

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

USING MINDFULNESS TO TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR EATING!

Changing your mindset towards food means paying close attention to your emotions and your body's cues.

Do you ever find yourself mindlessly eating while you're watching TV or reading, or are otherwise distracted? Research suggests that being hurried or not paying attention to a meal tends to make people eat more. Mindless eating can also be a response to feelings and emotions such as boredom, loneliness, sadness, and stress. During the holiday season, it can be especially difficult to maintain healthy eating habits.

Changing your mindset towards food means paying close attention to your emotions and your body's cues. Are you eating because you're hungry or because you're feeling stressed? When you slow down and make eating an intentional act, you'll make more conscious choices instead of operating on auto-pilot. You'll become more aware of the triggers that make you want to eat or crave certain "comfort foods," even though you might not be physically hungry.

Here are some tips to practice mindful eating:

- **Eat slowly while sitting down, with minimal distractions.** Use your senses to savor the meal, noticing colors, smells, flavor, and texture.
- **Notice how the food makes you feel as you taste it, and how you feel throughout the day.**
- **Pay attention to your body's signals.** It can take twenty minutes or so for your brain to register that you're full.
- **When you have a food craving, especially for junk food, think about what emotions or needs are triggering the craving.** For example, if you want to snack because you're bored, take a walk or engage in some other activity instead.

Mindful eating takes practice, but over time you'll become better at distinguishing between emotional and physical hunger, and make healthier food choices.

