

Can you work with Problematic Eaters?



**If you can do this, then you CAN
work with Problematic Eaters**

The biggest fear I hear from coaches is that they are just *not qualified to work with **problematic eaters***; They do not have the training, they are not sure how to help with the psychological side of food issues and they don't have a "target market" that fits this description.

If you are a health professional and you work with women who struggle with weight, body image issues, emotional or compulsive eating issues or women who simply can't stick to the food plan you have suggested, then you will **NEED** the tools to work with problematic eaters. We all know that it is only half of the story to prescribe, diagnose and suggest a personal food plan. Whether or not the individual can follow and stick to it is an entirely different matter.

In other words, you do not have to have a client base that is primarily emotional eaters nor do you have to work with those who have eating disorders to use this work.

The program I have designed is based on the cognitive behavioral approach which empowers women to transform their distorted black and white thinking and completely transform their relationship with food. It is not about simply putting an affirmation on the fridge and repeating a positive thought- this is internal work that shifts behaviors that have people have been stuck in most of their lives.

Have you ever had a client say,

“ I plan to stick to my healthy eating every morning but by the end of the day I have fallen off track”

OR

“ I just can’t keep the weigh off no matter what I do...as soon as I’m back on my own without accountability, I just fall back to my old ways..”

OR

“ If I eat one food that is not in the plan” I end up bingeing or really beating myself up for it..”

These are all thoughts that are based on the “diet” mentality and most women tend to fall back into this trap very easily.

*If you are able to identify and change the distorted thinking of your clients you will not only have success with your programs and client satisfaction, but you will **CHANGE LIVES RADICALLY.***

*Not only will your clients shift the patterns and behaviors that lead them to feeling like they have failed with food, they will also feel **HOPE** that anything is possible for them in the realm of food, health, shape, weight and body image!*



In this article I will share 3 tools from our 12 Week Program and 3 Categories that you will address with Problematic Eaters;

- 1. Identify Triggers**
- 2. Food Diary Tool**
- 3. Stress and Anxiety**

Problematic Eating is a term that describes any situation whereby a person is compromised due to an inability to eat in a way that does not cause stress physically, emotionally and/or mentally.

Usually this involves a concern that is above average with weight and shape, or an overall concern about how one looks.

A person with Problematic Eating will experience emotional, environmental, cognitive and/or interpersonal triggers that will lead them to act out in behaviours that are destructive around food.



Emotional eating, eating in response to feelings rather than hunger, is one factor that may exist. Eating compulsively, in a way that feels "out of control" may also be present, whereby a person is consuming food past the point of being full. Binge eating and restricting may or may not be present at various levels.

As a **Problematic Eater**, it is common for your client to feel like there is no "off" button. They may struggle with the ability to use food as its true purpose rather than a tool to mask what is really going on.

Those who do not suffer from Problematic Eating are able to use food as nourishment, and as a tool for self care. Eaters who eat "normally" are able to choose foods they want and they eat to live rather than live to eat.

Essentially, "normal eaters" do not have distorted thinking around food.



How to know if Problematic Eating might be **YOUR CLIENT**...

- ❖ They think "today is the day" they will start eating mindfully and in a healthy way.. but they can't get started or you sabotage before the day is done.
- ❖ They are often saying " tomorrow it will be different" but nothing seems to change
- ❖ They turn to food to deal with emotions
- ❖ They eat unconsciously and wish they hadn't once its over
- ❖ They have a very critical inner voice that judges for eating or not eating the "right" food
- ❖ They have an eating disorder- or not...
- ❖ They have tried every diet out there, and nothing works permanently
- ❖ They are sick and tired of being on the roller coaster- but are always on it
- ❖ They must loose weight and want to do it in a healthy way but can't.
- ❖ They think and/ or obsess about food a lot of the time
- ❖ They cannot seem to loose the weight they need to regardless of what " diet" they have tried
- ❖ They are always trying to loose weight but it never lasts

The following are steps you can take with your problematic eater:

Identify Food Triggers

Problematic eaters spend much of their lives trying to avoid "triggers" that might induce a compulsive eating episode, a "risky" choice, or a full out binge. The constant stress of a compulsive eater, around the uncertainty of how the day with food will look often feels defeating, paralyzing, and devastating.

Triggers that might exist are :

1. interpersonal (relationship triggers, for example a fight with spouse)
2. behavioral (a behavior habit such as eating food on car on the way home)
3. cognitive trigger (a black and white thought they are stuck on)
4. food trigger (a food that causes them to over eat)

Most Problematic Eaters are aware of their " **Food Triggers**", the ones that feel " dangerous" to them. These are foods that they simply cannot eat safely.



***HOW* do you have clients get rid of the TRIGGERS FOR GOOD?**

There are *steps and stages* to becoming conscious of the emotional, interpersonal and cognitive triggers that lie behind the food for each individual and a good reminder is that for any Problematic Eater- this is a PROCESS and doesn't happen over night. But it DOES happen.

The most important step on this journey to heal from Problematic Eating FOR GOOD is the FOOD DIARY!



Most Problematic Eaters have experimented with a "Food Diary" that is focused on...the FOOD ! Its been about counting calories, putting checks for good days, punishing themselves for the bad, restricting and white knuckling it through the day...

That is NOT what we are talking about here !

The types and amounts of food are really not important here.. what IS important is what was going on at the time of the eating episode...in other words, what feelings were present, behaviours and interpersonal events. Rather than focusing on calorie counting or dieting the focus is on eliminating dieting and normalizing eating so that daily eating routine begins to look like a more regular pattern of three meals and two snacks per day. The food diary breaks the "highway hypnosis" . This is the unconscious behaviour that happens with food and food patterns. Just as its easy to be in a trance and "wake up" after a short driving stint, missing all the small details along the way..its easy to be in a food trance- and not " wake up " until after a binge.

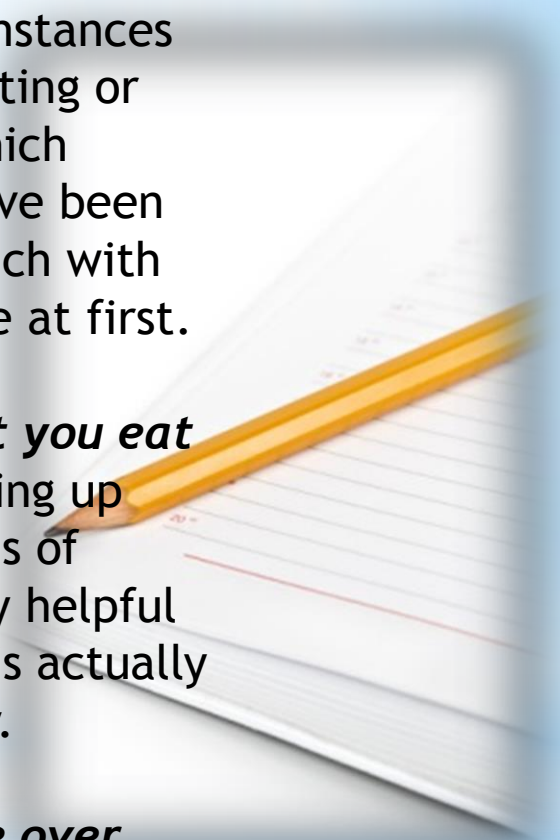
FOOD DIARY

The first column looks at the *time you ate*.

The second column is to help you make sense of the circumstances that lead to overeating or that protect you from either dieting or over eating. We look here at your *physical sensations*, which include whether you feel hungry or full, although if you have been dieting or overeating for some time, you may have lost touch with these bodily sensations, so it may not be easy to determine at first.

In the third column , you write down *very generally, what you eat and drink. And roughly how much*. Don't worry about adding up calories just simply write how much you are eating in terms of amounts as accurately as possible. This column will be very helpful later, when you are discerning whether you're over eating is actually related to not giving your body enough food during the day.

In the fourth column you discern *whether or not you have over eaten*. It is easy to think we have or haven't overeat because of the types of food we eat or our feelings at that time. This helps us to be more in touch with our bodies needs.



The fifth column asks you to consider ***how you are feeling and what your thoughts are when you are eating***. What mindsets influence your eating? Are you anxious, depressed, or in an angry state?

In this column focus on what TRIGGERS might be present (interpersonal, emotional and/or environmental)

EX) Ate a box of cookies- felt anxious, upset , angry.... trigger : argument with husband.

The outline may look like this:

- Time :
- Physical Sensations :
- What food/ How Much:
- Have I overeaten ?
- Feelings/ Thoughts/ Triggers

The FOOD DIARY is the FIRST STEP to begin to get conscious of the REAL triggers and how they are affecting your client !

From there you can begin the process of having your clients develop awareness around what is really "eating them" .



Stress and Anxiety

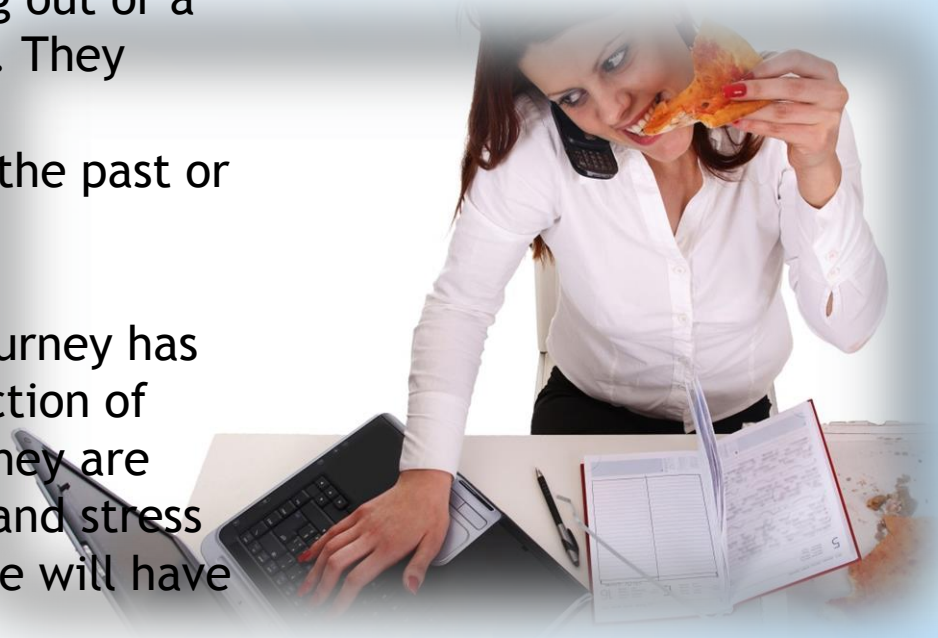
If you have the appropriate tools to guide your clients in dealing with stress and anxiety, you will have success in having them combat the problematic eating!



Stress and anxiety are optional and are huge signals that it is time to question their **thoughts**, and get back into the ***present moment***. Somewhere behind the stress there is a thought with a "*should*" playing out or a very "*black and white*" conclusion. They might be caught up in care taking the universe or completely lost in the past or future.

They **MUST** understand that the journey has been an *inside job*. A simple dissection of what thoughts, ideas and beliefs they are 'stuck' on that create the anxiety and stress and negative **EMOTIONS** in their life will have them free!

When they are in the present moment the stress and anxiety completely subside. To get back to the present moment and let go of the stressful thought, the following is **ONE** example of how they can do just that.



For example :

negative thought: " If I eat one cookie I will binge"

affirmation : If I learn how to change my black and white thinking I can change this black and white behavior.

negative thought: But I have always done this, it will never change

affirmation: I haven't questioned my thinking as I am now- I have CHOICE now, therefore this can look very different this year !

....continue to write every negative thought that surfaces, follow it with an affirmation and refute until you feel CLEAR..

Write the affirmation ten times to complete this thought cleanse !





These are some concrete tools you can use with clients who struggle from problematic eating. In my 12 week program I offer a step by step guide with an in depth review of how to turn distorted thought around, combat stress and anxiety, and get conscious with food for good. I also offer 6 recorded calls with instruction on how to use this material. If you are wanting to dig deeper, this program is for you.

You will ALL come across this with your clients. We are doing a dis-service by *only* focusing on food. I look forward to hearing your success in transforming lives and healing destructive relationships with food for good!

Meet Shelley... Not Your Average Eating Disorder Therapist!

I work in the world today as an author, yogi, health counselor, problematic eating disorder therapist, educator and business mentor. I feel incredibly blessed to do the work I am meant to be doing on this short time on the planet. It's been a road of self discovery and a desire to transform that has me here today.

Let me explain...

My healing journey began several years ago when I was ready to CHANGE MY THINKING and to choose not to remain a prisoner of the destructive eating patterns I had caused due to my unhealthy thinking patterns. I had become imprisoned in my own body and this war spilled outwards as disordered eating, alcohol abuse, and depression. It was affecting every area of my life. Learning that I had the power to change my thoughts and therefore my life, allowed me to go on an incredible journey of illumination and self discovery.

Today I have absolute peace in my relationship with myself and others, and a deep acceptance and love for the beautiful being that I am.

I am passionate about collaborating with women who are READY TO CHANGE THEIR THINKING and TRANSFORM themselves. I am passionate about empowering women to take CONTROL of their THINKING and to take CONTROL of their own lives so they can create emotional, physical and spiritual health.

Visit Shelley's Website at www.emergingjewel.com and join her on Facebook and Twitter.

