

## **Mindfulness based emotional eating awareness training: taking the emotional out of eating.**

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Background & Objectives: Emotional eating is important to study and address because it predicts poor outcome in weight loss interventions. Interventions have only touched the surface in terms of addressing emotional eating. Mindfulness approaches can address emotional eating by modification of emotion regulation and appetitive traits. The current study involved development of an emotional eating specific mindfulness intervention (Mbeeat) and assessment of its effect on appetitive traits associated with emotional eating. Methods: Participants ( $n = 14$ ; Age  $M = 29$ yr; 90% female) completed baseline and end-of intervention self-report measures of emotional eating, food-cue reactivity, mindfulness, intuitive eating, emotional impulse regulation, stress, and a behavioural measure of inhibitory control. The Mbeeat intervention taught mindfulness meditation skills on a weekly-basis embedded in a psycho-educational curriculum about emotional eating. Results: Paired t-tests controlled for type 1 error revealed significant improvements in food-cue reactivity, intuitive eating, emotional impulse regulation, inhibitory control and stress ( $p < .05$ ;  $d: .58$  to  $1.54$ ). Changes in emotional eating approached significance ( $p = .075$ ,  $d = .66$ ). Discussion & Conclusion: The intervention purposefully did not focus on weight loss and recruited participants who had self-declared difficulties with emotional eating. The positive outcomes suggest that intervening with mindfulness training before weight loss is attempted has the potential to change psychological factors that underpin overeating and undermine weight loss efforts. The study provides proof of principle as a basis to design a randomized control trial to rigorously assess the effectiveness the Mbeeat approach as a precursor to a weight loss intervention.