



CENTER FOR CHANGE
Specialized Treatment for Eating Disorders
www.centerforchange.com

Moving From Fear to Freedom: Nutrition Interventions in the Treatment of Eating Disorders

REBEKAH COOK, RD CD, CEDS-C

1

Objectives

1. Participants will be able to describe how to initiate nutrition interventions, how to implement the intervention, assist with mood regulation, and process the intervention with the client.
2. Participants will be able to explain one nutrition intervention used with clients restricting their food intake and how to help clients decrease anxiety and resistance during the intervention.
3. Participants will be able to describe one nutrition intervention that can be used with someone who has difficulty with stopping eating and how to process the experience.

2

Nutrition Interventions are Fear Based and Not Nutrition Based

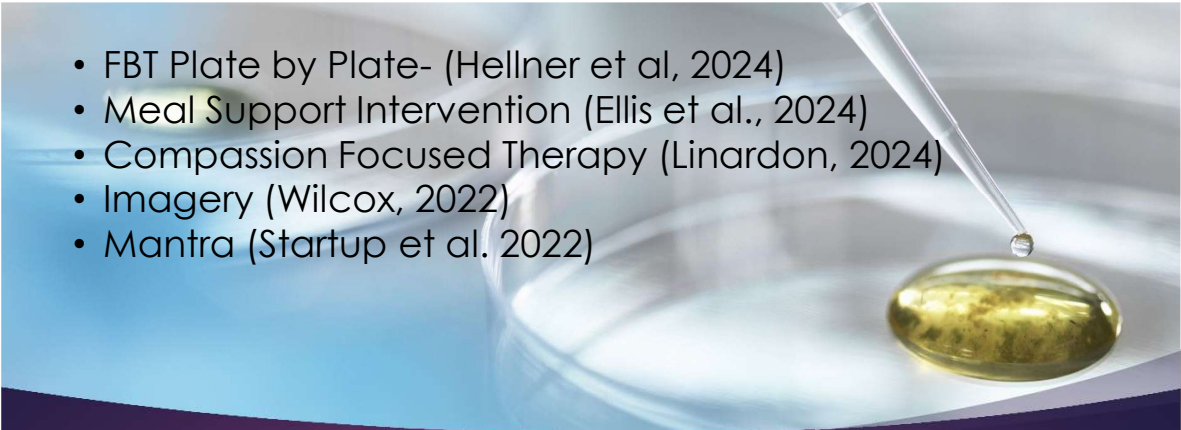
- ▶ Dietitians Historically Do Interventions
- ▶ Dietitians are skilled at educating patients with medical concerns who require special diets, tube feeding patients, community education, and managing food service institutions.
- ▶ A dietitian's degree is a pre-med degree with additional chemistry, management, and nutrition coursework.
- ▶ Dietitians are not trained on how to work with fear, anxiety, or other mental health conditions.
- ▶ Dietitians are not trained on how to work with fear, anxiety, or other mental health conditions.
- ▶ A therapist who can help clients treat fear and anxiety is just as qualified to do food interventions with patients with eating disorders since the problem is not nutritionally based. It is fear-based.

3

Why do nutrition interventions?

- ACTIVE INTERVENTION
- ALLOWS CLINICIANS TO HELP CLIENTS WORK THROUGH FEAR WHILE BEING IN A DISTRESSING SITUATION
- PROVIDES CLIENTS WITH SUPPORT IN CHALLENGING FOOD SITUATIONS
- HELPS CLIENTS GAIN CONFIDENCE THAT THEY CAN HAVE DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES WITH FOOD

4

- 
- FBT Plate by Plate- (Hellner et al, 2024)
 - Meal Support Intervention (Ellis et al., 2024)
 - Compassion Focused Therapy (Linardon, 2024)
 - Imagery (Wilcox, 2022)
 - Mantra (Startup et al. 2022)

Research on Nutrition Interventions?

5

Allowing Self to Live and Take Up Resources

- ▶ Covert Behavior Rehearsal
 - ▶ Using imagery to create a different imagined outcome.
- ▶ Plate for Someone You Love
 - ▶ Self-Worth
- ▶ Visual Item Being a Statement
 - ▶ "It's okay for me to eat!"
- ▶ Planned Permission to Eat
 - ▶ "It is okay for me to eat."

6

Allowing Imperfection and Relax Control

- ▶ Eat at Times Not Planned
 - ▶ Breaking Rules and Challenging Perfection
- ▶ Challenge the Unknown- Unplanned Items
 - ▶ Relaxing Control

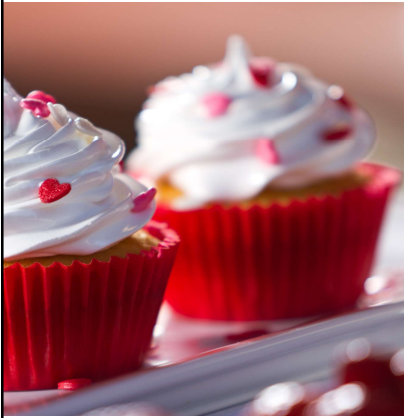
7

Allowing Discomfort

- ▶ Food/Texture Exposure
 - ▶ The Unknown and Unfamiliar
- ▶ Physical Discomfort
 - ▶ Fullness- "This too shall pass."

8

Experiencing Pleasure



- ▶ Eat Food the Way it Tastes Best
 - ▶ Honoring Preferences
 - ▶ Experience Pleasure
- ▶ Blindfold Eating
 - ▶ Experiencing How Senses Impact Eating

9

Permission to Feel Comfortable



- ▶ Practice Saying No
 - ▶ Practice Disappointing Others
- ▶ Therapeutic Food Day
 - ▶ Decreasing the Novelty
- ▶ Abundance Eating
 - ▶ Wasting

10

Permission to Take Care of Themselves

- ▶ Challenging Situations
 - ▶ Dealing with Anxiety
- ▶ Solo with Food
 - ▶ Can I Trust Myself if I am By Myself?

11

Listening to and Honoring Somatic Cues- Part 1

- ▶ Double-take
 - ▶ Paying Attention to Attention
- ▶ Challenges and Extras
 - ▶ Recognizing and Honoring Wants and Somatic Cues

12

Listening to and Honoring Somatic Cues- Part 2

- ▶ Hunger and Fullness Monitoring
 - ▶ Recognizing Somatic Cues
- ▶ Mirrored Eating
 - ▶ Using Somatic Cues to Guide a Client
- ▶ Only Eat- Screens
 - ▶ How overloading the sensations creates a numbing experience.

13

Not Making Amends



- ▶ How do we allow ourselves to make mistakes and keep moving forward?
 - ▶ Purging- Clean the Slate
 - ▶ Exercise
 - ▶ Laxatives

14

Support In the Trenches



- ▶ Preparation and Process
- ▶ Permission to Eat
- ▶ Permission to Not Eat
- ▶ Not Make Amends

15

Thank you for attending!

Rebekah Cook, RD, CD, CEDS-C
Rebekah.cook@uhsinc.com



16

REFERENCES

Aouad, P., Ahmed, M. U., Nassar, N., Miskovic-Wheatley, J., Touyz, S., Maguire, S., & Cunich, M. (2023). Appraisal of the costs, health effects, and cost-effectiveness of screening, prevention, treatment and policy-indicated evidence-based interventions for eating disorders: a systematic review protocol. *Journal of Eating Disorders*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40337-023-00802-2>

Breiner S. (2003). Evidence-based practice in action. An evidence-based eating disorder program. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*, 18(1), 75–80.

Chakraborty, K., & Basu, D. (2010). Management of anorexia and bulimia nervosa: An evidence-based review. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 52(2), 174.
https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A230841988/AONE?u=nu_main&sid=bookmark_AONE&xid=e4c711ea

Ellis, A., Gillespie, K., McCosker, L., Hudson, C., Diamond, G., Machingura, T., Branjerdporn, G., & Woerwag-Mehta, S. (2024). Meal support intervention for eating disorders: a mixed-methods systematic review. *Journal of Eating Disorders*, 12(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40337-024-01002-2>

17

Friedlich, C. E., Covarrubias, A., Park, H., & Murray, S. B. (2023). Updates in the treatment of Eating Disorders in 2022: a year in review in Eating Disorders: The Journal of Treatment & Prevention. *Eating Disorders*, 31(2), 128–138. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10640266.2023.2179774>

Hellner, M., Steinberg, D., Baker, J., Cai, K., & Freestone, D. (2024). Dietary interventions in family-based treatment for eating disorders: Results of a randomized comparative effectiveness study. *Eating Disorders: The Journal of Treatment & Prevention*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10640266.2024.2336278>

Linardon, J. (2024). A call to action for more rigorous research on compassion-focused interventions for eating disorders: Commentary on paranjothy and wade (2024). *International Journal of Eating Disorders*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/eat.24214>

18



Onyishi, C. (2023). Evaluation of Psychological and Nutritional Interventions for Eating Disorders in Nigeria: A Scoping Review. *International Journal of Home Economics, Hospitality and Allied Research*, 2(1), 72–87. <https://doi.org/10.57012/ijhhr.v2n1.006>

Startup, H., Franklin-Smith, M., Barber, W., Gilbert, N., Brown, Y., Glennon, D., Fukutomi, A., & Schmidt, U. (2021). The Maudsley Anorexia Nervosa Treatment for Adults (MANTRA): a feasibility case series of an integrated group based approach. *Journal of Eating Disorders*, 9(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40337-021-00424-6>

Navas-León, S., Tajadura-Jiménez, A., Motrico, E., Morales, L., Borda-Mas, M., Almeda, N., & Sánchez-Martín, M. (2024). Understanding and treating body image disturbances in eating disorders through body illusion interventions: a scoping review protocol. *Systematic Reviews*, 13(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13643-024-02458-8>

Willcox, A. (2022). *Mental imagery interventions in eating disorders and imagery processing in obsessive-compulsive disorders : a systematic review and quantitative study exploring the role of mental imagery.*