

Mindful Eating: Emotional Eating and Food Craving Management Group

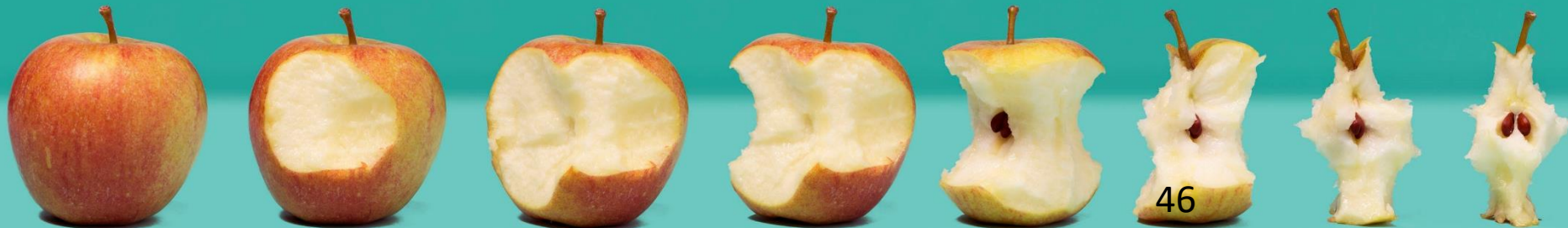


Class 4

Re-engineer Your Food Environment

STOP to Manage Food Cravings

Cognitive Behavioural Techniques



Class 4 outline

- Check-in
- Learn about:
 - Ways to **reduce food cravings**
 - Review of self-care and mindful eating
 - Strategies to "re-engineer food environment"
 - Use STOP to **manage food cravings**
 - Review self-awareness strategies
 - Using cognitive behavioural techniques (CBT) to re-wire the brain
 - Positive self-talk
 - Name your emotions
- Mindfulness Exercise: self-affirmations
- Set a SMART goal

Ways to Reduce Food Cravings



- Engage in regular self-care
- Practice mindful eating
- Re-engineer your food environment
 - Willpower alone is not enough to help us change our eating behaviors in the long run. Renovating your environment is an effective way to help support healthier eating behaviours and reduce the frequency and strength of food cravings. Small changes around the home or office can make a big difference in making the healthier choice the easier choice!

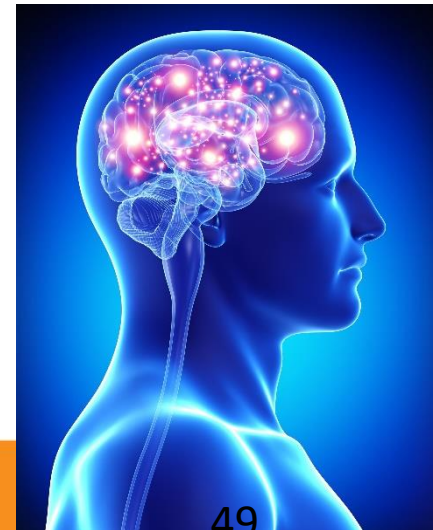
My SMART Goal to re-engineer my food environment is:

Re-wiring the brain

Our brain is composed of billions of cells called neurons. These cells are interconnected via countless pathways which allows our brain to send and receive information to other parts of our body and receive information from the outside world.

The brain has the ability to change and strengthen (or weaken) throughout the lifetime. This is called neuroplasticity.

When we talk about ‘re-wiring’ the brain, we are referring to our ability to change the way we think, feel, and behave!





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We have the ability to create and strengthen new pathways or cellular connections in order to help us reinforce healthy thoughts and behaviours. At the same time, we can weaken certain pathways that are currently contributing to unhelpful thoughts and less healthy behaviours.



Every time you practice using a CBT strategy, you are literally changing the shape of your brain! You are wiring new pathways and building new habits all while dismantling or breaking up the old brain pathways that automatically lead you to crave and eat food.

STOP to Manage Food Cravings



Food cravings can be strong and confusing. They are a combination of thoughts, emotions and physical sensations. The following acronym will help you to build self awareness and make different choices all while starting the process of re-wiring your brain.

S – stop what you are doing

T – take a breath

O – observe non-judgmentally without expectation

P – proceed with awareness and kindness

STOP to Manage Food Cravings



S – stop what you are doing

Take a moment to simply pay attention. Try to limit distractions. If you can do so, close your eyes.

T – take a breath

Take 3 deep breaths to help calm the mind and body. This will allow you to listen to what they are telling you.

O – observe non-judgmentally without expectation

Observe your body sensations, emotions, thoughts

Ask - "Am I Hungry? Or do I have the BLAHS?"

Check in - Use the Hunger Scale to work on getting in tune with your internal hunger signals

P – proceed with awareness and kindness

Is it real hunger?

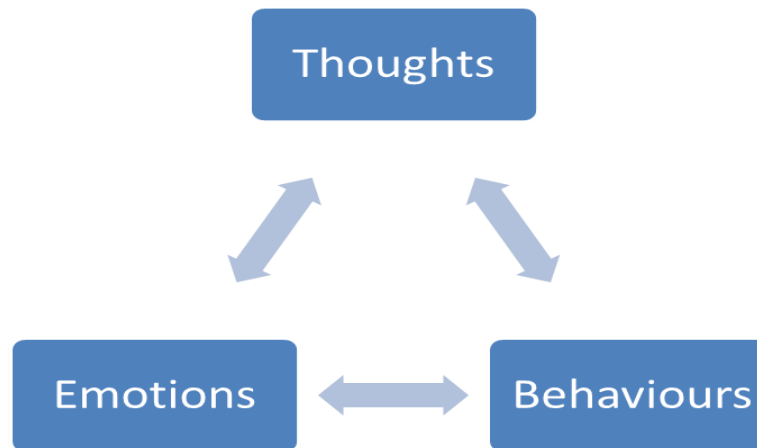
YES – Eat! Practice mindful eating and try to eat according to your hunger level.

NO – You have a choice. You can eat anyway - practice mindful eating. Or, you can use a CBT strategy from your list.

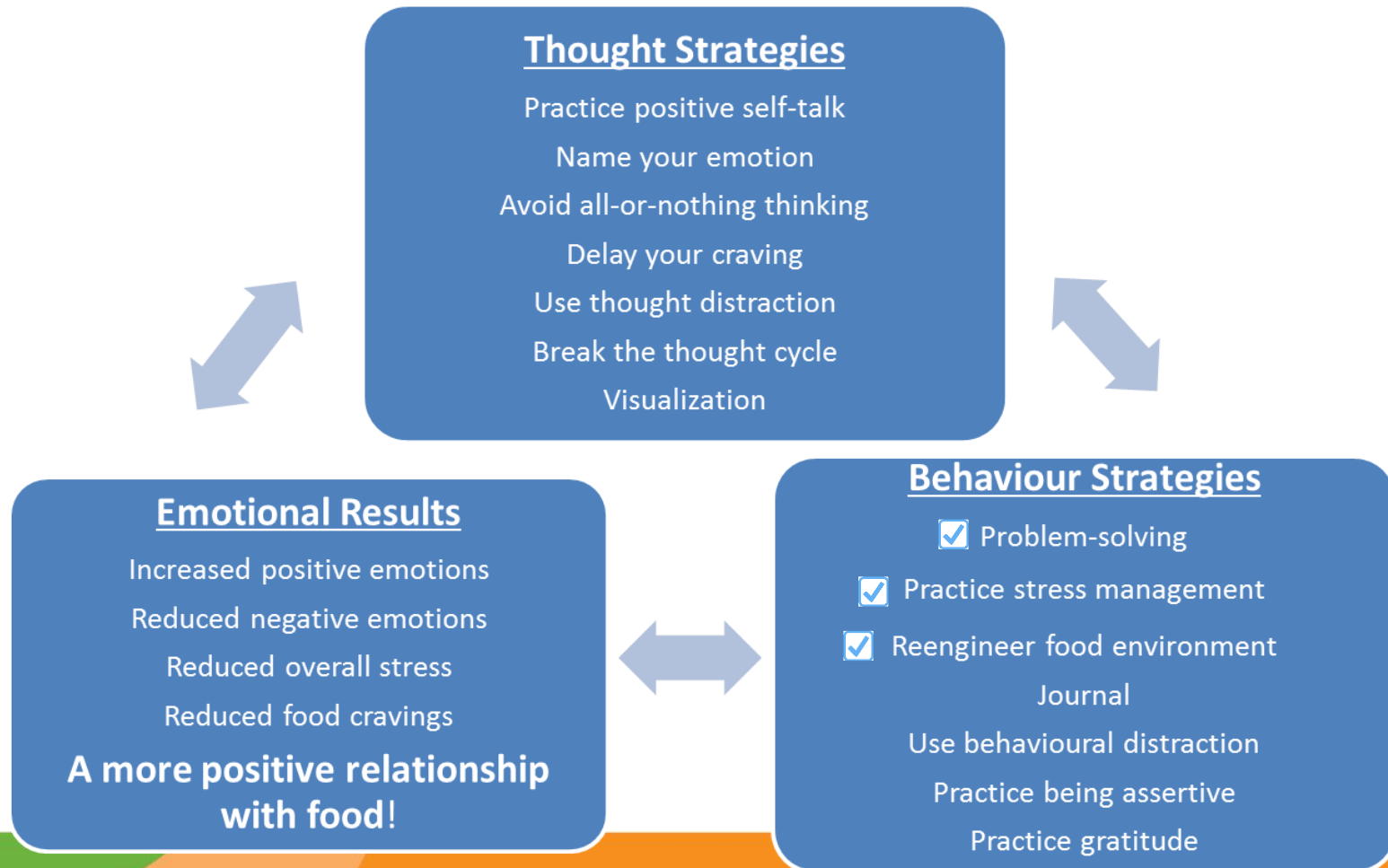
CBT: Cognitive Behavioural Model

How we *think* affects how we *act* and *feel*. What we *feel* affects what we *think* and *do*. What we *do* affects how we *think* and *feel*.

By changing the way we think and the way we behave, we can *re-wire* the brain. This will lead to reduced food cravings and a more positive relationship with food!



CBT: Cognitive Behavioural Model



Self-talk

Self-talk describes what we *say* to ourselves. This is fundamental to how we *feel* about ourselves.

We often assume that it is what is happening around us (external events) that makes us feel the way we do. But in reality, it's our *interpretation* and *thoughts (or self-talk)* about what is happening that form our feelings.

The good news is, we have control over our self-talk! Therefore, you have control over how you feel in response to a given situation.

External
Events

Interpretation of
Events & Self-Talk

Feelings &
Reactions

Negative or unhelpful thought	Evidence for this thought	Evidence against this thought	Positive counter-thoughts
“I’m such a failure, I can’t stop eating chips!”	No matter how often I’ve tried to cut out chips, I always seem to fall of track.	I’ve been successful in cutting back on chips and making healthier snack choices in the past. I don’t need to completely cut out chips or avoid the foods that I love eating.	
“I’ve been so good this week. I can’t believe I blew it by eating a piece of cake!”	I went for my walk 3 days this week and then I gave into that delicious looking cake!	I have permission to eat cake if I want to. I am neither good nor bad if I walk, don’t walk, eat cake or don’t eat cake.	56

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Look at the evidence. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What is the evidence for this?
- Has this been true in the past?
- Is this always true?
- What are the odds of this really happening (or being true)?
- What is the very worst that could happen? What is so bad about that? What would I do if the worst happened?
- Would my best friend agree?
- Am I looking at the whole picture?
- Am I being fully objective?

Creating positive self-talk

Tips for writing positive statements

- State as a **positive** (avoid negatives)
- Keep in **present tense**
- Keep in first person by using “I.....”
- Have some **belief** in your positive self-talk. If you don't believe it then go through the questions provided to look at the evidence!

You will eventually begin to step back and see the connection between self-talk and your feelings. Be gentle with yourself...it takes time and practice to learn new behaviours!

Negative or unhelpful thought	Evidence for this thought	Evidence against this thought	Positive counter-thoughts
<p>“I’m such a failure, I can’t stop eating chips!”</p>	<p>No matter how often I’ve tried to cut out chips, I always seem to fall of track.</p>	<p>I’ve been successful in cutting back on chips and making healthier snack choices in the past. I don’t need to completely cut out chips or avoid the foods that I love eating.</p>	<p>“I can do this!” “I am successful.” “I’ve made changes in the past and will be successful in the future.” “I’m worth the effort.”</p>
<p>“I’ve been so good this week, I can’t believe I blew it by eating a piece of cake!”</p>	<p>I went for my walk 3 days this week and then I gave into that delicious looking cake!</p>	<p>I have permission to eat cake if I want to. I am neither good nor bad if I walk, don’t walk, eat cake or don’t eat cake.</p>	<p>“I’m a good person.” “I have a choice. I can eat cake mindfully whenever I want to.”</p>

Use the following chart to capture negative self-talk. Consider the evidence for and against these thoughts and create one or more positive counter-thoughts.

Each time you ‘catch’ yourself saying this negative or unhelpful thought to yourself replace it with a positive counter-thought.

Practice, practice, practice! Eventually, the positive thoughts will outweigh the negative and become habitual. This will change your brain, and improve the way you feel about yourself.



Positive counter-
thoughts
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Negative or unhelpful thought	Evidence for this thought	Evidence against this thought	Positive counter- thoughts

Self-affirmations

Self-affirmations or positive realistic statements to counter the mistaken beliefs we hold about ourselves.

It's helpful to:

- Keep them short and simple
- Use present tense
- Avoid negatives
- Declare a positive change you want to make in your life
- Have some belief in the statement

*Life is what I make of
it. I have control over
my own life.*

*I am strong and
healthy.*

Positive self-affirmations



Reciting positive self-affirmations can be uplifting, motivating and inspiring. It can also be a great way to help better manage stress levels. Here is a few examples:

- I trust my body to tell me what it needs
- I accept myself and value the body that I have
- I engage in self-care every day to enjoy good health
- I forgive myself for not being perfect because I know that I am human
- I learn from my mistakes

It's best to come up with your own, personal affirmations that are meaningful to you. Have fun with it and don't be afraid to be creative! You're worth it!

My personal self-affirmations:

*Keep your thoughts positive because your
thoughts become your words.
Keep your words positive because your words
become your behaviours.
Keep your behaviours positive because your
behaviours become your habits.
Keep your habits positive because your habits
become your values.
Keep your values positive because your values
become your destiny.*

~Gandhi~

Name your emotions



This strategy can also be called '**Name it to tame it!**'. This term was coined by the psychiatry professor Dr. Dan Siegel.

On any given day we can experience a full range of emotions from feeling happy to frustrated to angry to sad and back to happy again! These emotions are simply the result of our brain responding to our environment. They are our brain trying to protect us or meet a specific need. They provide us with a sense of meaning, passion and vitality.

We've learned that our emotions have a profound impact on our behaviours. Many of us have developed the habit of automatically responding to certain emotions with food (heart hunger) or other distractions. Science tells us that rather than avoiding difficult emotions, it is helpful to NAME them. This allows us to step back from the emotion and activates a different part of the brain that provides a calming effect on your mind and body.

Moving from "I am angry" to "I am *feeling* angry" means that we are not that emotion. It also gives us space between the emotion that we're experiencing and our response to that emotion.

Naming your emotions can be a very simple yet powerful tool. Give it a try next time you're experiencing an emotion and tune inwards to notice how your body responds. This strategy is most effective if you say it out loud or write it down. To help you identify your true emotion(s), use the following list.

To learn more about the science of our brain and emotions:
<https://www.drdansiegel.com/>

...I am having the emotion of:

- Sadness
- Depression
- Emptiness
- Helplessness
- Despair
- Loneliness
- Jealousy
- Anger
- Frustration
- Impatience
- Disgust
- Fear

- Anxiety
- Concern
- Anticipation
- Panic
- Worry
- Confusion
- Stress
- Guilt
- Shame
- Boredom
- Powerlessness
- Excitement

- Insecurity
- Irritability
- Bitterness
- Hurt
- Restlessness
- Feeling calm
- Pride
- Happiness
- Other:

Weekly Challenges



- Continue to use your ME journal and practice mindful eating
- Choose one way to re-engineer your food environment in order to reduce eating triggers
- Use STOP to help manage food cravings
- Practice using positive self-talk
- Practice using positive self-affirmations
- Try naming your emotion
- Write a SMART goal

Use this space to write a **SMART** goal.



Make sure your goal is realistic:

How confident are you in achieving your goal?

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7 --- 8 --- 9 --- 10

If you're not at least 7/10, how can you tweak your goal to make it a little bit easier and increase your confidence?

Consider barriers. Is there anything that might get in the way of you achieving your goal? If so, how might you overcome these barriers?

Track your progress



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Evaluate/Repeat/Re-adjust:

What went well?

What got in the way?

What could I do differently next time?

What are my next steps?