

February 2009

Front Range Psychological Associates

Mental Health Minute



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Mindful Eating

Hello and
welcome
to another
edition of
Mental
Health



Minute! This month we are focusing on healthy eating. Please read on for some important tips on mindful eating, the practice of being aware of what we are putting into our bodies and how it makes us feel.

We are counting down the days until the 2nd Annual Women's Symposium held at the Erie Community Center on February 21st. It is going to be a fun, information-packed event - hope to see you there!

Dr. Bridget Engel & Dr. Stephanie Smith

**7 Mindful Eating
Tips**

2nd Annual Women's Symposium

When:

Saturday February 21, 2009

8:15am - 12noon

Where:

Erie Community Center

What :

Speakers on finance, mental health, legal issues, nutrition, and fitness.

Free Food!

Shopping!

Lots of Fun!

Please join us for the 2nd Annual Women's Symposium!

This is a FREE event, but space is limited so pre-registration is required. Go to:

www.eriecommunitycenter.com

to register and save your spot for this awesome event!

Struggling with Unemployment?

We are living through an amazingly difficult time. Everywhere we turn we are bombarded with bad news about the economy, the real estate market, companies laying off workers by the thousands, and other companies simply



When you are mindful you are fully present, in-the-moment without judgment. When it comes to eating, mindfulness helps amplify the volume of your body's cues so you can hear loud and clear when you are hungry and full. Many social and environmental factors can stand in the way of being able to accurately decode your body's feedback. Mindfulness helps you break free from routine eating habits by examining the thoughts, feelings, and internal pressures that affect how and why you eat (or don't eat).

1. Shift out of Autopilot Eating

What did you have for breakfast? Many people eat the same thing day in and day out. Notice whether you are stuck in a rut or routine.

2. Take Mindful Bites

Did you ever eat an entire plate of food and not taste one single bite? Bring all of your senses to the table. Breathe in the aroma of a fresh loaf of bread. Notice the texture of yogurt on your tongue. Truly taste your meal. Experience each bite from start to finish.

3. Attentive Eating

Sure, you are busy and have lots "on your plate." It's hard to make eating a priority rather than an option or side task. If you get the urge for a snack while studying, working, or watching tv; stop and take a break so that you can

closing their doors overnight.

Looking for some place to turn?

Try the following resources:

<http://www.frontrangepychology.com/blog.html>

<http://www.apahelpcenter.org/articles/article.php?id=171>

Did You Know?

Nearly half of young adults meet the diagnostic criteria for mental illness or substance abuse, but only a quarter seek treatment

(Archives of General Psychiatry, Vol. 65, No. 12)

People who have a sibling with mental illness are 63% more likely to suffer from depression

(Journal of Family Psychology, Vol. 22, No. 6)

Talking on your cellphone while driving increases your risk of being in an accident fourfold

(The New England Journal of Medicine, Vol. 336, No. 7)

give eating 100% of your attention. Try to avoid multitasking while you are eating. When you eat, just eat.

4. Mindfully Check In

How hungry am I on a scale of 1 to 10? Gauging your hunger level is a little like taking your temperature. Each time you eat, ask yourself, "Am I physically hungry?" Aim to eat until you are satisfied, leaving yourself neither stuffed nor starved.

5. Thinking Mindfully

Observe how critical thoughts like "I just need to lose 10 more pounds" or "I'm so stupid, how could I do that" can creep into your consciousness. Just because you think these thoughts doesn't mean you have to act on them or let them sway your emotions. Negative thoughts can trigger overeating or stop you from adequately feeding your hunger. Remember, a thought is just a thought, not a fact.

6. Mindful Speech

Chit chatting about dieting and fat is so commonplace that we often aren't truly aware of the impact it might have on our self-esteem. When you are with friends and family, be mindful of your gut reaction to "fat talk" (e.g., "I'm so fat" "No you're not!"). Keep in mind how the words might affect someone struggling with food issues.

7. Mindful Eating Support

Friends provide an enormous amount of support, but often it's helpful to obtain assistance from a trained professional. Check out the following websites for more information:

www.NationalEatingDisorders.org

www.ColoradoPsych.org

www.apa.org

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See you next month!

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