

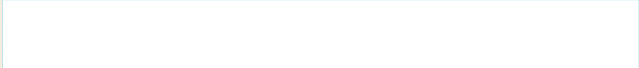
If you have worries about the mental health or emotional wellbeing of a colleague, it is important to gain appropriate, professional support.

Education Support Partnership:

Support for those who work in education

Telephone support and counselling: 08000 562 561

Email: support@edsupport.org.uk



Mind:

Mental health information and support

Infoline: 0300 123 3393
(Mon - Fri 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.)

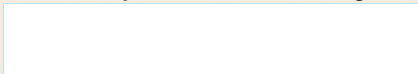
Email: info@mind.org.uk



Samaritans:

Helpline: 116 123

Email: jo@samaritans.org



Anxiety UK:

Infoline: 03444 775 774
(Mon - Fri 9.30 a.m. - 5.30 p.m.)

Text: 07537 416 905



Staff Wellbeing

Make Your Diet Work for You

Diet Mindset: Doesn't have a much-wanted pudding when eating out with friends. Goes home and overeats on chocolates and sugar-based food to try and satisfy the craving.

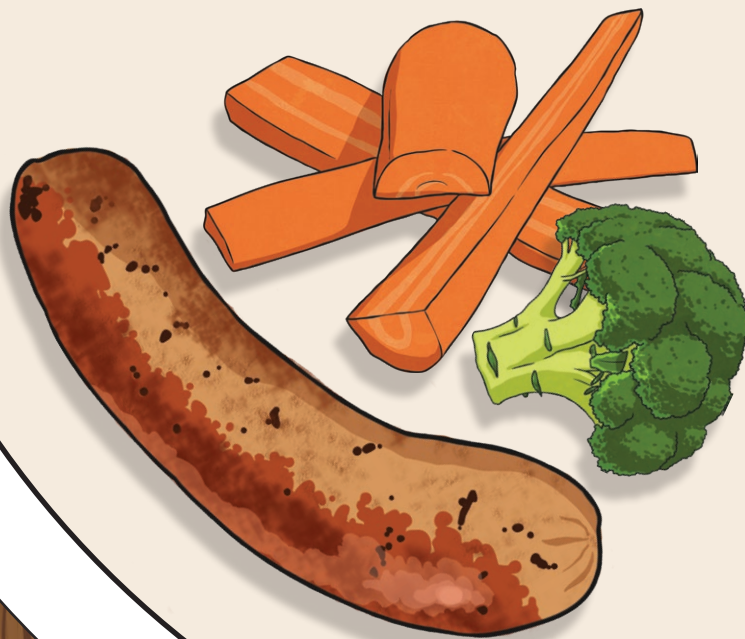


Intuitive Eating Mindset: Wants a pudding when eating out with friends. Eats the pudding and goes home having eaten a comfortable amount and feeling happy and satisfied.



What is a diet?

Nutritionally, the word 'diet' is used to mean the collection of food consumed by an individual. However, the word is also defined as a noun meaning 'an eating plan in which someone eats less food, or only particular types of food, because they want to become thinner or for medical reasons' (Cambridge Dictionary). The term 'diet' is also defined as a verb meaning 'to limit the food and/or drink that you have, especially in order to lose weight' (Cambridge Dictionary).



- Recognise your cravings. Often, cravings occur for hormonal reasons, emotional reasons or for physical needs. For example, when you are deprived of sleep, you are more likely to crave carbohydrates and sugars to give your body energy. By recognising this, you can make a conscious choice over what you do. Sometimes, it might feel appropriate to eat the craved food and then move on. On other occasions, you might recognise that a different tactic is needed, e.g. socialising when you are feeling emotional, might remove the need to use food as a coping strategy.
- Allow food to be comforting. Although alternatives for 'emotional eating' can be sought, it is important to recognise that food can provide comfort - if this helps you feel better, this is OK. When it does not make things seem better, it might be worth looking at alternative emotional supports.
- Rather than regarding exercise as the counter-balance for extra calories consumed, acknowledge that your body needs food to be able to exercise. Focus on the positive feelings which exercise brings to your life.
- Stay focused when you are eating. Enjoy the eating experience rather than doing something alongside eating. This helps you to recognise your internal cues and feel full and satisfied.



Steps to Intuitive Eating:

- Recognise the impact that diet has on your life and on your mental wellbeing. Think about the ways in which negative ideas are projected on to you and limit these wherever possible.
- Recognise feelings of hunger. Consider when you eat and when you feel hungry. Think about the times when you eat but are not hungry and think about what motivates you to eat on these occasions.
- Reflect on foods that you have created negative feelings towards and question whether this actually helps your relationship with food or hinders it. Question the impact each food would have if you ate it and then simply moved on and continued to enjoy your day.
- Consider your eating rituals. Do you always eat at the same time? Do you always eat similar meals? Do you always eat your food in a certain order? Do you always eat all the food on your plate?

What is the difference between dieting and intuitive eating?

Dieting is often associated with limiting food, controlling specific food quantities, counting food intake in some way and associating certain foods with negative consequences.

In contrast, intuitive eating is considered to be the total opposite of a diet. It is associated with recognising natural and internal hunger, with feelings of being full and with creating positive relationships with food. Intuitive eating is also connected with identifying the external relationships we have established with food, e.g. feeling full with ice cream might be associated with comfort, and then later with guilt or shame. Intuitive eating is about trusting the body to know what and when it needs to eat. Diets can often build negative cycles, including food obsessions, low self-esteem, guilt, low motivation and believing that not sticking to a routine is 'failure'. These negative emotions can actually prompt cravings and desires to comfort eat.



What exactly is intuitive eating?

Intuitive eating is a non-diet approach to food which encourages you to recognise the associations you have created (and have been encouraged to create) between food and emotions. These associations can include rewarding yourself with food, punishing yourself by restricting food, regarding certain foods as bad or naughty and allowing yourself to feel guilty when you have consumed them.

Every person is born with an intuitive approach. Babies cry when they are hungry and stop feeding when they have had enough. A young child will eat some of their lunch and stop when they are satisfied or want to move on to a different activity. Gradually, you may have been conditioned to see food differently through gaining puddings, sweets and chocolates as rewards or having them taken away as punishment. This approach starts the association between emotions and food which can then be very controlling.

High performing athletes will not consider themselves to be on a diet. They may eat or avoid certain foods at certain times, but purely based on their body's need to perform rather than emotional attachment.

Intuitive eating might involve recognising that your body wants sugar so you have some cake. You then recognising that, while high in calories, the cake has little overall impact on your health. However, by feeling guilty for eating the cake, you are more likely to start a negative starve-binge cycle that can be very challenging to break.

Intuitive eating encourages focusing on internal motivations, such as hunger, satisfaction and feeling full to guide your eating habits.

