Agenda

- Review SMART goals
- Understanding emotional eating
- Strategies to cope with emotional eating
- Set new SMART goals
SMART Goal Review

- What were your SMART goals for the past week?
- Did you accomplish your goals? How did you feel afterwards?
- What barriers did people face? How did you overcome them?
Objectives

Attendees will be able to:

1. Define emotional eating
2. Identify 3 factors that contribute to emotional eating
3. Identify 3 strategies to decrease emotional eating
What is emotional eating?

Emotional eating occurs when we eat for reasons other than hunger:

• To cope with negative emotions
• To celebrate or socialize
• In response to environmental cues
• In response to beliefs about food

In what situations do you find yourself eating emotionally?
Emotional eating is common

- Many people eat to cope with negative emotions (stress, sadness, boredom, anxiety, depression)

- American Psychological Association survey – 25% of Americans agree:
  - “When I am feeling down or facing a problem, I turn to food to help me feel better.”
Emotional side of food

- Food meets emotional and social needs as well as physical needs and drives
  - Food creates a positive emotional response
  - From an early age food communicates love, comfort, and nurturing
  - In most cultures eating is social, nurturing activity

- Problem occurs when we ignore internal cues and or use food as a way to cope with negative emotions or meet social expectations
Emotions and food

"I just need to be held."
"Am I all alone here?"
"Please fill me up."
"I'm never going to finish this project on time."

The Emotional Food Pyramid
Food, culture, and emotions

What is the food culture among your friends and family?

What are the unspoken rules and expectations?
Common rules & beliefs

- Food is love – not eating is rejecting it
- If you don’t eat, you are insulting the cook
- If we both do it together, it does not really count
- Forbidden food is part of the fun
- If I eat __________ I will feel better
- I have to clean my plate
Associations and habits

- Associations are created when two things occur together – the brain makes a connection
  - Ex: Movies and popcorn, breakup and ice cream, Friday nights and pizza, TV and snack

- Associations often lead to automatic behaviors and mindless eating

- Identify and break unhealthy associations
What can you do about it?
Understand emotional ties to food

- Food has many functions in our society
  - Social, emotional, celebratory, tradition, culture, nutrition
  - What functions does it serve for you?
  - Keep track, write it down
  - Can use notes section in myfitnesspal food diary
Monitoring patterns

- How are you feeling?
- What are you doing?
- What are you thinking?
- What is happening around you?
- Track your ABCEs
“Is this hunger or something else”

- Before you eat, practice asking yourself, “Is this hunger or something else.”
  - Sometimes we eat for reasons other than hunger (such as boredom, sadness, stress, habit, etc.)

- If the answer is “something else” identify another healthy way to meet that need.
Create distractions or environmental barriers

- Set up your environment for success
- Practice mindful, decisive eating
- Find a competing behavior
- Make a rule to do another strategy first
Use your support system

- Research shows people who have good support systems are healthier and happier.

- Enlist the help of a friend or family member. Tell them about your goals and how they can help you achieve them.
Summary points

- People are social-emotional creatures and eating is influenced by these factors.
- Emotional eating is a common behavior and a common cause of weight gain.
- There are simple strategies to help overcome emotional eating.
- Practice healthy ways to cope with negative emotions and meet other needs.
Emotions and healthy eating and can live in harmony
Setting SMART Goals

- Set new SMART goals for the week
- How confident (0-10) are you that you can complete your goals?
  - If your confidence is less than 7, rethink your goal to make it more accomplishable
References

- Presentation content developed by Amy Walters, PhD