

Mindful Eating: Cultivating Awareness and Connection with Food

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NOTE: This handout is intended as an educational and informational aid, and is not intended to be used for the purpose of diagnosis or treatment. Diagnosis and treatment of emotional or behavioral problems, and related disorders and conditions, should be provided by a licensed mental health professional.

Mindful eating is a practice that encourages a heightened awareness of the eating experience, fostering a deeper connection with food and promoting a healthier relationship with eating. Consider incorporating mindful eating into more of your meals. Gradually, this practice can become a natural part of your relationship with food, promoting a sense of satisfaction and well-being.

- Mindful Preparation:** Before you begin eating, take a moment to appreciate the effort that went into preparing your meal. Consider the colors, textures, and aromas of the food in front of you.
- Engage Your Senses:** As you start eating, focus on engaging your senses to fully experience each bite.
- Sight: Examine the colors and presentation of your food.
 - Smell: Inhale the aroma before taking your first bite.
- Slow down and savor:** Take your time to chew each bite thoroughly and savor the flavors. Put your fork down between bites to fully appreciate the experience.
- Pay Attention to Hunger and Fullness:** Tune into your body's signals of hunger and fullness. Before you start eating, assess your hunger on a scale of 1 to 10.
- Mindful Awareness of Emotions:** Notice any emotions or thoughts that arise as you eat. Are you eating out of hunger, boredom, stress, or habit? How does your emotional state impact your eating experience?
- Non-Judgmental Observation:** Approach your eating experience with a non-judgmental attitude. Avoid labeling foods as "good" or "bad." Instead, observe without criticism. Can you notice any self-judgments arising during the meal?
- Gratitude and Appreciation:** Express gratitude for the nourishment your meal provides and the effort that went into its preparation. What are you grateful for at this moment?
- Reflection:** After finishing your meal, take a moment to reflect on the mindful eating experience. How did this mindful eating experience differ from your usual eating habits?