



New Insights into Binge Eating Treatment  
Kari Anderson DBH, LCMHC, LPC, CEDS




**Learning objectives**

- Explain why the focus on weight loss can interfere with long term recovery and how to shift the focus toward recovery and wellbeing.
- Describe why the therapeutic relationship, setting, as well as ongoing safe support systems are essential for treatment.
- Explain why an emphasis on establishing self care and mind-body practices are key for sustainable recovery.




**Key Components to  
Binge Eating  
Treatment**

**Dialectical Behavioral Therapy**

- Dialectics challenge dichotomous thinking
- Balances validation with change methods
- Considered an affect regulation model
- Mindfulness is taught to counteract the dissociation
- Behavioral self monitoring and skill enhancement

*Rapid response of binge abstinence, continues throughout treatment and at one year follow up with DBT.  
~ Safer & Joyce 2011*




**Self Determination Theory and Eating Regulation**

CONTROLLED EATING (PRESSURE/RULES)	AUTONOMOUS EATING (PERSONAL CHOICE)
Appearance Focus	Health and Wellbeing Focus
Rigid Eating	Flexible Eating
Avoid Food	Approach Food
Quantity of Food	Quality of Food
Depleted Energy	Sense of Vitality
Having to Change	Wanting to Change

Verstuyf, Patrick, Vansteenkiste & Teixeira, 2012




**Explain why the focus on weight loss can interfere with long term recovery and how to shift the focus toward recovery and wellbeing.**



Mindfulness bridges the gap from  
external to internal motivation



Experimentation / Feedback / Choice



Mindfulness

- Mindfulness-based approaches provide individuals with a heightened ability to simply observe feelings and experiences and take charge of decisions, disengaging automatic reactivity. Encourages present moment awareness without judgement.
- Mindfulness is noticing the twinkle lights of our life, rather than being fixated on finding a flood light.



Questions?

Describe why the  
therapeutic setting,  
relationship, as well as  
ongoing safe support  
systems are essential for  
treatment.

The brain...on Stress



Stress Response

- Our brains are wired for survival, ANY real or perceived threat of safety is met with fight, flight or **freeze** response
- Our clients are often too anxious, too angry, too ashamed or too tired and find themselves unable to balance their sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems
- Fear shuts down our ability to make good choices, we react out of impulsivity (default to limbic system)



## Feeding and our Nervous System

- Our feeding process is aligned with our “rest and digest” or parasympathetic nervous system
- Turning to food is systemically effective in calming oneself down
- Feeding also is aligned with survival and signals the body that it is safe, especially when other methods are compromised



## Polyvagal Theory by Steven Porges

- Studies neurophysiological foundations of emotion, attachment, communication and self-regulation
- Neuroception, a subconscious system for detecting threat and safety
- Evolutionary development allows social interactions to stabilize physiological arousal by means of facial expressions, vocal tones also known as “gazing effect”
- Communication is the “royal road” to affect regulation and invites a radical shift in our therapeutic approaches



## Community of hope

- Surrounding oneself with people who “get you”, have a common experience and want the same thing that you do.
- They support your autonomous decisions and trust that you are competent to carry out your plans. (SDT)
- Interpersonal therapy (IPT), especially in a group setting can heal interpersonal wounds and restore connections necessary for recovery



Questions?

Explain why an emphasis on establishing self-care and mind-body practices are key for sustainable recovery.

## Mind Body Healing

- Yoga programs help people who are chronically stressed by learning to calm themselves down through breath management and engage in poses that put them in touch with their dissociated bodies
- Breath with rhythmical activities such as drumming or body movements such as tai chi can shift people out of disorganized and fearful brain states and heal processes related to ADHD, anxiety and trauma



## Neutralize the Thin Ideal

- Intentional focus on merging mind and body, healing one's relationship with body through acceptance and forgiveness techniques, and ongoing self-care can help shift our clients from a weight focus to a functional focus of their bodies.
  - Allowing your body to heal and restore balance by addressing its response to physical, emotional and environmental stress
  - Accepting and not fighting the body as it heals
  - Engaging in practices that make us feel good by paying attention (mindful eating, moving and living)



## Mindful Eating and Binge Eating

- Important to remember mindful eating is not just how to eat, it's being mindful before, during and after a meal
- Am I Hungry? Programs follow a structure for thinking about eating; asking yourself why, when, what, how, how much when eating and where do you spend your energy



## Yoga treatment

- Decrease in quantity of food eaten
- Decrease in speed of eating
- Improvement of food choices
- Healthier connection to food, physical self-empowerment and cultivating present moment awareness

~ MCIVER 2009



## BED and Exercise

- Mindful movement is discussed as part of mindfulness and the healing relationship with body, increasing mobility, decreasing pain and to have fun and reduce stress, rather than for burning calories
- Those with BED who live in larger bodies have issues related to exercise apparel, negative appraisal of selves while exercising, focus on weight loss which is discouraging, and become more fatigued and experience pain when exercise
- Suggestions: Play and enjoyment, adapt and modify, intrinsic motivation for exercise, increase perceived competence and social aspect of movement.



## Self compassion

- Disengages the fear response (stress)
- Creates a positive, safe environment for change
- Based in validation of one's experience
- Compassionate responses to automated critical voice
- Modeled by therapist and peers until internalized
- Reinforced by mindful meditation and practices such as Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)



## Professional Partners, Resources and Trainings

### Am I Hungry? Mindful Eating Programs and Training

- Mindful Eating for Binge Eating  
Therapist and Treatment Team  
Training - ONLINE
- Mindful Eating Support Community
- Mindful Eating Retreats
- Eat What You Love, Love What You  
Eat for Binge Eating (book)



### Green Mountain at Fox Run

- Professional Partners Trainings
- Resource Library  
[www.fitwoman.com](http://www.fitwoman.com)
- Women's Center for Binge and  
Emotional Eating residential and  
weekend formats

## Contact Information

Kari Anderson  
DBH, LPC, LCMHC, CEDS  
[kari@fitwoman.com](mailto:kari@fitwoman.com)  
Binge Eating Specialist  
Chief Clinical Director  
Green Mountain Fox Run  
Ludlow, Vermont  
[www.fitwoman.com](http://www.fitwoman.com)

