

What is Mindful Eating, and What is it not? Points of Confusion

Our key messages this year for Mindful Eating Day 2018 are ‘Compassionate self-care is essential’ and “Mindful Eating because consistent self-care promotes health and wellbeing”

With these this Mindful Eating Day messages we want to affirm what Mindful Eating is and what it is not. You may have seen how sometimes mindful eating gets co-opted by the diet industry, promoting that it is a tool that can be used to manage our bodies and weight.

Mindful Eating Day (and month!) is an opportunity to spread a different message, that of self-care and self-compassion.

Here are some of the points where the message sometimes gets confused:

- Mindful Eating is NOT A DIET
- It is not a tool or approach to control our bodies or appearance
- When we eat mindfully we don't judge or moralize food nor do we do so when it comes to ourselves based on our food choices
- Mindful Eating does not promote a "right or wrong" way to eat
- Mindful Eating does not advocate for specific foods - ie: lower calorie, lower fat, higher protein, higher, fiber etc.
- Mindful Eating does not advocate for a specific pattern/style of eating – “clean eating”, vegetarian, keto, organic etc.
- When Mindful Eating discusses portions of foods, is it done by advocating present moment awareness, and checking in with a person's current experience, and desires and physical states of hunger/fullness.

Mindful Eating is:

- An opportunity to connect with present moment awareness -- pause, check-in, notice, evaluate, rate.
- Autonomy for any food, regardless of what type of food that is.
- Choice and flexibility -- before, during and after a food choice is made.
- Promoting and acknowledging that all eating experiences are unique to the individual, situation, moment.
- Self-care
- Self-kindness
- Non-judgment surrounding food and eating choices.
- Using the qualities of Mindfulness such as compassion and kindness using Mindful Eating mean we do NOT pathologize, stigmatize or shame individuals in larger bodies nor do we pathologize, promote, idealize, shame or compare individuals in smaller bodies.
- Mindful Eating promotes size acceptance.
- With Mindful Eating we have an opportunity recognize and celebrate the natural diversity of bodies and the importance that they are all worthy of compassionate self-care.

Learn more about the views of The Center for Mindful Eating on weight and healthy eating:

Principles of Mindful Eating: <https://www.thecenterformindfuleating.org/Principles-Mindful-Eating>

Weight Concerns Statement: <https://www.thecenterformindfuleating.org/Weight-concerns>

Healthy Eating Statement: <https://www.thecenterformindfuleating.org/Healthy-Eating>

With Mindful Eating, we have an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the natural diversity of bodies and the conviction that they are all worthy of compassionate self-care.