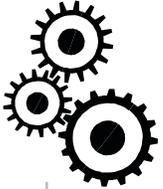


Types of Hunger

This is a very simple technique to increase self-awareness with eating. The participant simply pauses for a moment before eating to determine the “type” of hunger they are experiencing.

It's incredibly easy, yet can definitely be one of the most effective ways for participants to become more aware of their eating triggers.



Activity - “Is this stomach, mouth or heart hunger?”

1. Go back to the flipchart listing the reasons for eating.

Explain that it can be very helpful to distinguish between the different types of “hunger” that we experience. Emphasize that the more we are aware of our eating triggers the better able we will be to change our eating response.

2. Use Ppt Slide #14 or Overhead #13 and describe the different categories of hunger by paraphrasing the following:

paraphrase

I am now going to show you a very simple strategy that you can use to help you become more aware of the type of hunger you are feeling every time that you eat. We're going to think of different categories or types of hunger as follows:

Stomach hunger

This is the physical need for food. It's been 5 or 6 hours since you've eaten. Your stomach is growling. You are eating for the well being of your body. Stomach hunger also refers to times when you might eat for a medical reason, say to prevent a low blood sugar if you're on insulin.

Mouth hunger

This is referring to a food craving. When you're standing in front of the fridge or cupboard looking for something to eat with a certain taste or texture. “Where are those salty, crunchy chips? No, that's not it, I want creamy...where's the ice cream...?”

Heart hunger

What do you think “heart hunger” refers to?

Right, when you're eating because of your emotions or how you're feeling mentally. It can also refer to a learned behaviour around food or eating.

continued on next page 

So, let's look at our list of reasons for eating and identify the type of hunger associated with each reason.

Notice the symbol next to each type of hunger. I am going to use these symbols to represent the different types of hunger in this exercise.



A plate with a knife and fork for Stomach Hunger



A mouth for Mouth Hunger



A heart for Heart Hunger

All your ideas are important with this exercise; there are really no wrong answers. Also, you might think a reason represents more than one type of hunger.

3. As you read out each reason on the chart, in the order it was given, encourage the group to call out the type of hunger they think it is.

Using a different colour marker than you used for the list, draw the symbol of the type of hunger either beside or over top of the reason. (You may not be very artistic but don't worry, draw away! The symbols can be rough, as long as the participants can recognize the plate, mouth, and heart symbols.)

This activity should move very quickly. Don't stop to evaluate or question the participants' answers. Just keep drawing in the symbols as the types of hunger are called out until you've completed the list. If the group needs clarification about a reason that had been given, read out the reason and ask if anyone in the group remembers suggesting this reason. Ask the participant to clarify what they meant.

Some of the reasons may seem difficult to categorize. These are often a learned behaviour and can be categorized as Heart Hunger. Such reasons include:

"It was free" – we've learned to get value for our money and not pass up a free offer.

"It's time to eat" – we've learned or developed a certain schedule for eating.

4. Stand back and take a look at the chart.

Ask the group to point out the type of hunger that shows up the most on the chart. (Usually someone in the group makes the observation that this is Heart Hunger before you can even ask.)

Although there are a few reasons identified as Stomach Hunger (did the group mention nutrition?) and Mouth Hunger, most of the reasons have a Heart symbol next to them. This is often a real eye-opener for the group as it gives them a visual representation of how often they may be eating due to their emotions or learned behaviours.

Allow the group to discuss the chart if they have comments.

Point out that this simple exercise is one of the ways they can become more aware of their eating triggers before the next workshop.

5. Suggest that for at least one entire day they ask themselves . . .

"Is this stomach, mouth or heart hunger?"

. . . every time that they eat. Emphasize that it just takes a few seconds before they eat or drink something. Point out the instructions and worksheet for this self-awareness activity on pages 14 and 15 of the workbook.

6. If you feel that the group needs further clarification, you can give them this example:

Example

You wake up in the morning. You haven't eaten anything since ten the night before. You can hear your stomach growling. Is this stomach, mouth or heart hunger? (*Stomach*)

You head off to the mall to go shopping. As you wander over to the music store you pass by a shop selling freshly baked cookies. They smell delicious. You buy a warm chocolate chip cookie. Is this stomach, mouth or heart hunger?
(*Probably mouth hunger*)

You get home half an hour later and listen to your phone messages. One is from the tax department sounding urgent. The next thing you know you're standing at the counter, frantically eating crackers out of the box. Is this stomach, mouth or heart hunger? (*Heart*)