

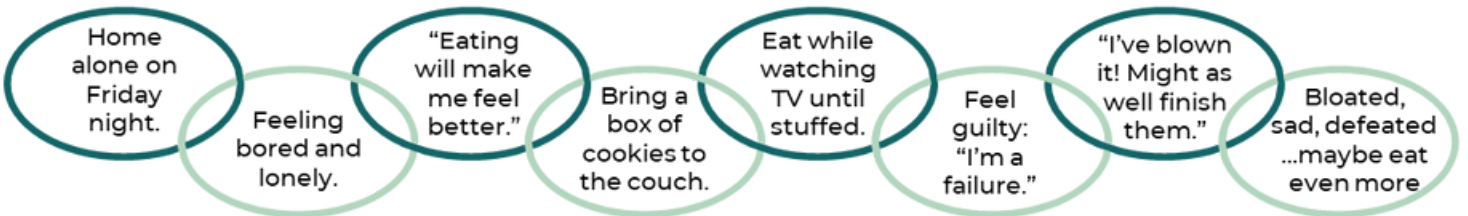
Overcoming Emotional Eating



In an ideal world, we would eat when we're hungry, stop when we're full, and get the nutrition we need. But in reality, lots of other things drive our eating habits, plus tasty temptations are everywhere. Here are some strategies to empower your intentions and reclaim control.

Breaking Bad Behaviors

Emotional eating is often part of a longer behavior chain. Can you relate to this?



Do you have a behavior chain that is creating problems for you? Use the diagram to determine your own "links" in the chain, and suggest things you could do differently to break the chain.



At what links of the chain are you reaping a benefit to yourself by the behavior? At what links of the chain is the behavior providing negative results? Is it worth it to continue the behavior? Once you identify your triggers and problem areas, you can work on breaking the chain.

Road to success

Here are some tips to stay on track and prevent a relapse of undesirable behaviors.

- **Recognize high risk situations.** What challenges lie ahead? How will you prepare for them?
- **Build your skills.** Remember that eating is often a coping mechanism for other issues, such as boredom, stress, anger, or depression. Finding alternate ways to address these emotions is critical to your success!
- **Manage stress.** Stress is a surefire way to head back into old eating habits. Remember that "stress" spelled backwards is "desserts"!
- **Visualize your desired plan of action.** Envision the steps you will need to take to meet your goals.
- **Identify role models.** Who embodies your vision of health? What makes them successful?
- **Avoid triggers.** What triggers a lapse? How can you take steps to minimize it? Adjust your environment to suit your needs.
- **Re-channel bad intentions for good.** Set a new goal, plan a healthy meal, or enjoy a longer workout. Take positive steps to get back on track.
- **Review past achievements.** Remind yourself of positive health changes you have made.
- **Learn from your failures.** Identify exactly what caused you to lapse. How could you learn from your mistakes and what could you do differently?
- **Seek support.** Enlist the help of friends, family or support group members to encourage you to stick to your goals.
- **Get comfortable with "gray."** Healthy eating is not as black and white as many of us believe. If you have a relapse, do not succumb to the all too common "What's the use? it's pointless" mentality.

Think you lack willpower? No way!

The notion of "willpower" often has negative connotations. Using, "I have no willpower" as a reason for failure overlooks the underlying reasons why you were unable to be successful. The secret to success is **"skillpower"** – developing the skills you need to prevent, manage, and overcome difficult situations.