

Week 1: Diet Culture

What it looks like...

- Idealizes thinness as a signal of health, status and moral virtue
- Demonizes certain ways of eating and elevates others
- Nonconformity results in feelings of shame and guilt

What it sounds like...

- good/bad
- should/shouldn't
- can/can't
- never/always
- allowed/forbidden
- sinful/guilt-free
- slimming/fattening
- earn/burn

Letting Go: Fear vs. Reality

FEAR: If I stop dieting, I won't stop eating.

REALITY: Dieting is often the trigger for overeating.

FEAR: I don't know how to eat when I am not on a diet.

REALITY: Your body's inner wisdom will help guide you.

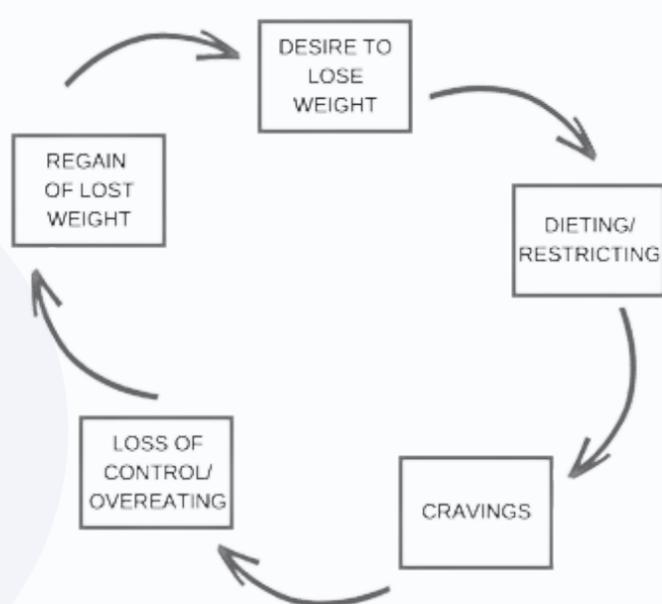
FEAR: If I stop dieting, I will be out of control.

REALITY: Breaking the "rules" is what makes you feel out of control.

Managing Expectations

- Diet culture thoughts stick like glue in our consciousness.
- Even with evidence to refute them, these thoughts stay entrenched.
- It takes time to loosen their hold and replace them with reality.

DIETER'S DILEMMA



We Need a Paradigm Shift

You have not failed - diets have failed you.
Dieting is the biggest predictor of weight gain.
Weight is not a controllable behavior.
Weight management is not health promotion.

How to Reject Diet Culture

Recognize the damage that dieting causes

this includes both physical and psychological harm

Reject the diet mentality

forget about willpower, obedience and failure

Ditch the dieter's tools

stop using scales, apps and measuring tools

Practice self-compassion

it works better than self-flagellation

Reframe cognitive distortions

replace them with more helpful patterns of thought

DISTORTION	EXAMPLE	REFRAME
Binary Thinking Only gives you two alternatives.	"All carbs are bad." "I am off my food plan"	Find the grey area. This is where sustainable and enjoyable eating happens.
Absolutist Thinking One behavior will absolutely result in a second behavior.	"I have to avoid sweets, or I will not manage my diabetes."	Replace absolutes (e.g. must, should, need to, have to, supposed to) with permissive and flexible language. Helpful words include may, can, might and could.
Catastrophic Thinking Exaggerated thinking that leads to the worst possible conclusion.	"If I eat one Oreo, I will eat the whole package."	Climb out of the abyss. Challenge the exaggeration and examine the logic.
Pessimistic Thinking A tendency to dwell on what has gone wrong or will go wrong.	"All I ate was junk." "This is gonna be a terrible week."	Make an intentional effort to recognize the positive things you are doing.
Linear Thinking Planning for an end result that allows for no deviation.	"I'm gonna get my cholesterol below 200 before my next doctor's visit."	Prioritize the process over outcomes, which encourages continual change and learning.

What Has Dieting Cost You?

Social

- I eat differently.
- I compare my food to what others are eating
- I worry about what people think about my eating.
- I worry about what people think about my body.
- I try to eat similarly to those around me.
- I cancel social events because of the food served.
- I avoid eating.
- Dieting has interfered with relationships.
- Other: _____

Psychological

- I worry about my eating.
- I have strict rules about eating.
- I count: calories, carbs, or other.
- I categorize foods as good or bad.
- I feel guilty if I eat a 'bad' food.
- I have mood swings.
- I am afraid of feeling hungry.
- I am afraid of feeling too full.
- I don't trust my body.
- I am afraid that if I start eating 'forbidden' foods, I won't stop eating.
- I fantasize about food
- I am preoccupied by thoughts of what I eat and don't eat.
- Other: _____

Physical

- Weight gain
- Blunted metabolism
- Cravings for carbs
- Blood sugar swings
- Disconnected from hunger cues
- Disconnected from fullness cues
- Chronically tired, even when sleeping well
- Hair falling out, more than usual
- If female: missed or inconsistent menses
- Feeling physically numb
- Other: _____

Behavioral

- If I break a food rule, I lose control.
- If I eat too much, I make up for it by skipping a meal or eating less food, even if I am hungry.
- I eat more food when I'm feeling stressed.
- I exercise only to burn calories or lose weight.
- I talk a lot about dieting, weight, and food.
- When I'm on vacation, I ignore my food rules and eat whatever I want, no matter how full I feel.
- I binge eat.
- I avoid physical intimacy.
- Other: _____

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