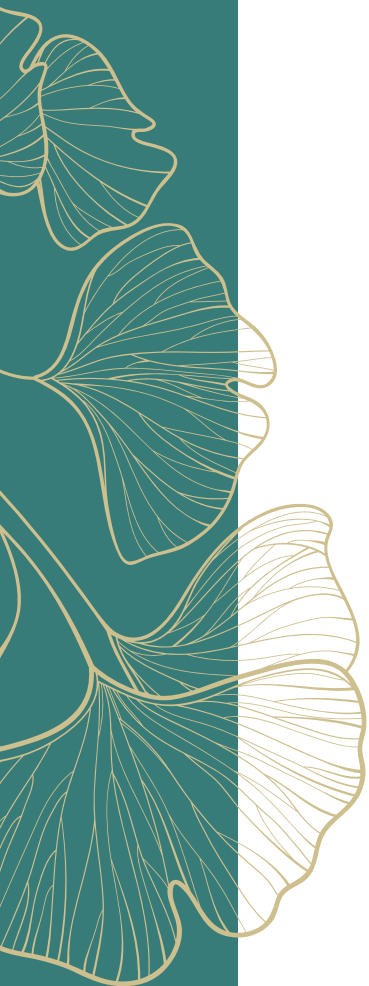


Free Guide

Hunger & Fullness Decoded

www.celiacklark.online





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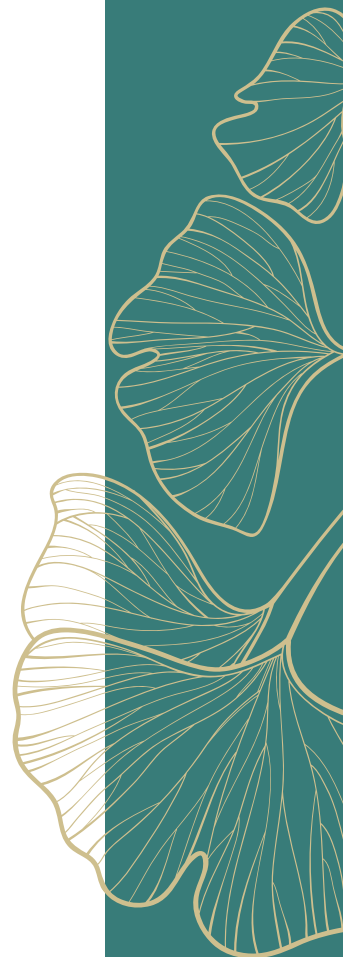
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Welcome

Hey there, I'm Celia and I work at the intersection of food, body and business. With 15 years as a therapist, including a decade specialising in eating disorders, I now support female entrepreneurs, coaches and change makers break the bond with food, so they can reconnect to their most authentic, powerful selves and elevate their impact in both life and business.

I am super creative and love learning new ways to share what I know, so that women no longer have to carry the toxic stories they have been told about their bodies and about their place in this world. There is nothing more fulfilling to me than witnessing a woman heal, and step into her light, so she can have a bigger impact on those she seeks to lead and serve.



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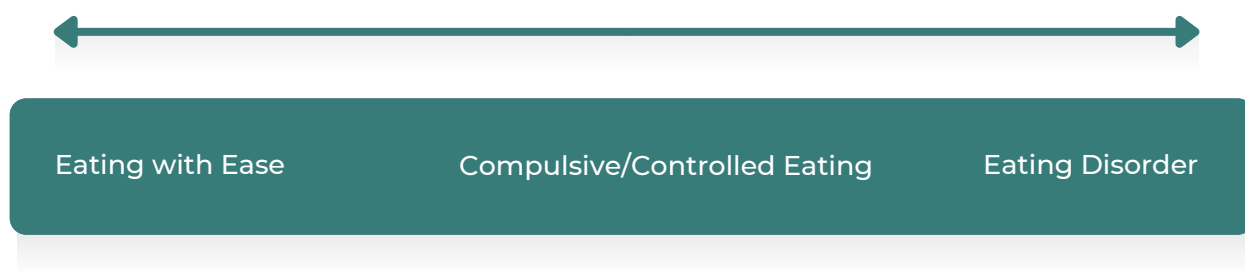


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Do I Have A Problem With Food?

Eating behaviours vary from person to person and occur on a spectrum. At one end is what I describe as *Eating with Ease*. When *Eating with Ease*, we have a comfortable relationship with food and can eat in response to our natural in built hunger and fullness cues.

We can experience pleasure in eating and eat a wide variety of foods. We often have neutral or more positive body image and feel safe connecting to and inhabiting our body.



Compulsive or Controlled Eating

In contrast, those of us engaging in eating that is more compulsive or controlled are often uncomfortable inhabiting our body. We believe our self worth is linked to our body weight and shape and we can experience fear and anxiety around food.

We may feel compelled to limit food intake by skipping meals or snacks, reducing portion sizes, delaying eating or by excluding or limiting certain foods or entire food groups.

We may view certain foods as 'good' or 'bad' and attempt to limit or avoid the 'bad' food. Many of us also create rigid rules around food in order to limit food intake and control shape and weight.



Let's look at some examples:

- I can't eat after 7pm
- If I eat lunch, I can't have dinner too
- I can only eat this number of calories per day
- I must eat less than everyone else at the table
- I can only have a treat day if I've been good all week
- I can only eat this food at the weekend.

We may also engage in episodes of binge eating or compulsive overeating, feel out of control around food and experience intense guilt and shame after eating.

Some of us may also feel compelled to engage in compensatory behaviours such as self-induced vomiting, compulsive exercise or taking laxatives, to make up for what we have eaten or as a way of earning our food.

When engaging in compulsive or controlled eating, it is also common to struggle with high

levels of body distress and feel ashamed of our body. Many of us will also engage in frequent body checking, comparing and weighing.

Eating Disorders

On the right of the eating behaviour spectrum are the following clinically diagnosable Eating Disorders:

- Anorexia Nervosa (AN)
- Bulimia Nervosa (BN)
- Binge Eating Disorder (BED)
- Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID)
- Other Specified Feeding or Eating Disorder (OSFED)

These are essentially more extreme presentations of compulsive or controlled eating that fit specific criteria as described in the DSM-5.

For more information on the specific criteria for a diagnosable Eating Disorder check out [this guide](#).



The Dieting Spiral

Controlled eating behaviours and in particular dieting, are among the most common risk factors for the development of an Eating Disorder.

Restricting the amount of food we eat, can lead to chaotic eating and what is often referred to as being in dietary chaos.

When the body is starved of food it responds by reducing the rate at which it burns energy (the metabolic rate) and this can result in increased food cravings that trigger over eating and binge eating behaviours.

To compensate, we believe the best approach is to further limit what we eat, and the cycle continues.

Compulsive and controlled eating can have a significant negative impact on our bodies and our lives and has been linked to poor physical and mental

health, low mood, fatigue, gastrointestinal issues, irritability, insomnia, anxiety, depression, a reduced ability to cope with stressful situations, low self-esteem and social withdrawal.

Other Behaviours

Other behaviours can also show up alongside our compulsive or controlled eating further increasing risk:

- Self-Harming
- Substance Abuse
- Obsessive Compulsive Behaviour
- Promiscuity
- Risk Seeking
- Perfection Seeking.

In the short term these behaviours can provide relief or a sense of self soothing but just like our compulsive or controlled eating, these behaviours can become unhelpful and harmful over time.

Why Me and Why Food?



What I've learned from my own personal journey, and from the 100's of women I have supported, is that eating in a compulsive or controlled way is an attempt to resolve at least one of more of the following:

Low Self Worth

We believe that we are not good enough. By focusing on food and our body and attempting to change or control how we appear on the outside, we hope to somehow increase our sense of self worth.

Unmet Need

We have difficulty identifying, expressing and meeting our needs. As a result, we can struggle not only to meet the needs of our body, but also our needs for meaningful connection, love and a sense of belonging.

Lack of Safety (in the body)

We can experience a lack of safety or discomfort in our body and use food and a focus on our body to try to resolve this. This lack of safety may be a result of trauma, difficulties in relationships, confusion around how to be in the world or the impact of living in a toxic culture.

By using food and a focus on the body in an attempt to resolve these core issues, we are seeking an *external* solution to what is actually an *internal* problem. This external solution can offer some temporary relief, it's why we return to these patterns even though they cause harm.

However, using food and a focus on the body is a distraction from the healing that needs to happen inside.

What Are Parts?



Can you remember a time when a Part of you has wanted, felt or thought one thing when another Part of you something different?

For example:

- Part of me wants to visit a friend this evening and Part of me wants to stay at home curled up on the couch.
- Part of me wants to eat less and Part of me wants to eat everything.

Just like these examples, it's common to have Parts of ourselves who have differing needs for different reasons. It's part of the beauty and complexity of human nature.

We each have many Parts and these Parts of ourselves have often been around a long time. In their natural state, the qualities of our individual Parts enrich our lives.

However, as we grow and adapt in response to our environment and our experience, our Parts can change and take on different and sometimes more extreme roles inside, in order to protect us. This includes the Parts of us who use food and a focus on the body to manage experience.

Our Internal Family

Our Internal Family of Parts is unique to each of us, however there are key elements common to us all:

- We all have Parts.
- Although it may not always appear so, there are no bad parts, all Parts are viewed as valuable.
- Parts have their own unique perspective, thoughts and feelings.



- They display our individuality including our gifts, quirks and genetic traits.
- Many of our Parts have good intentions although it may not always appear so.
- They are impacted by their environment.
- Our Parts form relationships with each other just like people in a family do. Some Parts are more supportive, others can be in conflict with each other and hold opposing views and some Parts might work together as a group.
- As we work with our own systems they begin to re-organise. Change can be obvious or change may happen behind the scenes that we only begin to recognise later.
- Parts can get stuck in more extreme roles like the Parts of who us who focus on food and the body to manage our experience.
- We can help our Parts to heal.

Parts as Protectors

Compulsive or controlled eating is driven by the Parts of ourselves who use a focus on food and the body in an attempt to resolve our low self worth, unmet need or the lack of safety in our body. You may recognise some or all of these behaviours:

- Food Restriction
- Binge Eating
- Purging (Self-Induced Vomiting, Over Exercising, Taking Laxatives)
- Over Eating
- Body Checking
- Body Comparing
- Frequent Weighing.

By working directly with these Parts of ourselves we can resolve our compulsive and controlled eating patterns.

Getting Started



As the Parts of us who focus on food and the body to manage experience intensify, chaotic eating patterns often develop. For many of us chaotic eating moves our body into survival mode, increasing appetite, slowing metabolism, changing our hormones and affecting concentration, sleep, mood and memory.

To help our Parts and our body heal from the impact of chaotic eating, a focus on regulating eating is key.

Regulating eating involves learning to fuel our bodies properly by eating regularly and eating enough. In the early stages this can be challenging. Many of us have been disconnected from our bodies for so long that we have difficulty recognising the internal hunger and fullness cues that let us know what our bodies need.

Clear and Simple Plan

To support reconnection with the body and create safety, we support our Parts to follow a clear and simple eating plan until we can begin to attune once again with our natural hunger and fullness cues. For some of us the reconnection may take several weeks and for others several months of eating in this structured way.

As we begin to regulate our eating and food intake becomes more regular and consistent, our body will recover.

The routine brings calm to the dietary chaos, increasing safety in the body. Over time and through repetition, our appetite, metabolism, hormones and mood will stabilise and attunement to hunger and fullness cues will strengthen.

Supporting Our Parts



The routine we support our Parts to follow for regulating eating is simple; eating at least every three hours in the following way:

- Breakfast
- Snack
- Lunch
- Snack
- Dinner
- Snack

You will notice there are no times given as schedules are unique. Some of us may work night shift and sleep through the day, some of us may have young children or other caring responsibilities that mean the day starts early.

I encourage you to take the time you need to work out what your unique schedule might look like and make a note of it in your diary, calendar or phone.

Examples

Here are some examples to get started. Notice the first example is fairly standard, the second for early risers and the third for those who work nightshift.

- | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| • 7.30am Breakfast | • 5.30am Breakfast | • 7.00pm Breakfast |
| • 10.30am Snack | • 8.30am Snack | • 10.00pm Snack |
| • 1.00pm Lunch | • 11.30am Lunch | • 1.00am Lunch |
| • 3.30pm Snack | • 2.30pm Snack | • 4.00am Snack |
| • 6.30pm Dinner | • 5.30pm Dinner | • 7.00am Dinner |
| • 9.00pm Snack | • 8.00pm Snack | • 9.30am Snack |



Why Every 3 Hours?



Eating regularly and eating enough keeps our fuel tank (and our energy levels) topped up, increasing safety in our body.

By supporting our Parts to following a simple eating plan of three meals and three snacks each day (eating around every 3 hours), we begin to resolve the impact of the dietary chaos.

If we think about our tank being empty at 0 and full at 10, we want to aim for between a 3 and a 7 on the fuel gauge. By eating regularly and eating enough we stay in the 'safe zone' and reduce the likelihood of triggering our Parts.

When we drop below a 3 this can trigger Parts who are sensitive to deprivation and the Part of us who feels compelled to binge eat or overeat is much more likely to intensify.

If we eat beyond a 7 the Parts of us who feel compelled to control food or purge are likely to intensify.

If you find it challenging to identify how empty or full your tank is, I invite you to use the Hunger and Fullness Scale. This scale gives helpful descriptions of the different stages of Hunger and Fullness.

Hunger and Fullness Scale





Hunger and Fullness

Many of us will recognise the more extreme ends of the Hunger and Fullness Scale, when we are either really hungry or really full and have little or no awareness of anything in between.

This can lead us to miss early hunger cues which moves our body into survival mode. This can trigger our Eating Part(s) as they respond to this unmet need.

It's equally unhelpful when we miss our early fullness cues and we eat beyond a comfortable level of fullness. This can leave us with feelings of shame and guilt which often trigger the Parts who focus on controlling food or purging.

As we learn to stay in the 'safe zone' (between a 3-7) the Parts who drive compulsive or controlled eating will begin to feel safer and be less reactive.

We can also learn to check in with our body. Many of us are familiar with *thinking* about how hungry we are but learning to tune into how hungry we *feel inside* our body is much more helpful for

recovery. We can do this before, during and after eating.

It just takes a few minutes and with practice, we will get better at recognising our hunger and fullness cues, supporting us to make informed choices about eating.

The more we learn to connect to ourselves in this way, the better we get at identifying and meeting our needs and the more familiar our new pattern of eating becomes.



I was a little unsure at first, but with practice, I'm so much better at recognising when I need to eat. It's been a game changer for me!

Mila, 34



Early Signs

We can support our Parts by learning more about the early signs for hunger and fullness. Although these will be unique to each of us, here are some common early signs for hunger:

- Feeling empty
- Having a headache
- Feeling grumpy
- Lacking in energy
- Feeling shaky or weak
- Looking at the clock
- Finding it more difficult to focus or concentrate
- Becoming aware of our mouth
- Feeling sleepy
- Thinking about food.

These early signs can be also be connected to other things going on our lives. For example, I might be grumpy because I've had an argument with a friend or feel sleepy because I was up late the night before. As you become aware of these early signs, consider whether hunger may be the underlying trigger.

Common early signs of fullness:

- Food losing it's flavour
- A heaviness in our belly

- Discomfort below the rib cage
- Getting bored of what we are eating
- Feeling more easily distracted while eating
- Clothing feeling tighter especially around the tummy.

Just be aware that some of these cues, like a heaviness in our belly or clothing feeling tighter might also be due to the sensitivity of Parts who are fearful of the body changing or who may be struggling with the new eating plan.

As we become more familiar with our Parts, it will become easier to identify the difference. If we are unsure, we can check in with our Parts to learn more.

Questions for Reflection

- How often do you find yourself outside the safe zone?
- How might you support your Parts to spend more time inside the safe zone?
- Do recognise any of the early signs for hunger and fullness?
- Are there any other early signs you can identify that are not listed here?



What if I miss a meal or snack?

If we miss a meal or snack the first step is to identify why the meal or snack was missed. The following questions can be helpful:

- What led to us missing our meal or snack?
- Was it intentional or unintentional?
- **Is a Part of us feeling unsafe and trying to regain control? If so, how can we support this Part?**
- What can we learn from what we have identified so we can ensure success in the future?

Returning to the schedule and having our next meal or snack as planned will best support our recovery.

What if I eat too soon?

If we eat too soon the first step is to reflect on why this happened.

The following questions can be helpful:

- Did we eat enough at our last meal or snack? We may have been hungry and not had enough fuel in our body so checking in to see if we ate enough at our last meal or snack is important.
- **Which Part is dominant here?**
- Is a Part of us feeling unsafe and trying to regain control by limiting what we ate earlier in the day? If so, how can we support this Part? or
- **Has our Eating Part(s) retaliated? If so, how can we support this Part(s)?**
- What can we learn from what we have identified so we can ensure success in the future?

Returning to the schedule and having our next meal or snack as planned (even if we don't feel hungry) will support our Parts and increase safety inside.



What if I don't feel hungry & it's time to eat?

If we have been in dietary chaos for some time, it can be really difficult to accurately gauge our hunger and fullness cues. In the early stages, we support our Parts to follow the simple eating plan until we can begin to reconnect with these natural hunger and fullness cues.

As we learn to reconnect to these cues they become more reliable. Until then we eat at the scheduled times even if we don't feel hungry. Although challenging for some of our Parts, this gives ourselves the best chance to heal our relationship with food and our body for good.

What if I Binge Eat or Overeat?

If our Eating Part(s) have been active for many years, it is common for these Part(s) to continue to show up until it feels safe enough inside to soften back.

Be mindful that our Eating Part(s) often trigger a response from other Parts (e.g. Parts who control food or purge or a Part who is Critical) maintaining our unhelpful and harmful eating patterns.

Returning to the schedule and having our next meal or snack as planned (even if we don't feel hungry) will support our Parts and increase safety inside.

What if I Purge?

Purging includes Self-Induced Vomiting, Taking Laxatives and Over Exercising. If purging is part of our pattern, it is common for the Part who drives purging behaviour to continue to show up until it feels safe enough inside to soften back.

Returning to the schedule and having our next meal or snack as planned (even if we don't feel hungry) will support our Parts and increase safety inside.

The Power of Small Steps



Desire for Change

We often have a Part who wants change and wants it quickly, especially when it comes to healing our relationship with food and our body. This is understandable given the life limiting nature of our compulsive or controlled eating patterns.

However, when change is too big or comes too soon or too fast, other Parts can become overwhelmed, and we can begin to withdraw from the very practices that are supportive. Instead we find ourselves caught once again in our unhelpful and harmful eating patterns.

Small Steps

By taking small, manageable steps and repeating these over time, we support our Parts to stay safe and reduce the likelihood of overwhelm. It helps us to grow in confidence and develop self belief and self worth long term.

It can be helpful to remember that small steps lead to the small changes that create bigger change.

You and your Parts have got this!



Let's stay in touch!



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