Lesson 6 – Make Peace with Food

Goals and Objectives:
1. Increase knowledge of ways to make eating more satisfying and pleasurable.
2. Increase skills in making lifestyle behavior changes that promote healthful eating choices.

Handouts:
- Audience Notes (create from Lesson 6 Slides)
- Perspectives to Ponder (handout 6:1)
- Smart Snack Bag Ideas (handout 6:2, fold and place one in each paper bag)
- OYOL Labels (Lesson 6 handouts folder)
- Quick Thoughts (Lesson 6 handouts folder)

Materials:
- Sign-in Sheet
- Name Tags
- Smart Snack Bags (paper lunch bags, one per participant)
- Portable stereo and music
- Flip chart or board and markers or chalk (optional: write the WOW on board)
- Computer, Projector, Screen
- Extension Cords
- Feedback sheets from previous lesson

Outline:
- 5 minutes – Welcome and Review
- 5 minutes – Make Peace with Food and Perspectives to Ponder
- 10 minutes – The Foods I Love and Journaling
- 5 minutes – Legalizing Food
- 5 minutes – Physical Activity Break: Three Gears of Walking
- 10 minutes – Breaking the Rules and But What If
- 5 minutes – Smart Snack Bag
- 5 minutes – On Your Own Learning (OYOL)
- 2 minutes – Wrap-up

Words of Wisdom: WOW
“I probably enjoy food more now than I ever have because I don’t feel like it’s in control of me, even though it never was. I wanted to think that I had no control.”

Female, 40ish
Let their voices be heard ©
### Facilitator Notes

**Distribute Audience Notes.**

Optional: Post *Class Guidelines.*

### Facilitator’s Message

**Sign-In**

As participants arrive, have them sign in and pick up their name tags and *Audience Notes.* Play some nice background music.

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**Slide 1 and Slide 2: Welcome and Review**

Welcome to our lesson on Making Peace with Food.

Does anyone have any comments or questions? *(Address any concerns, confusion or comments from previous session evaluations.)*

How are the goals coming? Would anyone like to share? Part of your OYOL assignment was to try some higher-fiber foods. What did you try? Did you take your daily walks? What are they like?

Some people struggle, or even fight with food. Have any of you ever done any of the following:

- Craved a food that was restricted through a diet – and found you still craved the food after the diet ended?
- Finally given in to a forbidden food and then binge on it?
- Found yourself in the “Last-Supper” mentality – overeating just before you plan to start the next diet? Or overeating a particular food because you believe you won’t have it again for a long time?
- Eaten forbidden foods only when no one is watching?

Turn to a neighbor and share any thoughts these statements prompted.

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*(Topics to be covered during this session are in red.)* Today we will visit the topic of making eating pleasurable and look at ways to make peace with food and address food struggles. If you have not experienced some of these struggles, perhaps you can gain some insight into friends and family members who may have these challenges.
Let group respond.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slide 3: Make Peace with Food</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In an earlier session, we discussed diets and the diet mentality. One possible dieting strategy might be this: List your favorite foods in column A. In column B, list only foods you hate. Now tell yourself to eat only foods in column B.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What happens?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Most people crave foods that are restricted. The longer foods are prohibited, the more seductive they become. You feel deprived and are tempted to give in – maybe even with a binge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>How about making peace with food? This approach has worked for some people who have had struggles with food.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1. Give yourself unconditional permission to eat.</strong> This means desserts, chocolate, bread, pasta, rice, beans, and fruit – all foods! At first, this may seem to conflict with the idea of gentle nutrition. However, this approach puts trust in yourself to eat all the foods you like while listening to cues of hunger and fullness. If food is not forbidden, cravings, binge eating and overeating can decrease.</td>
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<td><strong>2. There are no good or bad foods.</strong> All foods can fit in a day of healthful eating.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3. Eat what you really want,</strong> not what a diet says you should. This can be a scary thought. What if you don’t stop eating? Some people find they eat more of some foods at first. As they listen to their body and pay attention to internal hunger and fullness signals, food cravings subside. In fact, some people find they don’t really like some foods they once craved.</td>
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<td><strong>4. Forget about food “deals.”</strong> Have you ever promised yourself you will exercise more or skip the next meal in exchange for a food that is off-limits? Can you really enjoy the special treat if you have to make a deal to have it?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distribute Perspectives to Ponder.</td>
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<td>Assign one quote to each group.</td>
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<td>Allow 2 to 3 minutes to complete the list.</td>
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<td>Let group respond.</td>
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<th>Slide 4: The Foods I Love</th>
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<tr>
<td>Think about the foods you love to eat! Don’t label any food as good or bad, healthy or unhealthy, fattening or nonfattening, legal or illegal, safe or dangerous. Set aside any judgments about the food.</td>
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<tr>
<td>In your journal or on a piece of paper, make a list of the foods you love. From ice cream to steak, strawberries to buttered popcorn, even chocolate!</td>
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<td>Even though I asked you to set judgments aside, did you find your “internal sensors” still at work? These judgments have a great influence over food choices. What judgments crept in as you made your list?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Look back over your list. * Star the foods that you have in your home and allow yourself to enjoy regularly. * Circle foods you keep at arm’s length, to be enjoyed only occasionally. * Underline foods that you will not, or very rarely, allow yourself to eat.</td>
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<tr>
<td>List the food items on the board.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Journaling

In your journal, record how you feel about one or more of the foods you underlined. Why do you love this food? How often do you eat it? How do you feel when you eat this food?

*(Play some soothing background music and allow about 3 mintues for journaling.)*

### Slide 5: Legalizing Food

Think about your underlined foods. Raise your hand if you...

- . . . avoid eating such foods or avoid having them around
- . . . feel anxious, guilty, or ashamed if you eat such foods
- . . . feel anxious, sad, or deprived if you don’t eat these foods
- . . . crave these foods and/or binge on them

**Legalizing food is a process** to eliminate guilt and deprivation. Stop labeling or judging food and return all food to a neutral status. Intuitive eating means giving yourself unconditional permission to eat all foods and trusting yourself to find a healthy balance.

**Legalizing food is more helpful than labeling.** The intent of labeling foods – fattening or nonfattening, good or bad – is often to help people lose weight, but it generally has the opposite effect. Prohibition increases desire; nothing makes food more alluring and impossible to resist than calling it forbidden.

**Legalizing food is a means to an end.** Food must be neutral if we are to be at peace with food, to end food and weight obsessions, and to reduce potential eating problems.

**Legalizing food is the opposite of dieting.** With diets, foods are labeled and then restricted or deprived. When you legalize food, you say “no” to diets forever. Give yourself permission to eat when you are physically hungry, choose foods you are hungry for, and eat the quantity that satisfies you.

Remember that legalizing all food does not mean we binge or eat out of control. Rather, if we are aware of our bodies’ nutritional needs and hunger signals, it is all right to eat what we desire. We need to eat slowly and to focus on what we are eating. We need to check in with our bodies to know when we are satisfied and can stop eating. We are working towards a flexible, gentle approach rather than a rigid restrictive pattern.
Slide 6: Physical Activity Break – The Three Gears of Walking

Walking is a great way to be active. It is inexpensive and can be done almost anywhere. Walking is a good all-around workout for the body with a low occurrence of injuries. Plus, it is something you already know how to do!

Robert Sweetgall is a leading advocate of walking for wellness. He has walked across America seven times. He describes three gears of walking. Please stand and line up behind me. (Find a space where you can lead a group in walking.)

1. **First gear**: Easy strolling pace. There is no sweating and it is light exertion. Equivalent to light gardening.

2. **Second gear**: Medium-intensity walking at 3.5 miles per hour. Most people can breathe comfortably. Equivalent to energetic yardwork.

3. **Third gear**: High-intensity, brisk walking. Most people begin to breathe heavily and start to sweat. Muscles work intensely. Equivalent to cross-country skiing.

Which gear is best? The one you do! The goal is to walk more and when you are ready, walk more intensely more often.
Slide 7: Breaking the Rules

The first step to legalizing food is to break the rules and bring formerly forbidden foods into your home. Surround yourself with foods you crave. The goal is to have the food whenever you want it, to enjoy the food, and to crave the food less. During this next week, consider trying the following:

Pick one food from your underlined list. Buy it! In fact, buy some extra.

Give yourself permission to eat this food whenever you are hungry for it.

Enjoy the food. Create a pleasant food atmosphere. Focus on the food – don’t be doing anything else while you eat it. Promise not to scold yourself when you eat food you love.

Note in your journal how it tastes and how you feel when you eat it.

Replenish supplies as they go low.

(Note: This activity may be too uncomfortable for some people. Remind them it is optional and it would be helpful if some people would do it and share their experiences next week.)

Remember, the goal is to have the foods you love available, truly enjoy the food to your satisfaction and crave it less. This is an optional activity. If you are feeling very uncomfortable, you may choose to wait until next week and hear how this worked for others in the class. You may decide to try it later.
Address fears as they are shared.

But what if I . . .

Lose control. It is normal to be afraid of gorging on this food you have brought home. Many people discover when they surround themselves with great quantities of foods they love and stop yelling at themselves for eating, their cravings diminish and eventually disappear.

Gain weight. If you have just come off a diet, some weight gain may occur as part of the natural rebound. Once you have truly legalized food, your weight should stabilize.

Waste food. Having a surplus of food is important to this process. It symbolizes permission to eat and trusting yourself. You may want to have reasonable quantities of perishable foods.

Harm health. If you have medical concerns that respond to food restrictions, such as diabetes, you may need to modify your eating as a respectful response to your body’s needs. Listening to your body is especially important.

Find it gone. For this activity to work, you must know the food will be there when you want it. Let family members know your plan. Designate shelf space or a special cupboard for your food – and one for them as well.

Distribute paper lunch sacks with Smart Snack Bag Ideas inside.

Slide 8: But What If

Complete the sentence,
If I legalize food, I am afraid I will . . .

Slide 9: The Smart Snack Bag

A helpful tool for making peace with food and being able to listen and respond to your body’s signals is having a Smart Snack Bag. This bag contains food that you can enjoy whenever you get hungry. This helps keep you from getting too hungry if food is not available. It can minimize raiding vending machines or grabbing fast food when you are starving. Think back to the hunger and satiety scale. The Smart Snack Bag can help you maintain a normal eating pattern by having food available if you begin to feel hungry.

It can be any kind of bag – plastic, cloth, hard, soft. Keep it where you most often find yourself getting hungry. You may have one for the office and one for the car.

Try to include foods that satisfy you. By selecting foods that do not require refrigeration, you won’t have to have cold packs. There are some food ideas for your snack bag on the insert page in your bags.
### Slide 10: On Your Own Learning (OYOL)

1. If you are ready to try it, break the rules.
   * Buy the one food you selected.
   * Enjoy it when you want it.
   * Focus on the food – don’t do anything else.
   * Note how it tastes and how you feel in your journal.
   * Replenish supplies as needed.

2. Make your Smart Snack Bag.

3. Increase your daily 2-minute walks to daily 5-minute walks.
   Please note in your journal where you went and maybe even which walking gear you used.

### Slide 11: Wrap-Up

Thank you for joining our class today. Please complete the evaluations and leave your name tags. We will see you next week.
References and Additional Resources:

