Intuitive Eating: What Every RD Needs to Know
Evelyn Tribole, MS, RD
Co-Author, Intuitive Eating
April 10, 2011
Chicago

Objective

What It Is & Isn’t
Key Studies
Issues & Challenges
Examples

Brief Hx & Influences

Book for Consumers:
1995 Intuitive Eating, 1st ed.
2003 Intuitive Eating, 2nd ed.
LL Birch
Keys
Hirschman & Munzer
Geneen Roth
Ellyn Satter
Laurel Mellin
Habitation
Restraint Theory
Sensory Specific Satiety/Hedonics
“Tylka Mini”
• Brief Assessment
• In Your Handout...

Evidence

~20 Studies to Date

Intuitive Eater Characteristics

BMI  Self esteem
Thin idealization  Wellbeing
Variety of Foods  Triglycerides
HDL  Body Appreciation
Body Acceptance  DE
Enjoyed Eating  Proactive Coping
Body Cue Awareness  Optimism

Compatibility & Differences

Common
• Honor Bio Cues
• Respect Body

Differences:
• Reject Dieting
• Exercise
• Nutrition

Role of Family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trust Model [Regular Eating Patterns]</th>
<th>Traditional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Division of Responsibility</td>
<td>Caregiver Controls Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Portion Control</td>
<td>Portion Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respects Satiety Cues</td>
<td>Label Reading &amp; Calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Food Restrictions</td>
<td>Unhealthy Food Restricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Pressure to Eat</td>
<td>Pressure to Eat Healthy Foods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This integrative function illuminates how reasoning, once thought to be a “purely logical” mode of thinking, is in fact, dependent on the nonrational processing of our bodies.”

[Daniel Siegel, MD 2010]
Intuitive Eating

Attunement
Dynamic Integration

Inner External

Attunement Barriers

- Stress
- Distraction
- Body Dissatisfaction
- Illness
- Sleep Deprivation
- Dieting

Principle 1
Reject the Diet Mentality

- Biology
- Psychology
- Predicts Weight Gain
Evidence

• Kids—Dieting to control weight is not only ineffective, it may actually promote weight gain. [Field 2003]
• Adolescents—Dieting is the most important predictor of new eating disorders. 3-yr cohort study. [Patton 1999]
• Teen—study n=2500. 1999 vs. 2004. Dieting predicted: weight gain, disordered eating, overweight status & ED. [Neumark-Sztainer 2006]
• Adults—Dieting is consistent predictor of weight gain. Up to 2/3 people regain more weight than they lost. [Mann 2007]

"We do not need another diet trial, we need a change of paradigm." [Katan NEJM 2009]
Honor Hunger

Italian Research Team

**Evidence**


---

**Good Intentions Backfire**

Study: 196 girls (assessed at ages 5-7 yrs)

- When mothers restricted daughters’ food, they were *twice as likely to eat in absence of hunger*.
- Girls who ate in the *absence of hunger* were also *five times more likely to be overweight at age 5 and 7 years*.

---

**Dopamine & Stress**

- Reward Signaling & Sensitivity
- Satiety
- Eating in Absence of Hunger

"Surprisingly, our findings indicate that the effects of stress on food choice are clearly not just present in obese or obesity prone... (Born 2009)"
Principle 4
Make Peace with Food

- Permission to Eat
- Emotionally Neutral
- Habituation Studies
- Burn-Out is not Goal!

Principle 4
Make Peace with Food

Habituation Research

Food Habituation Studies

↑ Exposure
↓ Response
Habituation & Dieters

- No Habituation Experience
- Food Remains:
  - Exciting & Scary
  - Must be controlled
- Last-Supper-Farewell

---

Good Intentions Backfire

- Forbidden Foods ↑ Preferences For It!
- Restricting Foods Increases Overeating Risk.
- External Cues (portion, clean plate, reward)
- Attunement Weaken with Compliance to External Pressures to Eat or Restrict.

---

Permission Paradox

- Trust
- BED pts. perceive as impossible task.
  (Kemister 2006)
2008 BED Study

31 Women
BED (DSM-IV Criteria)

Intervention:
• 8-Week Intuitive Eating

Outcome:
• Binge Abstinence
• Significant Improvement

Limitation:
• No control

Results suggest that mindfulness & increase awareness of satiety cues may be particularly important.

1999 MB-EAT Study

18 women-BED (DSM-IV)

Intervention: 7- session MB-EAT

Outcome: Significant Improvement
• 14 no longer met BED criteria
• 4 Binges/week → 1.5/week

Limitation: No control

Mindfulness
Self-Acceptance
Emotional Balance
Mindful Eating

2 NIH-Funded MB-EAT (RCT’s)

Intervention Groups MB-EAT: 4 Core Components
1-Mindfulness
2-Self-Acceptance
3-Emotional Balance
4-Mindful Eating

Study 1
N=140 men & women-BED
• 9-Sessions MB-EAT
• Psycho-education
• Waiting List

Outcome: Significant Improvement
• Under review/In press

Study 2
• 10-Sessions MB-EAT + 2 f/u
• Added “Outer Wisdom”
### Similarities Between MB-EAT & Intuitive Eating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mindful Eating Components</th>
<th>Intuitive Eating Principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hunger Awareness Training</td>
<td>2-Honor Your Hunger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste &amp; Enjoyment of Eating</td>
<td>6-Discover Satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of Fullness</td>
<td>5-Feel Your Fullness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Choices Based on Liking &amp;</td>
<td>6-Satisfaction; 3-Make Peace w/Food;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>10-Honor Health; Gentle Nutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonjudgmental Awareness of Eating</td>
<td>4-Challenge Food Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet Emotional Needs in Healthy</td>
<td>7-Cope Without Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Way</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance &amp; Nonjudgment of Body</td>
<td>8-Respect Your Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gentle Exercise</td>
<td>9-Exercise-Feel the Difference</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PRINCIPLE 6: SATISFACTION FACTOR

- Mindfulness
- Taste
- Texture
- Aroma
- Volume
- Temperature
- Physical Feeling

### SENSORY SPECIFIC SATIETY

*Know your food well, otherwise people with quantity will confuse you and cause you to eat more and eat the wrong food group.*
**Principle 7:**
Respect Your Body

- Treat it Nice
- Here-and-Now Body
- Appreciation
- Stop Body-Bashing
  - Doesn’t Help
  - Worsens
  - Interferes w/ Intuitive Eating

**Principle 10:**
Honor Health w/Gentle Nutrition

- “Food Worry” Study
  - USA
  - Japan
  - Belgium
  - France

**Intuitive Eating Dynamic Integration Process**
Challenges

Distracted Eating
- Television
- Multi-tasking
- Texting
- Email Checker
- Computer

Getting Basic Needs Met?
- Self-care
- Sleep
- Transition Time
- Friendships
- Boundaries
Challenges

Toxic Food Environment?

Challenges

“Permission Entitlement”

• “Because I Can…”
• “It’s There…”
• No Attunement

Challenges

What About “Food Addiction”? 

www.EvelynTribole.com
This region has been implicated in the euphoric component of cocaine...and music!

Brain Imaging Studies

Nucleus Accumbens

Communication Examples & Activities

- Fitness Magazine Makeover
- Mindful Eating Moment
- Brainstorm Activity
  - Overcoming Distracted Eating
  - Satisfaction
  - Permission to Eat Any Food

Resources

- LinkedIn Intuitive Eating Professionals
- Intuitive Eating Pro--Skills Training
- Intuitive Eating Worksheets
**Intuitive Eating Brief Assessment**

This assessment is adapted from the research of Tracy Tylka [1]. These statements are grouped into the three core characteristics of an Intuitive Eater. Check any of the following statements that apply. This will give you an indication of where to begin the work—in the area with the most checks.

### Unconditional Permission to Eat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1. I try to avoid certain foods high in fat, carbs or kcal.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. If I am craving a certain food, I don’t allow myself to have it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. I follow eating rules of diet plans that dictate what, when and/or how to eat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. I get mad at myself for eating something unhealthy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. I have forbidden foods that I don’t allow myself to eat.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Eating for Physical Rather than Emotional Reasons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1. I find myself eating when I’m feeling emotional (anxious, sad, depressed), even when I’m not physically hungry.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. I find myself eating when I am bored, even when I’m not physically hungry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. I cannot stop eating when I feel full (not overstuffed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. I find myself eating when I am lonely, even when I’m not physically hungry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. I use food to help me soothe my negative emotions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. I find myself eating when I am stressed, even when I’m not physically hungry.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Reliance on Internal Hunger/Satiety Cues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1. I cannot tell when I’m slightly full.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. I cannot tell when I’m slightly hungry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. I do not trust my body to tell me <em>when</em> to eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. I do not trust my body to tell me <em>what</em> to eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. I do not trust my body to tell me <em>how much</em> to eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. When I’m eating, I cannot tell when I am getting full</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Intuitive Eating Selected References


Smith MH et al. Validation of Two Intuitive Eating Scales Among Females Receiving Inpatient Eating Disorder Treatment. [abstract 2010 ICED conference]


Tylka, T.L. A psychometric evaluation of the Intuitive Eating Scale with college men (in press)


Wei, M., & Tylka, T.L. Do perceived body acceptance by others and body appreciation mediate the relationship between attachment and intuitive eating? (in press)


Young, S. Promoting healthy eating among college women: Effectiveness of an intuitive eating intervention. Iowa State University, 2011, 147 pages; Dissertation. AAT 3418683.