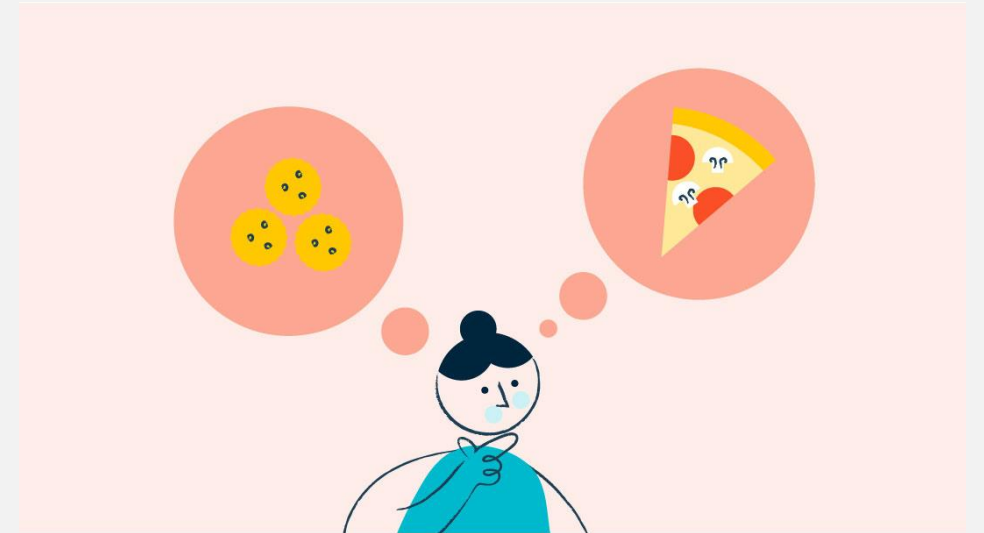


# EMOTIONAL EATING

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# EMOTIONAL EATING

- Definition:
  - The act of consuming large quantities of foods, normally “comfort” foods, in response to feelings or emotions instead of biological hunger
  - Examples of emotional eating:
    - Eating when feeling a certain emotion (stress, sadness, boredom, depression, etc)
    - Eating when you are not feeling hungry or when you are full
    - Eating to avoid stressful situations
    - As a reward



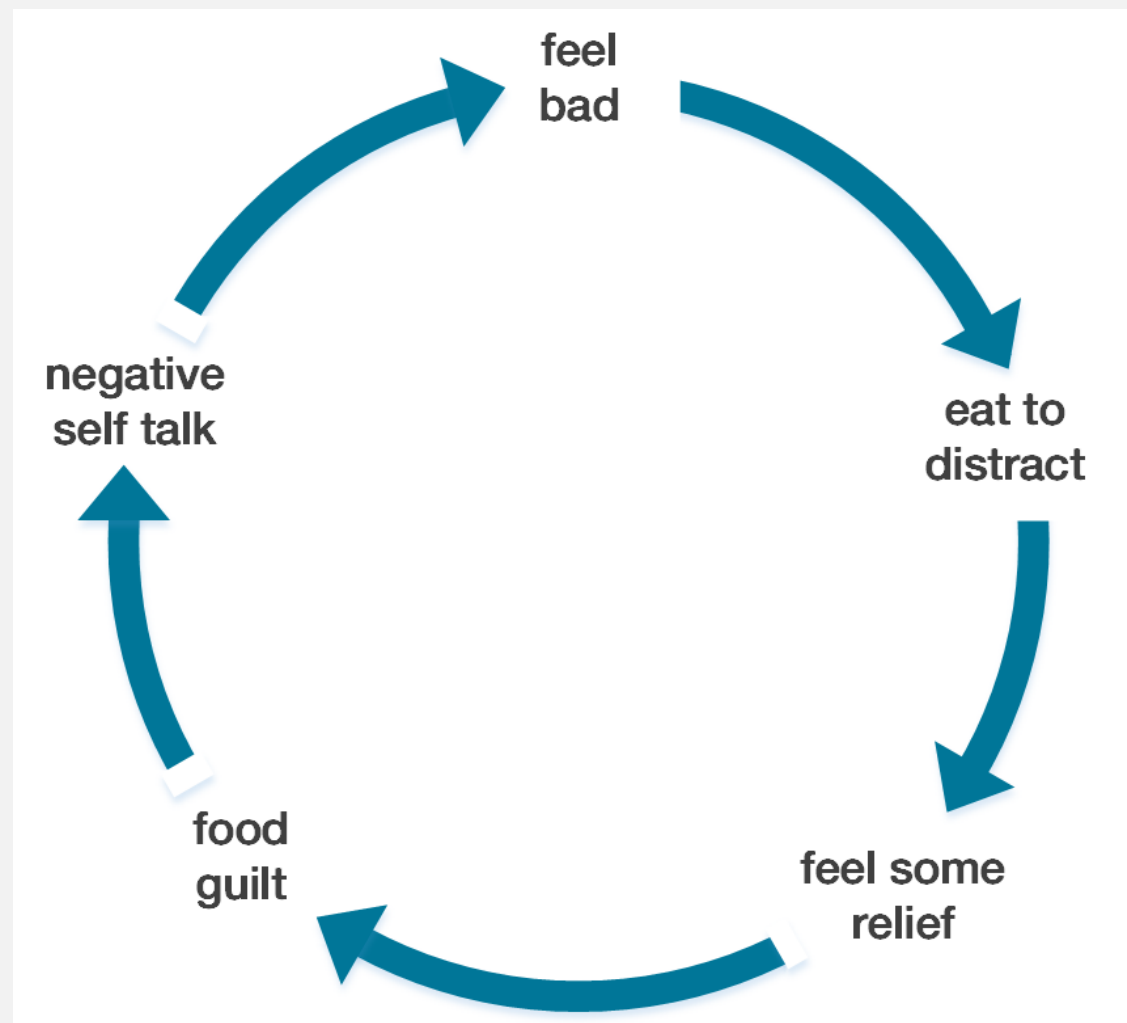
# EMOTIONAL EATING

- Misconceptions of emotional eating
  - All emotional eating is bad
    - In difficult or stressful times, this can be your only coping mechanism
    - It's better to cope with these emotions than to not
  - Emotional eating means you don't have enough self-control

# EMOTIONAL EATING

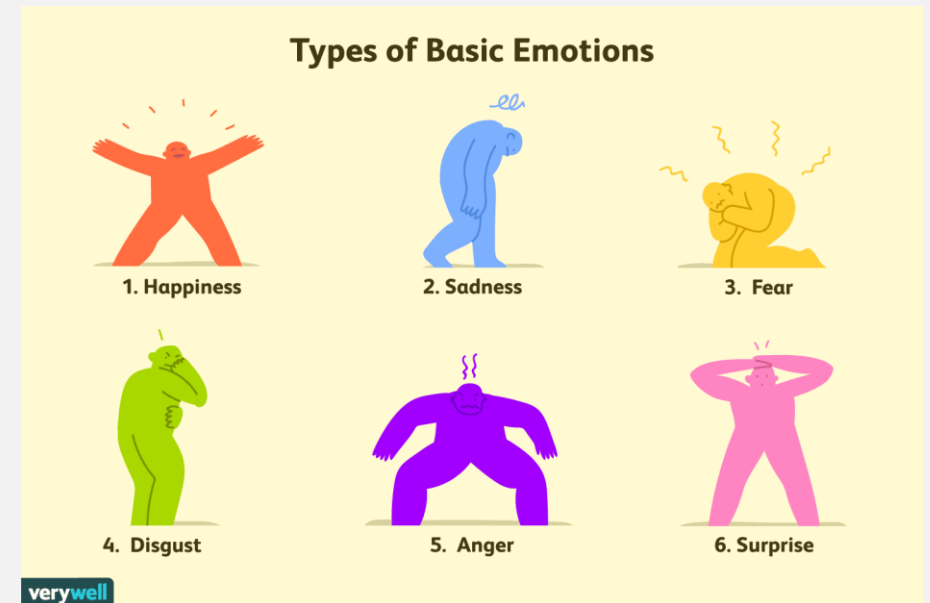
- Emotional eating triggers countless hormone cascades and can physically be seen in brain chemistry
  - Ex: When you eat foods that taste good, your brain releases dopamine
    - Dopamine is a pleasure hormone and acts as a reward mechanism in the brain
  - Ex: during times of stress, cortisol and insulin levels are elevated leading to an increase in hunger – especially for high fat, sugar foods
  - Ex: Tryptophan is the precursor to serotonin, the feel good hormone. In order to make tryptophan, you need carbohydrates help speed up the absorption
- When you experience times of emotional eating, understand you are undergoing a biological mechanism in the body

## THE CYCLE OF EMOTIONAL EATING



# TIPS FOR EMOTIONAL EATING

- 1. Identify your emotions
  - Name the feeling your are having (angry, frustrated, sad, stressed, etc)
- 2. Accept the feelings
  - Don't' try to suppress or fight the emotions – give yourself permission to feel that way
- 3. Express yourself
  - Find someone you trust who you can express the emotions to
- 4. Choose how to soothe yourself



# TIPS FOR EMOTIONAL EATING

- Find a different way to cope with every day stressors
  - Meditate
  - Go for a quick walk
  - Call a friend
  - Speak to a therapist
  - Exercise
  - Take a hot bath
  - Self-care
  - If all else fails, set a 5 minutes rule
    - Prior to eating anything, give yourself 5 minutes to evaluate your emotions, surroundings, and whether you are hungry or not



# TIPS FOR EMOTIONAL EATING

- Keep healthful snacks on hand
  - During stressful times, its easier to grab what's readily available
  - If you keep less nutrient-dense foods around, those are the ones you will grab during periods of emotional eating
  - Examples:
    - Whole fruit
    - Sliced vegetables
    - String cheese or yogurt



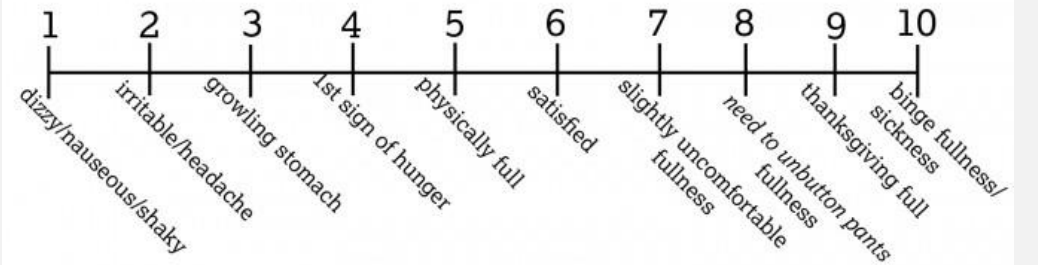
## TIPS FOR EMOTIONAL EATING

Keep a food journal or diary

Document your emotions when you are eating

Track your hunger and fullness

### HUNGER & FULLNESS SCALE



# TIPS FOR EMOTIONAL EATING

- Heal your relationship with food
  - Having a “good” relationship with food removes any guilt, shame, or stress behind the your choice of foods
  - You eliminate any food rules you might have and listen to your body’s hunger cues
  - Allows you to make more rational chooses under times of stress or high emotions
  - You also understand that foods you choose to eat does not define your value as a person



## RESOURCES

- **StayWell Coaching Calls:** With telephonic or virtual coaching, you work one-on-one with a trained health coach to achieve your wellbeing goals. Complete at least three calls with a StayWell coach to earn 250 points.
  - Call StayWell to enroll: 1-888-343-9862 or click *Coach* on your portal dashboard to schedule a virtual coach visit.
  - *To earn your points, you must start this program no later than September 30, 2021, and complete it by December 31, 2021.*
- **StayWell February Session: Mindful Eating.** Read the material, test your knowledge and track as prompted to complete the session. Earn 25 points for each session you complete.
- Explore the Resources tab > Nutrition sub tab for more information, recipes and videos.

# CONCLUSION

- Emotional eating is moments of consuming large amounts during emotional times
- This reflects a biological response in the body
- Identifying and finding ways to cope with everyday stresses and emotions is one of the best ways to fight emotional eating

# QUESTIONS

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