

the
eating
issues
centre

The Community Table

Recovery Through Connected Eating

Common challenges faced

WHEN TRYING TO NOURISH, NURTURE AND THRIVE:

- The pervasive presence of diet culture in the media and life in general.
- Fear foods, the fear of eating, and the associated self-doubt and shame.
- Struggling, fighting and negotiating with the eating issue 'voice'.
- The ongoing compulsion of eating issues that keep you trapped in the cycle of restricting food, binge eating and purging.

Connected eating skills

TO ASSIST WITH THESE CHALLENGES:

- **Choosing your 'non-negotiables'**, for e.g. eating regular meals, eating a variety of food, or making eating a pleasurable experience.
- **Planning** - does a lot of the "emotional work" before mealtime arrives - what, where, when and with whom you'll have a meal.
- **Stop the struggling, fighting and negotiating** with the eating issue 'voice' by using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy skills and techniques. (Wise Choices Morton, & Shaw, 2012)
- **Accepting, acknowledging and observing** intrusive thoughts and distressing images & feelings.

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Connected eating skills

If an unhelpful thought comes into your mind (for example “I’m useless”), you could:

Try ‘just noticing’

Try thinking “I’m having the thought that ...”. Then try “I’m just noticing I’m having the thought that ...”

‘Thank you, mind’

No need to pay attention to everything your mind says and no need to be rude either! Your mind is just doing its job. Try saying ‘Thank you, mind’ with a touch of humour (and not too much sarcasm).

How do the words sound?

Say the words over and over to yourself quite fast and notice the sounds of the letters like in the ‘Milk, milk, milk’ exercise. Are they soft? Sharp? Or silly sounds? Are the words running together?

Sing the words

Sing the words to the tune of ‘Happy Birthday’, or ‘Mary had a little lamb’, or any other song you know well.

Silly voice

Try saying the thought using the voice of one of your favourite cartoon characters such as Homer Simpson or Bugs Bunny. Try saying it in a funny accent or really fast or super s-l-o-w.

Write the words over and over

How do they look in different sizes? Different fonts? Different styles? Different colours?

Leaves on a stream

Imagine yourself on the bank of a stream. Put ‘I’m useless’ on a leaf and watch it float downstream. Wait on the bank of your imaginary stream for other thoughts, images, sensations or thoughts to come, and put each on a leaf and let them go too.

Clouds and sky

Imagine ‘I’m useless’ and other thoughts are clouds passing by. Perhaps you are the sky, not the clouds.

Utilise the principles of Soul Food..

Soul food refers to the process where an individual discovers their relationship with food, where they can see it as a source of pleasure, connection, creativity, miraculous wonder and soulfulness.

- **Pleasure** – is more than just hunger. It is appetite, the desire for food. Food providing pleasure to the senses (smell, taste, touch etc.).
- **Creativity** – cooking as a form of alchemy.
- **Connection** – food and community are at the heart and soul of relationships.
- **Soulfulness** – bringing soul to the food. Grow it, create it, bless it, and dine on it. Create a pleasurable environment to eat a meal. Inject soul into the relationship with food. (Costin, & Grabb, 2017)

