The Power of Mindset in Weight Management

Presented by
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The Power of Our Light

OAC
Obesity Action Coalition

Why Your Mindset Matters

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What is Mindset?

Your *mindset* refers to how you think.

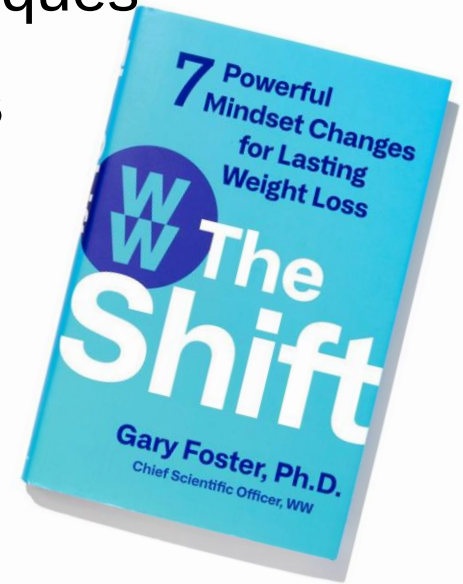
- **Awareness:** Noticing your patterns of thoughts, feelings and actions with curiosity.
- **How you think about the journey:** Thinking realistically, flexibly and with the big picture in mind.
- **How you think about yourself:** Accepting yourself for how you are now.

The way you think impacts what you do

Our thoughts are one of the factors that impacts behavior. A helpful mindset is the foundation for developing healthy behaviors that become healthy habits.

The Shift

- Why: Mindset Matters
- What it is: Science-based Techniques
- What it’s not: Diets or meal plans



Focus for Today

Three shifts we'll review:

- Embrace Self-Compassion
- Value Your Body
- Build Helpful Thinking Styles

/Embrace Self-Compassion

Myths about Self-Compassion

/Belief: Self-compassion is too self-indulgent or selfish.

Reality: We are better able to be compassionate toward and care for others when we are compassionate toward ourselves.

/Belief: I need to be tough on myself to stay motivated.

Reality: Self-criticism provides only momentary “motivation”, and soon thereafter brings feelings of disappointment and diminished self-worth which decrease motivation.

While **self-criticism** may lead to a temporary improvement in our motivation, it doesn't last, and can lead to more anxiety, less confidence, and less motivation.

Approaching your difficulties with **self-compassion** actually increases the motivation to get up and try again because you care about yourself and want to see yourself be happy.

Neff KD & Dahm KA. Mindfulness and Self-Regulation. New York: Springer 2014

Benefits of Self-Compassion

Studies show that when you treat yourself with kindness:

1. You're more likely to take care of your health, even when you're ill or stressed.
2. Your relationships with others can improve.
3. You're less afraid of failure.
4. You have a more positive outlook.
5. You have a better sense of wellbeing.
6. You're better able to maintain your weight loss.

Sirios FM et al. Self and Identity 2015; Mantzios M & Wilson JC. Mindfulness 2014 Neff KD & Dahm, KA Mindfulness and Self-Regulation. New York;Springer 2014; Neff KD et al. Journal of Research in Personality 2007; Leary MR et al. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 2007.

3 Components of Self-Compassion

1. **Self-kindness:** being kind to yourself, when things are going well and especially when things aren't going the way you would like.

2. **Common humanity:** recognizing that stumbling, experiencing setbacks, or not achieving your goal the first time you try, is part of being human. It is not only you, it happens to everyone.

3. **Mindfulness:** accepting your experiences for what they are, what is happening right now, without judgement.

Neff KD, Germer CK. Journal of Clinical Psychology 2013.

How would you treat a friend?

The next time you're struggling, picture how you'd treat a friend in the same situation, and treat yourself the same way.

Imagine a close friend feels bad about themselves, or is having a tough time	Write down what you'd do and say to them, including your tone of voice.
Think about when you feel bad about yourself.	Write down what you typically do and say, including your tone of voice.
Is there a difference?	If so, why? What factors or fears might lead you to treat yourself and others differently? Jot them down.
Write down what might change if you treat yourself as a friend.	Next time you're feeling bad, treat yourself like a friend and see what happens!

/Valuing Your Body

defining body image

Body image: How we perceive our bodies & our personal relationship with them

It’s influenced by our personal experiences, culture, sociocultural standards, and self-talk

Cash, T.F., The Body Image Workbook 2nd ed: An eight step program for learning to like your looks. 2008.

Consequences of Weight Stigma
Shame ≠ Weight loss

- Increased food intake
- Binge eating
- Weight gain/loss
- Development of obesity
- Stress
- Decreased quality of life
- Mental health challenges

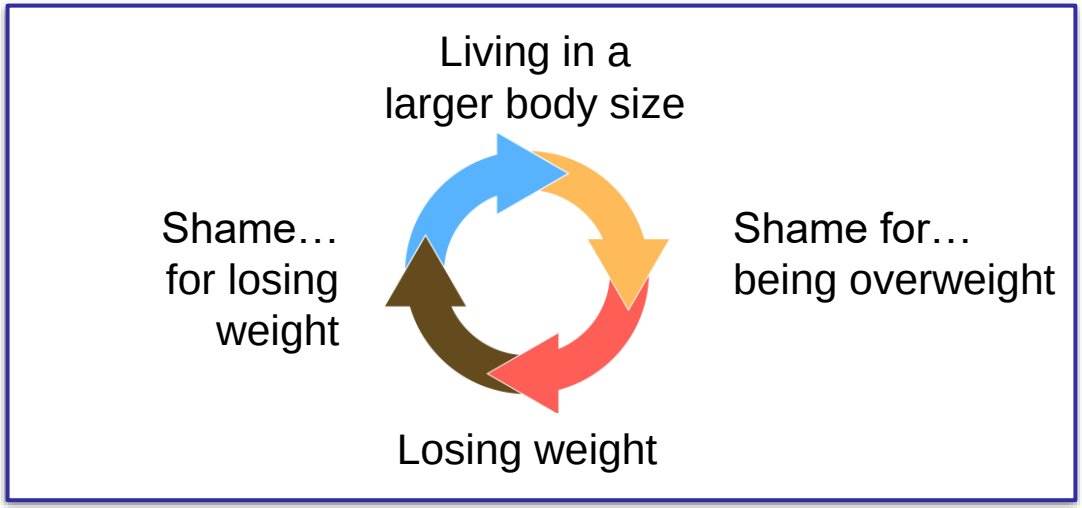
Puhl R, Suh Y. Health consequences of weight stigma: implications for obesity prevention and treatment. *Curr Obes Rep.* 2015;4(2):182-90.

Internalized stigma is harmful to wellbeing, quality of life and a weight loss journey.

It results in: Increased food intake & stress, decreased activity levels, greater risk of weight gain and poorer weight loss outcomes & lower quality of life.

Puhl RM, Lessard LM, Himmelstein MS, Foster GD. The roles of experienced and internalized weight stigma in healthcare experiences: Perspectives of adults engaged in weight management across six countries. PloS One. 2021 1;16(6):e0251566.

The cycle of shame



“I’m not shocked or even fazed by it, because my body has been objectified my **entire career,**" Adele said. "I'm either **too big** or I'm either **too small**. I’m either **hot** or I’m either **not**, whatever.” - Self Magazine, November 2021

Loving your body and wanting to lose weight to become healthier **are not mutually exclusive.**

And the data support this.

Research shows that people with a more positive body image, regardless of their size/shape, tend to lose more weight than those with a less positive body image.

Teixeira PT, et al. Successful behavior change in obesity interventions in adults: a systematic review of self-regulation mediators. *BMC Medicine*. 2015;13: 84.

Behavior Change Technique: Focus on what your body can do

Focus on What Your Body Does - Technique Spotlight

Behavior Change Technique: Reflect on non-scale victories

List 3 things* that have changed in the past month

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

*Not the number on the scale!

Struggling to fill the lines? Ask yourself, "If the scale didn't exist, how would I measure success?" Consider...

- Healthy habits, like starting a wake-and-walk routine
- "Yes!" moments—maybe you aren't so wiped after work or your clothes fit better.
- Changes to your health
- New-to-you experiences; trying a Zumba class or learning to cook—both count.

Reflect on Non-scale Victories - Technique Spotlight

/Build Helpful Thinking Styles

Think. Feel. Do.

Something happens:

Think. Automatic thoughts, filters, judgements

Feel. How you feel

Do. What you do

Example

You worked hard this week to meet your goals. You step on the scale and your weight has not changed since last week.

Think.

"*What's the use?"*
"All of this hard work is pointless, nothing is changing."

Feel.

Frustrated, angry, and hopeless

Do.

You stop tracking your behaviors, and disengage.

Common Unhelpful Thinking Styles

Style: All-or-none thinking

- Things are black and white, good or bad. You have to be perfect or you are a failure. There is no middle ground.

"I forgot to buy something at the store, that whole trip was a waste"

"I ate a doughnut, that's it. Game over"

"There's a drop of red wine on my carpet, the whole carpet is ruined"

Burns DD. Feeling good: the new mood therapy. 1980.New York: New American Library

Common Unhelpful Thinking Styles

Style: Overgeneralizing

- A single event is a never-ending pattern. If something bad happens once you expect it to happen over and over again. You use words like “always” and “never”

“I went on a date and s/he didn’t call for a second date. I’m never going to find love”

“I have gained 2 pounds back. I have learned nothing, and am right back to my old habits”

“It rained today and I was supposed to walk outside. It’s always bad weather when I want to be outside”

Burns DD. Feeling good: the new mood therapy. 1980.New York: New American Library

Common Unhelpful Thinking Styles

Style: Seeing things through a negative lens

- You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it so it colors the rest of the experiencing, darkening all of the positives, “like a drop of ink that discolors a beaker of water”

“Yes I was able to buy a house in a great neighborhood for a good price, but it has such ugly carpeting”

“I stuck to my goals only 5 out of 7 days this week”

“Even though I got mostly high scores on my evaluation, that one low score must mean I’m not doing a very good job”

Burns DD. Feeling good: the new mood therapy. 1980.New York: New American Library

Common Unhelpful Thinking Styles

Style: Don’t worry, be happy

- Overly optimistic that things will get better, without any plan on how to make things better.

“*I was a bit late for work again today. Tomorrow I will be on time”*- without planning to get up earlier or leave for work earlier

“*I didn’t get as much done as I wanted to today, but I’ll do better tomorrow”*- without making a to-do list or schedule

“I ate more than I planned. That’s okay, tomorrow I’ll do better.”- without meal planning

Burns DD. Feeling good: the new mood therapy. 1980.New York: New American Library

Changing the way you think

1) Identify the thought

2) Reality check

3) Think again

Step 1: Identify the thought

Event: You worked hard all week but the scale didn't budge

1. **Identify the Thought.**
    a. *"All of this hard work is pointless, nothing is changing."*

1. Reality check.

1. Think again.

Step 2: Reality Check

- **“Facts”:** think about this as if you were a lawyer, and ask the hard, objective questions. What is the evidence that this thought is true? What is the evidence that this thought might not be true (or not completely true)? Is there another explanation or another way of viewing this?

- **“Friends”:** think about what you would tell someone close to you, a friend or family member, if they had the same thing happen to them

Step 2: Reality Check

Event: You worked hard all week but the scale didn't budge

1. Identify the Thought.
    a. *"All of this hard work is pointless, nothing is changing."*

1. Reality check.

Facts: Is nothing changing? No- I have more energy, I'm loving my physical activity class, and I'm sleeping better.

Friends: I know you are disappointed that you worked so hard and the scale didn't change, but it's just one measure. You are changing in so many great ways! You are cooking up a storm, seem happier, and look great in your clothes.

1. Think again.

Step 3: Think Again

Event: You worked hard all week but the scale didn't budge

1. Identify the Thought.
   a. *"All of this hard work is pointless, nothing is changing."*

1. Reality check.

   Facts: Is nothing changing? No- I have more energy, I'm loving my physical activity class, and I'm sleeping better.

   Friends: I know you are disappointed that you worked so hard and the scale didn't change, but it's just one measure. You are changing in so many great ways! You are cooking up a storm, seem happier, and look great in your clothes.

1. **Think again.**
   "I am disappointed. I have worked hard all week and the scale doesn't show it. But the scale is just one measure, I feel better in my clothes, am happy, and slept great all week, so I know what I am doing is worth it."

Summary

- Mindset Matters
  - Embrace Self Compassion
  - Value your Body
  - Build Helpful Thinking Styles
- ***Self-compassion beats self criticism; every single time.***

WeightWatchers

thank you