Your Goal: Track Your Feelings

- Keep an ABC food and mood diary for a few days. Start by drawing a chart with three columns, similar to the sample diary in this handout. Fill in the ABCs:
  - **A** is for Antecedents—the trigger situations or emotions that come before eating.
  - **B** is for the Behavior of eating—what you ate and how much.
  - **C** is for Consequences—the feelings and attitudes that occur after eating.

- Bring your completed diary to future appointments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedents</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Got yelled at by boss; felt stressed.</td>
<td>Grabbed candy and soda from vending machine.</td>
<td>Felt better at first, but left work still feeling stressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home alone Saturday night; felt lonely.</td>
<td>Ate 1/2 bag of cookies and 1/2 bag of chips.</td>
<td>Food improved my mood initially, but then I felt guilty.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your Goal: Know Your Triggers

- Identify the emotions that you've typically been soothing with food, such as:
  - Anxiety
  - Loneliness
  - Stress
  - Sadness

- Ask yourself:
  - “How much of my eating is emotionally related?” (You can measure in percentages or count the number of eating occasions per week.)
  - “What triggers can I identify from my diary?”

- Write down your trigger situations and emotions:
✓ Your Goal: De-stress

- Explore stress management techniques, such as:
  - Progressive muscle relaxation
  - Deep breathing exercises
  - Meditation
  - Visualization
  - Yoga
  - Tai chi
  - Massage
  - Stretching
  - Exercise
  - Humor
- You can learn these techniques by finding a class in your community or buying a book, video, DVD, or audio CD.
- Pay attention to your stress level before and after you try these techniques; think about how different activities can lower your stress level.
- Other ways to reduce stress include:
  - Seeking out friends who make you laugh or seeing funny movies
  - Working with a qualified therapist who understands stress and eating issues
- Write down the stress management techniques that interest you:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When Feeling Lonely:</th>
<th>When Feeling Stress at Work:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call a friend.</td>
<td>Take slow, deep breaths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log onto an Internet chat group.</td>
<td>Talk it out with someone you trust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write a letter to someone.</td>
<td>Take a walk outside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit the health club.</td>
<td>Put thoughts in a journal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

✓ Your Goal: Cope Without Food

- Practice “mood surfing” as a way to keep your moods from getting worse. In other words, try to “ride out” your emotion or the desire to eat just as a surfer would ride out a wave. Instead of giving in to your desire to eat, observe and feel the emotion. Chances are the emotion or trigger to eat will slowly diminish.
- Develop an emotional eating action plan. Write your plan on an index card and carry it with you so you can refer to it when needed (see sample plan).
- Know that exercise is an effective way to boost your mood.