You are invited to use this manual for research purposes or in practice but please kindly inform us at mallory.frayn@mail.mcgill.ca and cite it in your publications.
Session 1 - Emotional Eating Food Diary

This diary will help you become more aware of the habits (feelings, thoughts, and emotions) that trigger your overeating. Every time that you overeat (eating more than you think you should or eating until you are uncomfortably full), write it down. Write down how you are feeling in this moment. Note any emotions that you are feeling that make you want to eat (e.g., are you feeling sad, stressed, anxious, etc.?). Also pay attention to and write down how you feel after you eat (e.g., do you feel happier, calmer, less uneasy?). You will review this diary with your doctor to help know what emotions to target throughout the rest of the program so that they don’t lead to overeating, so be sure to bring it with you next session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>What and how much did you eat?</th>
<th>How hungry were you? (1-5)</th>
<th>How did you feel before eating?</th>
<th>How did you feel after eating?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session 2 – Weight Loss Values

Values are very important in our lives because they help us make meaningful choices. Identifying your weight loss values is important so that you can follow them to reduce emotional eating and improve weight loss. To help clarify these values, please answer the following questions:

Why do you want to lose weight? Why is it important for you to lose weight?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

In the past, how has emotional eating interfered with your weight loss?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Session 3 – Using Values to Make Decisions

Sometimes when we are stressed or experience other difficult emotions, we stray away from our values related to losing weight. The BOLD technique will help you to deal with the emotions that make you want to eat by helping you to remember your values. Every time you experience a negative emotion that makes you want to eat, you can apply this acronym before acting on your urge to eat. This technique will help you slow you down so that you don’t immediately react to the emotion, and don’t (over)eat.

Be BOLD! BOLD stands for:

✧ B - Breath—Take a couple of breaths, slow down!
✧ O - Observe—Observe what you are feeling – are you tired or tense perhaps? Angry or bored?
✧ L - Listen to values—Why do you want to lose weight?!
✧ D - Decide to eat or not to eat, and how much. Decide in line with your weight loss values!

This week, when you experience an emotion(s) that make you want to eat, remember to use BOLD by using the if-then plan below:

**IF** I feel (___________) and want to eat, **THEN** I will use BOLD.

*insert emotion*

Rehearse this if-then plan repeatedly so that using it becomes automatic! After you used the if-then plan to apply BOLD, go through the following checklist:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did I BREATHE?</th>
<th>Did I OBSERVE my feelings?</th>
<th>WHAT was I feeling?</th>
<th>Did I LISTEN to my values?</th>
<th>What did I DECIDE?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Yes</td>
<td>☐ Yes</td>
<td>☐ Tired</td>
<td>☐ Yes</td>
<td>☐ I ate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td>☐ Tense</td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td>☐ I didn’t eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Yes</td>
<td>☐ Yes</td>
<td>☐ Anxious</td>
<td>☐ Yes</td>
<td>☐ I ate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td>☐ Tired</td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td>☐ I didn’t eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Yes</td>
<td>☐ Yes</td>
<td>☐ Tense</td>
<td>☐ Yes</td>
<td>☐ I ate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td>☐ Anxious</td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td>☐ I didn’t eat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session 4 – Acceptance

Negative emotions are an inevitable part of life. There will always be times when we are sad, stressed, or anxious. It is important to realize that just because we are feeling negative emotions, it does not mean that we have to act on them by eating.

A way to accept negative emotions is to:

- **Stop playing tug-of-war and drop the rope**: Every time that you want to eat because of certain emotions, think of this struggle like a tug-of-war between yourself and the emotions you are experiencing. Rather than continuing to pull harder and harder on the rope to try and win against these emotions, give up the struggle and just drop the rope. While the emotions may not go away, you will no longer waste your time/energy trying to rid yourself of them. By dropping the rope, you may realize that these emotions are not so bad after all, and that you are ok with just sitting with them.

  *This week, when you experience an emotion(s) that makes you want to eat, remember to stop playing tug-of-war and drop the rope by using the following if-then plan:*

  **IF** I feel (__________) and want to eat, **THEN** I will drop the rope.

  *insert emotion*

  After you drop the rope, choose to do something other than eating by using the following if-then plan:

  **IF** I feel (__________) and want to eat, **THEN** I will (__________________) instead.

  *insert emotion*  
  *insert alternative to eating*

  _Rehearse these if-then plans several times so that they become automatic!_

  *Take a minute to write down your experiences:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What emotion was I feeling?</th>
<th>Was I able to drop the rope?</th>
<th>Was I able to do my alternative to eating?</th>
<th>Did this stop me from eating?</th>
<th>How did I feel afterwards?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session 5 – Urge Surfing

Sometimes we will have the urge or craving to eat because of emotions we are having. Just because the urge or craving is there does not mean that you have to act on it. Think of an urge or a craving like a wave; it will rise and fall. Urge surfing is like riding a wave. The goal is to become aware of your emotions and cravings, but to try not to fight them. Over time, you might begin to find that they naturally go away on their own, without you having to do anything to try and change them.

To practice urge surfing, you can follow 5 easy steps:

1. Acknowledge your urge or craving (“I’m having the urge to…” or “I’m craving…”)
2. Observe your urge or craving. Notice how it feels in your body (are you tense, anxious, fatigued, etc.?).
3. Rather than trying to make it go away, just sit with it for now.
4. Watch the urge or craving as it rises and falls like a wave, notice how it gets stronger and then weaker. Score the urge or craving on a scale from 1-10 (10 being the strongest) to see how it changes over time.
5. Check in with your values. Is acting on the urge or craving in line with your weight loss values?

This week, when you experience an emotion(s) that makes you want to eat, remember to use urge surfing by using the following if-then plan:

IF I feel (__________) and want to eat, THEN I will surf my urge to eat.

Rehearse this if-then plans as often as possible so that it becomes automatic!

After you apply the urge surfing if-then plan, fill out the following chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What urge/craving did I have?</th>
<th>How did it feel in my body?</th>
<th>How strong was it before urge surfing (1-10)?</th>
<th>How strong was it during urge surfing (1-10)?</th>
<th>How strong was it after urge surfing (1-10)?</th>
<th>Did urge surfing stop me from eating?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session 6 – Mindful Eating

Often there are times when we do not notice what we are eating because we are too busy, too tired, or too preoccupied with other things, like our emotions (stress, irritation, anxiety, etc.). This is what we call “mindless eating”. The opposite of mindless eating is mindful eating. Mindful eating is being completely focused on each sensation that occurs while eating: chewing, tasting, swallowing, and savouring each bite. Mindful eating can help you become more aware of your hunger and fullness. It can also help you eat less food, reduce binge eating, and increase the pleasures associated with eating.

Your homework this week is to practice mindful eating. When you want to eat your treat, remember to use mindful eating by using the following if-then plan:

**IF** I want to eat my favourite treat (__________), **THEN** I will eat it mindfully.

*insert name of food*

Rehearse this if-then plan many times so that it becomes automatic!

Fill in the following chart to reflect on your experience with mindful eating:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What did I eat?</th>
<th>How did it smell?</th>
<th>How did it feel?</th>
<th>How did it taste?</th>
<th>How long did it take me to eat?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>xxxxxxxx</td>
<td>xxxxxxxx</td>
<td>xxxxxxxx</td>
<td>xxxxxxxx</td>
<td>xxxxxxxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reflect on your experience with mindful eating. How was it different from the way you normally eat? Did you enjoy your food more or less than usual?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Session 7 – Establishing Habits

All of the homework that has been given up to this point will be most effective if it is practiced routinely so that it becomes a habit. Decreasing emotional eating and improving weight goes beyond the program and the skills you learn here can be used indefinitely. There is no quick fix solution to weight loss, which makes it important to focus on applying skills consistently over the long term to manage emotional eating and weight going forward throughout your life.

Remember your if-then plans to practice:

1. BOLD (Breath, Observe, Listen, Decide)
2. Stopping playing tug-of-war with your emotions and dropping the rope
3. Urge surfing
4. Mindful eating

Which of these have worked best to help you not engage in emotional eating? Write them down here and we will review them in the next session:

IF I feel (________) and want to eat…

insert emotion

THEN

____________________________________________________________________________________

IF I feel (________) and want to eat…

insert emotion

THEN

____________________________________________________________________________________

IF I feel (________) and want to eat…

insert emotion

THEN

____________________________________________________________________________________

IF I feel (________) and want to eat…

insert emotion

THEN

____________________________________________________________________________________
Session 8 – Commitment to Weight Loss Values

Throughout this program you have learned skills to stay committed to your values of reducing emotional eating to help you lose weight. In order to stay true to your weight loss values, you can use the if-then plans that you have decided work best for you. Put this handout where you can see it, so that it acts as a constant reminder of your values to reduce your emotional eating and lose weight, e.g. on your refrigerator. When setbacks occur, refer back to these if-then plans to help motivate yourself to keep going in the right direction towards your values of losing weight and not eating when emotional.

IF ____________________________________________

THEN ________________________________________

IF ____________________________________________

THEN ________________________________________

IF ____________________________________________

THEN ________________________________________