

What is Food Addiction?

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SAISD Faculty/Staff Presentation Series
February 24, 2020

Today participants will learn:

- What is Food Addiction?
- What does it have in common with other addictions, such as alcohol and drug addiction?
- Is Food Addiction different from other Eating Disorders?
- Current strategies and practices that can help someone struggling with Food Addiction.

Food Addiction vs. Eating Disorders

*The symptoms closely resemble other **Substance Use Disorders.***



Includes: Binge Eating Disorder, Bulimia, and Anorexia.

*The symptoms are considered **Mental Health Disorders.***

****Characterized by an obsession or overvaluation of one's body weight and shape.*

Yale Food Addiction Scale (YFAS):

- Questionnaire developed in 2009 by Yale University's Center for Food Policy and Obesity to assess food addiction in individuals.
- They based this questionnaire on the same criteria that practitioners use to diagnose **Substance Use Disorders**.

Compulsive Overeating Scale:

- Overeaters Anonymous website
- 15 questions; some examples:
 - *Do I eat when I'm not hungry?*
 - *Do I go on eating binges, sometimes eating until I'm stuffed or sick?*
 - *Guilt, shame, or embarrassment about way I eat or my weight?*
 - *Is my eating affect my health or the way I live?*
 - *Have I ever eaten food that is frozen, burned, spoiled, out of the garbage?*
 - *Eating reasonably in front of others, but hiding/bingeing alone later?*
 - *Etc.*

Fat, Salt, & Sugar – Addictive Substances

These food ingredients have the ability to “hijack” the brain’s reward circuit

- Stimulates same reward pathways in brain as psychoactive substances.
- Alters structure and function of the brain, driving continued/compulsive use despite adverse consequences.
- Discomfort during withdrawal of the substance (when cut back or eliminated); cravings/urges to use again and again.

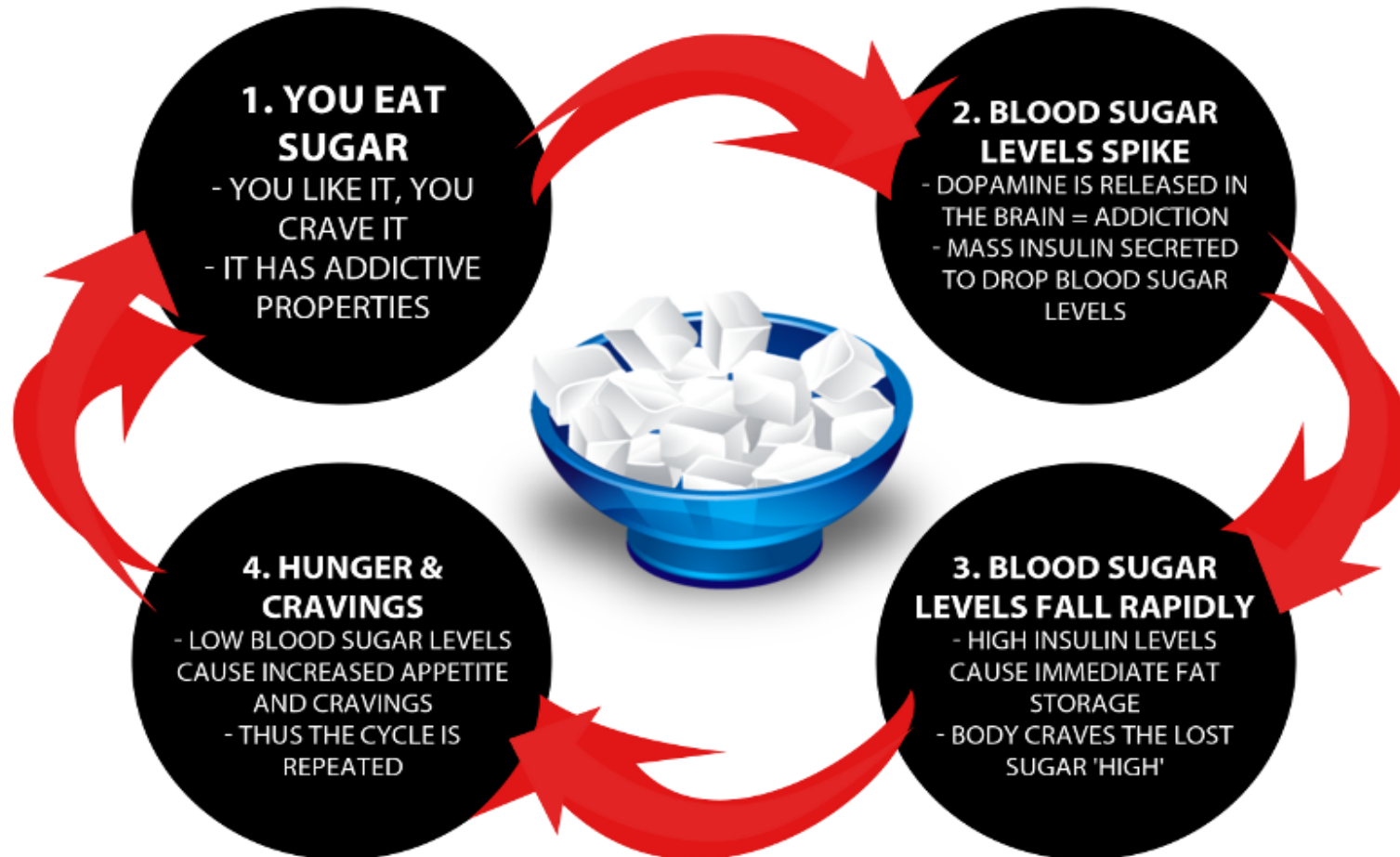


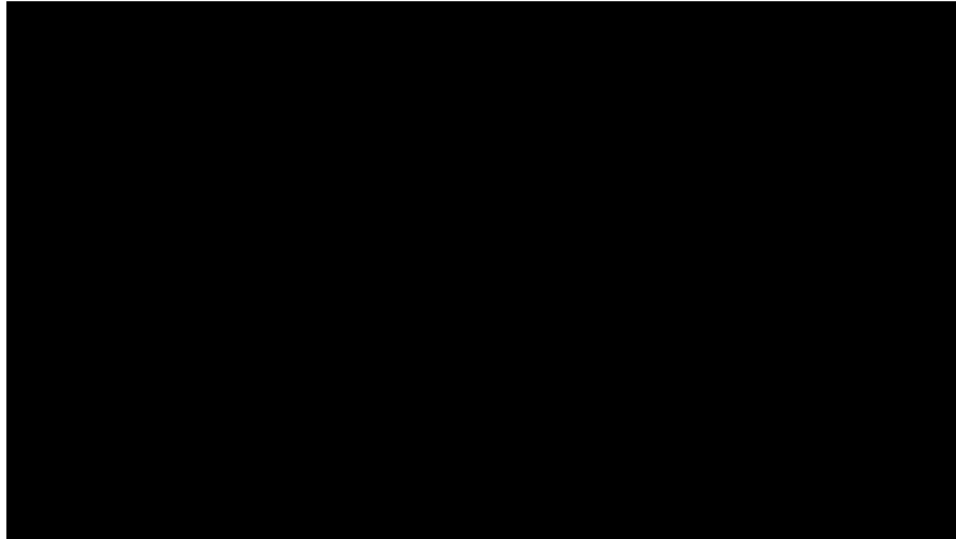
Sugar Withdrawal – It's Really a Thing

Rats who had been allowed repeated and excessive consumption of sugar have demonstrated withdrawal symptoms during abstinence that mimic the behavioral and neurochemical symptoms of opioid withdrawal.



SUGAR ADDICTION: THE PERPETUAL CYCLE





Society's Contribution to Food Addiction:



Our culture promotes a wide variety of low-priced, heavily promoted, hyper-palatable (tastes pleasurable), and energy-dense foods that are offered in large portion sizes.



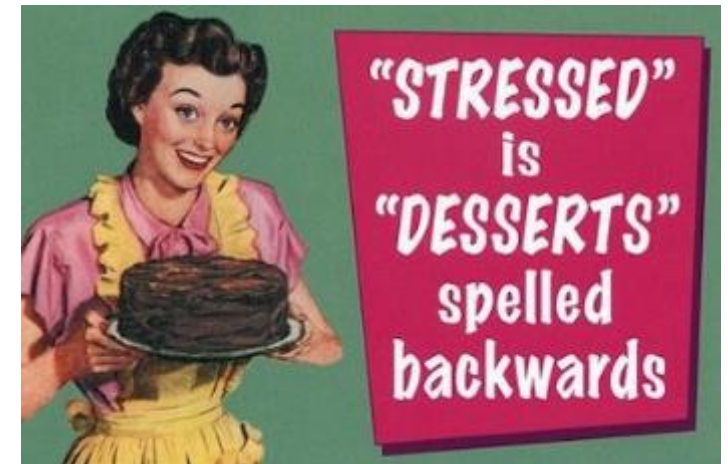
Consult with doctor:

- ***Genetic*** – genes that affect hormones related to hunger, satiety, and energy control; differences in taste preferences.
- ***Hormone issues.***
- ***Affects on the brain*** – tumors, brain cancer, brain injuries, dementia, etc.
- ***Medications*** – commonly cause weight gain as side effect.
- ***Other health conditions that cause weight gain.***



Emotional Risk Factors:

- Impulsivity, novelty seeking, lack of perseverance or persistence, preference for smaller immediate rewards over larger delayed rewards.
- Eating to alleviate bad feelings. Higher levels of depression, negative mood and emotional dysregulation, and lower self-esteem.
- Comorbidity with other psychiatric disorders that affect emotions (Personality Disorder, PTSD, OCD, etc.)
- High stress levels and/or lacking in coping skills to reduce stress (other than using food).

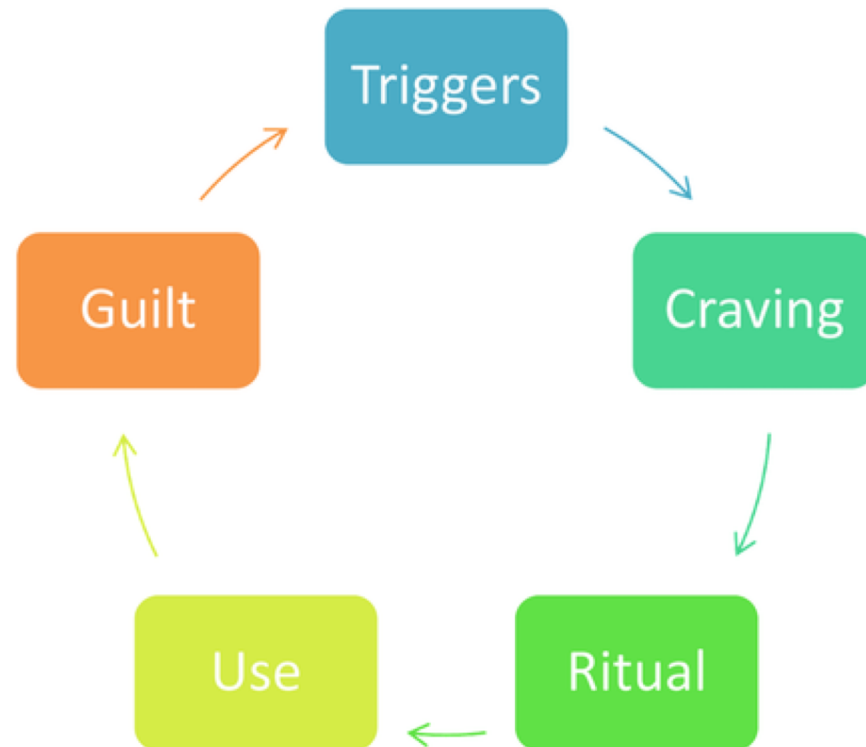


Other Risk Factors:

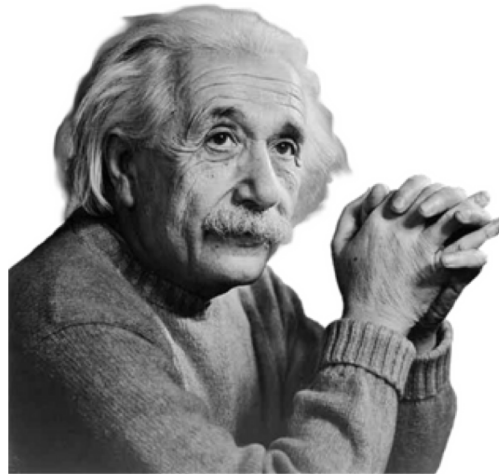
- History of physical or sexual abuse.
- Children raised in homes with more conflict and neglect.
- Erratic or inadequate sleep patterns.
- Learned behavior -- individuals who are exposed to overeating and unhealthy eating in their family or social peer groups may be at increased risk.
- Lack of access – “food deserts,” socioeconomic status.



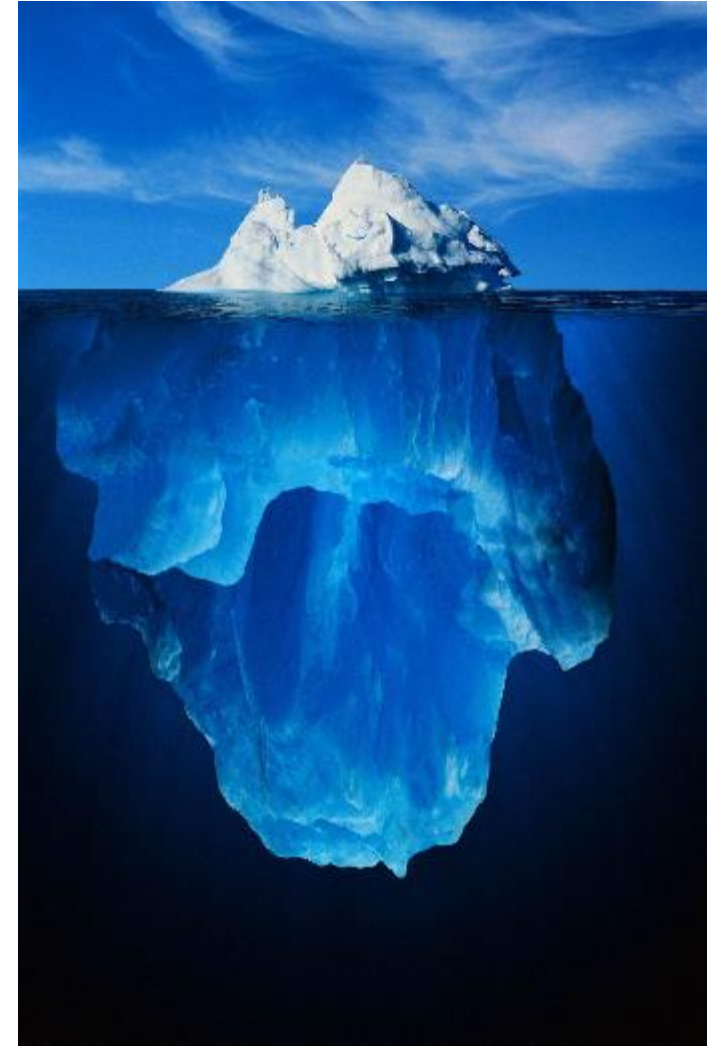
Regardless of the Addiction Type - Same Cycle



Treatment will have to address similar things that are addressed in treatment for alcohol and drug addiction.



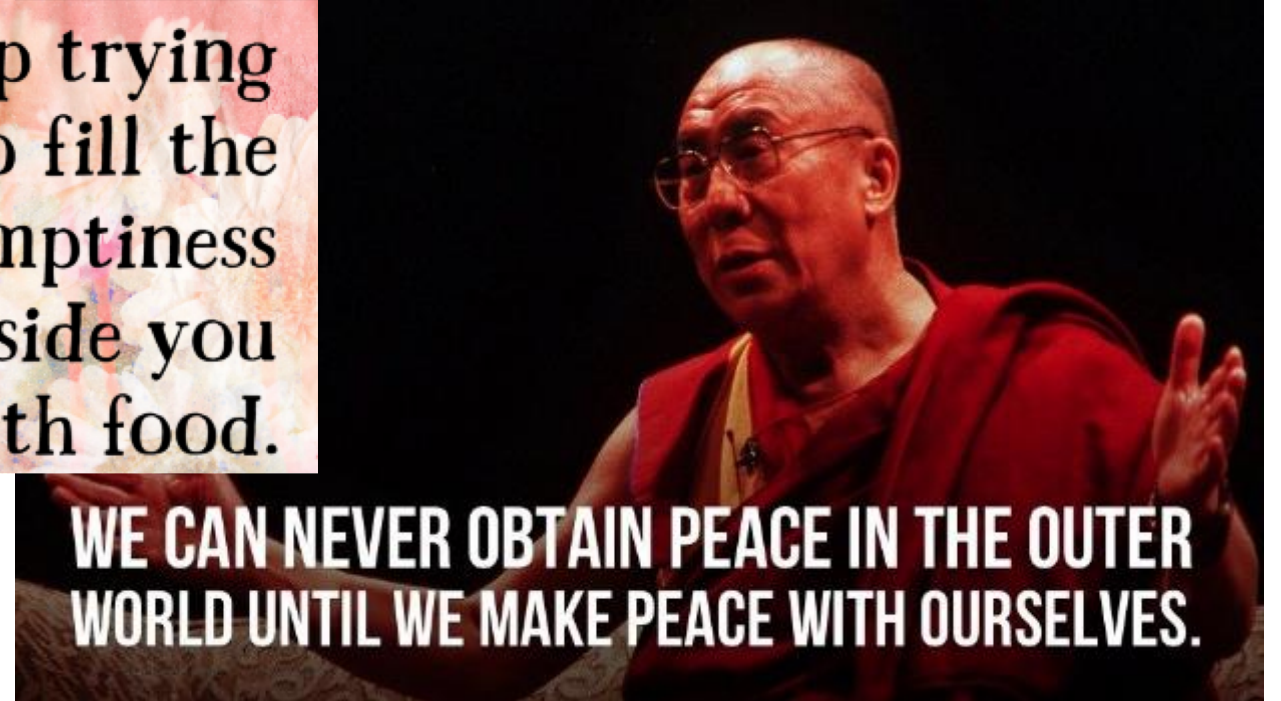
Insanity: Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.



Trying to “Eat our Feelings”



Stop trying
to fill the
emptiness
inside you
with food.



A well-known AA Slogan:

“1 becomes 1,000” – it will never be enough to satisfy or cure the real issue(s).

Examples of Interventions:

Keeping a food journal to increase self-awareness of the problem, triggers, etc.
Become more mindful about why you are eating.

Date	Time	Am I Hungry?	Current emotional state	If not hungry, what else can I do instead?	Food eaten and amount

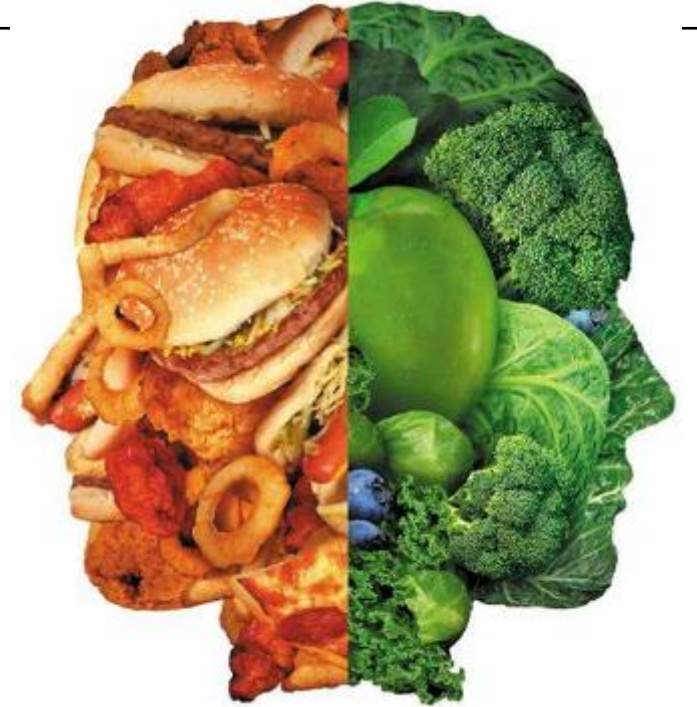
Examples of Interventions:

Identifying triggers and coping skills that can help

Triggers	Coping Skills
<i>Stress</i> <i>Boredom</i> <i>Sad or depression</i> <i>Thinking about the past</i> <i>Low self-esteem</i> <i>Tired/convenience</i> <i>Advertisements</i>	<i>Yoga</i> <i>Go for a walk</i> <i>Crafts</i> <i>Read a book</i> <i>Journaling</i> <i>Call a friend</i> <i>Meal prep on weekend/have healthy foods available</i>

Other strategies:

- Remove junk foods from the home.
- Make sure healthy alternatives are prepped and easily accessible.
- Eat at the table, not while watching TV.
- Decide on a time the kitchen is “closed” and no eating during those times.
- Use fitness apps, meal planning, and food logs to help stay on track.
- Slow down, eat more mindfully (quality over quantity), counting # bites.
- Use smaller plates, portion sizes.
- Drinking lots of water.



Other strategies:

- Attend individual counseling/therapy to help work through triggers, underlying issues, etc.
- Work with a dietician and/or your doctor.
- Create exercise plan, gym, trainer, etc.
- Join support groups of like-minded individuals.
 - Overeaters Anonymous
 - Food Addicts Anonymous
 - Weight Watchers
 - Friends (accountability)
 - Etc.



Excerpt from Overeaters Anonymous:

“We share a common bond: we are powerless over food, and our lives have become unmanageable.”

Sources:

- Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV and DSM-V)
- Food Addicts Anonymous, <http://www.foodaddictsanonymous.org/>
- Overeaters Anonymous, <https://oa.org/>
- Understanding and Addressing Food Addiction: A Science-Based Approach to Policy and Practice (2016), Center on Addiction, New York, NY.
- Yale Food Addiction Scale, <http://fastlab.psych.lsa.umich.edu/yale-foodaddiction>