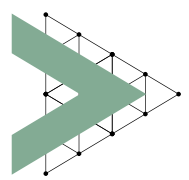


# What to do when you feel guilty after eating?

EATING  
DISORDER  
SUPPORT &  
AWARENESS

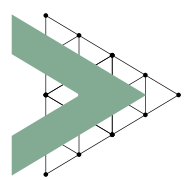


# FOOD GUILT?



## WHAT IS FOOD GUILT?

FOOD GUILT IS THE FEELING OF SHAME, REGRET, OR ANXIETY AFTER EATING CERTAIN FOODS, OFTEN TRIGGERED BY THE BELIEF THAT YOU'VE EATEN SOMETHING "UNHEALTHY" OR GONE AGAINST DIETARY RULES. THESE FEELINGS OFTEN COME FROM DIET CULTURE, WHICH PUSHES THE IDEA THAT YOUR FOOD CHOICES DEFINE YOUR SELF-WORTH. OVER TIME, THIS KIND OF GUILT CAN DAMAGE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH FOOD AND TAKE A TOLL ON BOTH YOUR MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH.

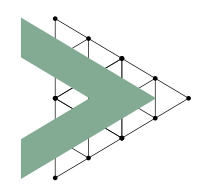


## HOW TO DEAL WITH FOOD GUILT?

RECOGNIZING FOOD GUILT IS THE FIRST STEP TOWARD BUILDING A MORE BALANCED AND COMPASSIONATE APPROACH TO FOOD. HERE ARE A FEW HELPFUL WAYS TO MANAGE THOSE FEELINGS AND SUPPORT A HEALTHIER MINDSET AFTER EATING.



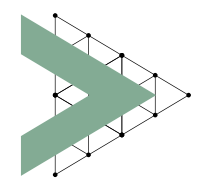
## STEP 1: UNDERSTANDING WHERE THE GUILT COMES FROM



**GUILT AFTER EATING OFTEN STEMS FROM LABELING FOODS AS "GOOD" OR "BAD." THIS BLACK-AND-WHITE THINKING CAN CAUSE DISTRESS AND AFFECT HOW WE VIEW OURSELVES.**

**ACCORDING TO A 2013 STUDY PUBLISHED IN APPETITE, INDIVIDUALS WHO ASSOCIATED CHOCOLATE CAKE WITH GUILT RATHER THAN CELEBRATION WERE LESS SUCCESSFUL AT MAINTAINING A HEALTHY WEIGHT AND EXPERIENCED LOWER LEVELS OF SELF-CONTROL (KUIJER & BOYCE, 2014).**

## STEP 2: PAUSE AND BREATHE



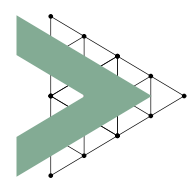
**WHEN GUILT HITS, THE FIRST STEP IS TO PAUSE AND TAKE A DEEP BREATH. AVOID SPIRALING INTO NEGATIVE THOUGHTS. MINDFULNESS PRACTICES CAN HELP GROUND YOU IN THE PRESENT MOMENT.**

**A REVIEW PUBLISHED IN HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY REVIEW FOUND THAT MINDFULNESS-BASED INTERVENTIONS WERE EFFECTIVE IN REDUCING EMOTIONAL EATING AND IMPROVING SELF-REGULATION (O'REILLY ET AL., 2014).**





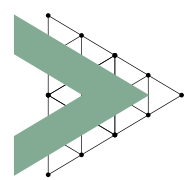
## STEP 3: CHALLENGE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS



TRY TO REFRAME YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT FOOD. INSTEAD OF SAYING, "I SHOULDN'T HAVE EATEN THAT" ASK YOURSELF, "WHAT MADE ME CHOOSE THAT FOOD?" WAS IT HUNGER, STRESS, OR HABIT? BEING CURIOUS RATHER THAN CRITICAL HELPS DEVELOP A HEALTHIER MINDSET.

COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL STRATEGIES, AS SUPPORTED BY THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, CAN HELP REDUCE DISORDERED EATING PATTERNS THROUGH THOUGHT AWARENESS AND RESTRUCTURING (FAIRBURN, 2008).

## STEP 4: PRACTICE SELF COMPASSION

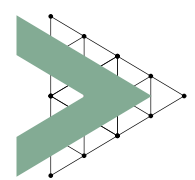


IT'S IMPORTANT TO TREAT YOURSELF WITH THE SAME KINDNESS YOU WOULD OFFER A FRIEND. SELF-COMPASSION HAS BEEN SHOWN TO REDUCE BINGE EATING AND FOOD GUILT.

A 2013 STUDY HIGHLIGHTED THAT INDIVIDUALS WHO PRACTICED SELF-COMPASSION WERE LESS LIKELY TO ENGAGE IN DISORDERED EATING AND HAD BETTER EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE (SCHOENEFELD & WEBB, 2013).



## STEP 5: SEEK SUPPORT WHEN NEEDED

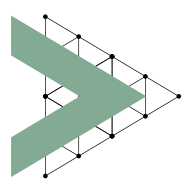


IF GUILT AFTER EATING BECOMES FREQUENT OR OVERWHELMING, IT MAY HELP TO TALK TO A MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL OR REGISTERED DIETITIAN. DISORDERED EATING THOUGHTS CAN GROW OVER TIME AND AFFECT YOUR WELL-BEING. GETTING SUPPORT EARLY CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE.

FOOD IS FUEL, COMFORT, CULTURE, AND CONNECTION. IF YOU EVER FEEL GUILTY AFTER EATING, KNOW THAT IT DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE WEAK OR LACKING SELF-CONTROL. IT SIMPLY MEANS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH FOOD MIGHT NEED SOME CARE AND COMPASSION.

YOU DESERVE TO FEEL AT PEACE WITH HOW YOU NOURISH YOURSELF. BE GENTLE WITH YOUR THOUGHTS, AND REMEMBER THAT HEALING BEGINS WITH UNDERSTANDING AND KINDNESS.

## STEP 6: KNOW WE ARE WITH YOU



KNOW THAT YOU ARE NOT ALONE IN THIS JOURNEY. TAKE IT ONE KIND CHOICE AT A TIME.





# EATING DISORDER SUPPORT & AWARENESS

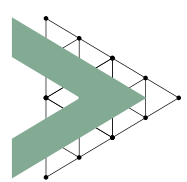
PROJECT EDSA (EATING DISORDER SUPPORT & AWARENESS) IS A YOUTH-LED INITIATIVE DEDICATED TO UPLIFTING LIVED EXPERIENCES, SHARING HONEST RECOVERY STORIES, AND MAKING SUPPORT MORE ACCESSIBLE.

THROUGH OUR VOICES OF RECOVERY PROJECT AND STUDENT-WRITTEN RESOURCE GUIDES, WE AIM TO AMPLIFY YOUTH VOICES AND OFFER THE KIND OF SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY WE WISH WE HAD DURING OUR OWN RECOVERY.

THIS IS A GROWING COLLECTION OF RESEARCH-BACKED, STUDENT-CREATED GUIDES, TOOLS, AND SUPPORT LINKS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH AND EATING DISORDER RECOVERY.

IF THERE'S A TOPIC YOU'D LIKE US TO COVER OR IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN CREATING A RESOURCE YOURSELF, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO LET US KNOW!

## REQUEST A RESOURCE | FIND MORE RESOURCES



KUIJER, R. & BOYCE, J. (2014). CHOCOLATE CAKE. GUILT OR CELEBRATION? ASSOCIATIONS WITH HEALTHY EATING ATTITUDES, PERCEIVED BEHAVIORAL CONTROL, AND INTENTIONS TO EAT HEALTHILY. APPETITE, 74, 48-54. [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.1016/J.APPET.2013.11.013](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2013.11.013)

O'REILLY, G., COOK, L., SPRUIJT-METZ, D., & BLACK, D. (2014). MINDFULNESS-BASED INTERVENTIONS FOR OBESITY-RELATED EATING BEHAVIOURS: A LITERATURE REVIEW. HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY REVIEW, 15(6), 453-461. [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.1111/OBR.12156](https://doi.org/10.1111/OBR.12156)

FAIRBURN, C. (2008). COGNITIVE BEHAVIOR THERAPY AND EATING DISORDERS. GUILFORD PRESS.

SCHOENEFELD, S. & WEBB, J. (2013). SELF-COMPASSION AND INTUITIVE EATING IN COLLEGE WOMEN: EXAMINING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF DISTRESS TOLERANCE AND BODY IMAGE ACCEPTANCE AND ACTION. EATING BEHAVIORS, 14(4), 493-496. [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.1016/J.EATBEH.2013.09.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eatbeh.2013.09.001)

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