



Lesson 8 — Leader's Guide

The Ups and Downs of Emotional Eating

There is a strong relationship between your mood and what you choose or do not choose to eat, hence the term “comfort food.” However, eating in response to emotions rather than physical hunger can lead to overeating, obesity, and even other health issues down the road.

Educational goals

After this program, participants will be able to:

- discuss emotional eating,
- identify personal triggers for emotional eating,
- differentiate between physical and emotional hunger,
- identify alternatives to emotional eating,
- discuss the stress relief benefits of yoga,
- define endorphins and their role in the body, and
- list additional health benefits of yoga.

Suggested program preparation

- Review this leader's guide and fact sheet (MF2972).
- Have a copy of the fact sheet for each participant.
- Review key definitions and themes discussed in the program.
- Prepare a mini yoga lesson, if desired.

Materials needed

- Copies of the fact sheet (MF2972) for self and participants.
- Evaluation for distribution at the end of session. Contact Tanda Kidd (martan@k-state.edu) for the evaluation form.
- Pens or pencils for participants to borrow.
- Present displays of books related to the topic of emotional eating (such as *Food and Mood*, by Elizabeth Somer, and *Mindless Eating*, by Brian Wansink), or sample yoga poses. Consider other appropriate displays.

Suggested program presentation guide

- Give each participant a pen or pencil and copy of fact sheet. Allow several minutes for each to review the fact sheet and make notes.
- Allow at least 30 minutes to teach the lesson. If possible, answer relevant audience questions as they arise rather than holding all questions for the end of the program.



References

Food and Mood, by Elizabeth Somer,
1999. Henry Holt and Company.

"The Benefits of Yoga for Stress
Management," Elizabeth Scott,
[http://stress.about.com/od/
tensionamers/p/profileyoga.htm](http://stress.about.com/od/tensionamers/p/profileyoga.htm)

Mindless Eating, by Brian Wansink,
2006. Bantam Books

"The Three 'E's': Exercise, Endorphins,
and Euphoria,"
[www.mens-total-fitness.com/
endorphins.html](http://www.mens-total-fitness.com/endorphins.html)

- Begin by facilitating a discussion of emotional eating. Encourage the participants to create their own definition of emotional eating and share their ideas.
- Discuss typical triggers to emotional eating.
- Ask the participants to identify their own emotional triggers and to record them in the space provided.
- Ask the participants to list foods they commonly eat that are associated with the emotions they identified and to record them in the space provided.
- Compare and contrast physical and emotional hunger. What are the participants' thoughts on these two very different forms of hunger?
- Discuss alternative responses to emotions other than eating. Encourage the participants to share their own ideas with the group and add them to the list.
- Discuss the effect of exercise and endorphins on mood.
- Introduce the topic of yoga. Ask if any participants are familiar with yoga and invite them to share their experiences.
- Discuss the health benefits associated with yoga.
- Ask the participants to reflect on the previous action plan. How successful were they? Have them create another one for this week, encouraging them to build onto their prior action plans.
- As this is the final lesson, facilitate a discussion on action plans. Did they help in the achievement of personal goals? Why or why not? Will they continue to use them in the future?
- Ask the participants to fill out an evaluation for the program.
- Thank the audience for their participation.



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In each case, credit Tandalayo Kidd, Ph.D., R.D., L.P.N., Associate Professor and Nutrition Specialist, Department of Human Nutrition, and Katie Hamm, 2009 graduate in Dietetics, *Move Into Health: The Ups and Downs of Emotional Eating, Leader's Guide*, Kansas State University, May 2012.

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