signals, you may find that comments from those individuals bother you less and less. If empathic assertion does not work, you may have to resort to stronger versions of assertion. Strong assertion includes two additional components. First, express your anger or resentment very explicitly; for example, “When you tell me not to eat something, I feel angry and I resent being treated like a child. I recognize I have issues about eating, but I need to resolve those issues myself. What you are doing is making my problems worse.” Second, you can specify a consequence if the person continues to undermine your efforts. For example, “When you bring ice cream home, it is harder for me to stay in charge of my eating. If you want ice cream, please eat it while you are out. I will tell you when I feel strong enough to manage having it in the house. Until then, if you bring ice cream home, I will throw it out.” I do not recommend strong assertion unless you absolutely have to use it. Strong assertion can damage a relationship, and it can escalate other conflicts you may have with this person. However, at times, strong assertion works amazingly well. Sometimes it turns out that such people are just bullies whose bark is worse than their bite. When you make it clear that you will not tolerate poor treatment (teasing, and the like), they often back down. Surprisingly, you will sometimes even get an apology; for example, “I was really just kidding. I didn’t realize it hurt your feelings that much.” However, don’t count on that. Sometimes, you have to be satisfied if the person just stops the offensive behavior. Take notes on your self-monitoring forms when someone else undermines your efforts. If you find that you have a serious “saboteur,” especially one you cannot avoid easily (for example, a spouse), don’t be too hard on yourself. If you cannot avoid the person, you may need extra help from other friends or a counselor to buffer the negative effects of a saboteur and get the support you need.

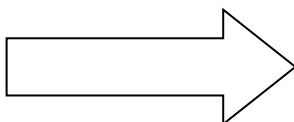
HELP! I Want to Eat!

There are many reasons why you might want to eat: hunger, regularly scheduled mealtimes, food is available, or emotions. The trick is to figure out why you want to eat, and then to make a conscious decision about whether or not eating is the best option at this point. Go through the following steps the next time you have an urge to eat.

START HERE

Am I physically hungry or is it close to my regular snack or mealtime?

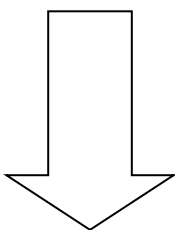
If Yes



Biological Hunger

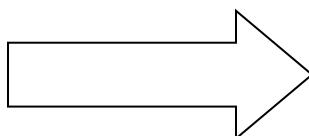
Eat the type of food you want. Stop at moderate fullness.

If No



Was there an external cue that triggered my urge?

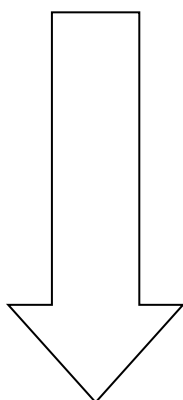
If Yes



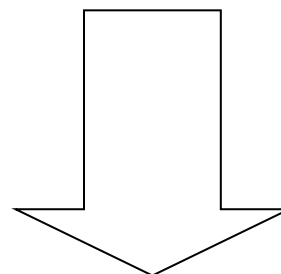
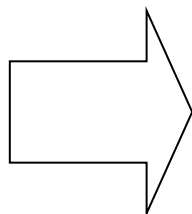
Food Available

Rate the intensity of your urge. Make a conscious decision (CD) to eat or to try non-food alternatives first. Best to choose Anti-deprivation eating (ADE) if you think you are likely to feel deprived.

If No

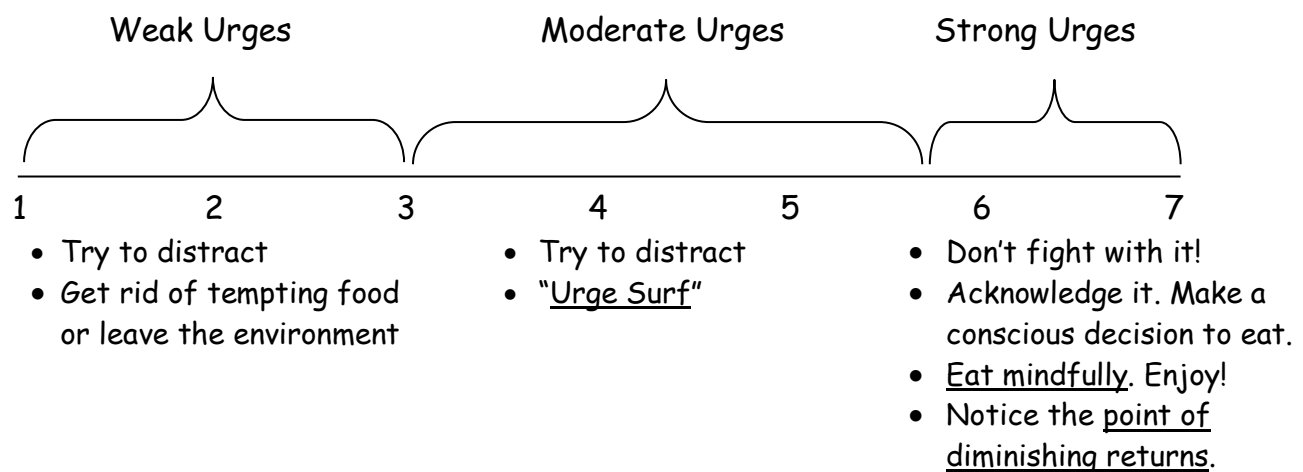


Emotional Eating



Rate the intensity of your urge. You can choose to self-soothe without food or you can choose Effective Emotional Eating (EEE) to feel better without getting stuffed. Try to figure out what emotional needs are making you want to eat? Ask yourself "What is the feeling I don't want to feel? What might be bothering me? What feels out of balance in my life?" If you eat, eat, eat mindfully, asking yourself questions along the way (consider food as a metaphor)

Managing Urges to Eat



AAT Skills

- Conscious Decisions (CD): Just like it sounds...making a conscious decision to eat instead of just eating mindlessly. With this skill, you practice making the *choice* to eat.
 - CDs also bring back more power and control.
- Anti-Deprivation Eating (ADE): When you make a CD to enjoy some sort of food, even though you aren't *that* hungry. It's allowing yourself a reasonable amount of a certain food you are wanting...so you won't feel deprived later on and end up *overeating* the food.
 - This is NOT an excuse to get stuffed! In fact, the purpose of ADEs is to keep you from setting yourself up to overindulge in the future!
- Rating Foods as "Worth It" or "Not Worth It"
- Effective Emotional Eating (EEE): All people eat for emotional reasons at time; this is part of "normal" eating. However, when you eat for emotional reasons, you want to do it effectively. Here's how it works: 1) you make a CD to eat for emotional reasons, and 2) you stay tuned into your stomach as you so you can notice the point of diminishing returns When you do feel better after eating, you have been effective. Anytime you end up feeling worse after you ate, then it wasn't effective emotional eating.
 - You are not practicing EEE when you use emotions as an excuse to get stuffed or when your eating has a "What the Heck" quality to it.
 - Point of Diminishing Returns: This is when you stay tuned in to the food, and notice when it no longer tastes as good or feels as good. When you reach the point of diminishing returns, food is really not working so well for you so you need to change strategies.

Appetite Awareness Based Challenges for Unhelpful Thinking

Diet Thoughts: I'm not that hungry, I can wait a little longer and save those calories.

I can't eat the type of food I want because it is too high in calories.

Reasons to Resist Urge to Restrict (skip planned meal or refuse to eat when aware of hunger)

Biologically, getting too hungry prevents you from feeling normal and in control when you eat.

**Skipping planned meals means you are likely to trigger your hunger alarm, which you need to avoid at all costs because it takes more to feel satisfied once the alarm goes off; you feel less in control when you do eat.

**Refusing to eat when aware of hunger pushes awareness of hunger underground. Awareness often emerges unexpectedly when you do start to eat, so you don't feel satisfied with moderate amounts and you find it very hard to stop at moderate fullness. Hunger gone underground puts you at risk for loss of control when you eat, maintaining your fears of certain foods and your fear of losing control.

Psychologically, restricting is often a false economy; if you feel like you are dieting but you do not eat significantly fewer calories overall, you will feel more hopeless about managing your weight effectively.

**You are likely to rationalize eating more later on because you haven't eaten all day, only had a light lunch, or you hardly ever eat this food. Then, you wipe out the calorie savings you intended.

**Limiting type of food causes preoccupation, which is aversive and interferes with your life. It works better to eat what you really want because you can never get enough of what you didn't even want.

Binge Thoughts: I can't stand it any longer, I just have to binge or I'll never get it off my mind.

I don't care right now. I'll make up for it later.

Reasons to Resist Urge to Binge (do What the Heck or Get Stuffed):

Biologically, bingeing maintains lack of awareness of moderate fullness, which makes it more likely that you will overeat in the future (ignore fullness unintentionally).

**When you tune out your stomach you are going to miss the point of diminishing returns- the point at which it is easiest to stop (cut a binge short)

**Getting uncomfortably full often feels bad right away and triggers urges to compensate.

Psychologically, bingeing prevents you from testing out other ways to deal with your uncomfortable feelings.

**Using food strengthens your belief that food is the only (or best) way to deal with your feelings.

**You feel out of control with eating, which undermines your self-esteem more generally.

Compensatory Thoughts: I really feel awful so it's ok to do it just this once, and I won't do it anymore.

I'll stop purging as soon as I can stop bingeing.

Reasons to Resist Urge to Compensate (escape the aversive feelings):

Biologically, purging disrupts your appetite regulation system so you can't learn to eat normally.

**By tricking your satiety signals, you teach your body to keep asking for more food and insure that you won't be able to feel satisfied with moderate amounts.

**By avoiding the naturally aversive sensations of overfullness, you reduce your motivation not to overeat (you'll be more likely to ignore fullness deliberately).

Psychologically, purging maintains permission to binge.

**You strengthen your belief that purging is the reason you are maintaining your weight because you don't test it out.

**By escaping the negative feelings you would normally have after bingeing, you reinforce both bingeing and purging as coping strategies, undermine your self-efficacy and make it harder to resist urges to binge the next time.