Ways to Reduce Emotional Eating

1. Increase Emotional Awareness

- Do a daily “check in” with yourself: how are you feeling?
- Learn what different emotions feel like for you.
- Identify which emotions are most linked to your drive to eat.
- Accept all emotions as important and meaningful (there are no “bad” emotions).
- Learn to distinguish between physical and emotional hunger.
- Practice mindfulness.

2. Use Stress and Emotion Management Strategies

- Prevent stress if possible.
- Track your stress level and your stress coping for a week and look at the patterns.
- Practice self-compassion and let go of perfectionism.
- Think about what you “really” need when you are feeling _______ and use coping strategies that match the specific need.
  - Hungry/thirsty: eat/drink
  - Tired: rest, slow down, take a nap, get more sleep
  - In physical pain: work on pain relief
  - Sad: ask for support, allow time to grieve and mourn
  - Angry/frustrated: find a safe place to vent, write a journal, take control back, work out
  - Lonely: reach out, engage in a gratitude practice, give to others
  - Bored: develop interests, help out
  - Scared/worried: focus on the present moment, practice resilient thinking

3. Nourish with Food

- Follow a regular eating schedule and eat sufficiently for what your body needs.
- Allow yourself joy in eating.
- Challenge the diet mentality.
- Think of food as fuel, truly, “nutrition”.
- Eat when you are hungry, stop when you are full (intuitive eating).