



## Identifying Emotional Triggers

Emotions are important because they provide us with information, help us to respond to different situations and influence our behaviour. However, emotions can also be distressing and often people use eating to deal with distressing situations.

Think about experiences in your life – positive and negative.

Think about the emotions linked to those experiences.

You can help your child explore their feelings to understand and recognise these feelings inside. What they can do with these feelings?

e.g. talk about them rather than eat.

It's ok to feel sad or angry, we don't have to do anything with our emotions, just feel them. Help your child/ren to solve their problems, reduce stress and worries by talking to them or offer a distractions such as going for a walk or playing a game to help with sadness and anger.

Work together as a team to emotionally connect.

The following table can help to identify your child's feelings.

Excited	Loved	Angry	Anxious	Sad	Ashamed
Amused	Adored	Mad	Scared	Depressed	Guilty
Happy	Liked	Irritated	Frightened	Down	Embarrassed
Eager	Cared for	Annoyed	Nervous	Hurt	Humiliated
Interested	Attractive	Frustrated	Worried	Dejected	Mortified
Curious	Desired	Enraged	Apprehensive	Lonely	Self-
Hopeful		Furious	Terrified	Miserable	conscious
		Aggravated	Panicked	Despair	Regretful

Here we can look at how we get caught in a cycle/trap of emotional eating.

Escape Plan: Emotional Eating Trap		
Situation #1: Feeling lonely at night. I'm sad that my husband and I have grown apart. Sometimes it seems like food is my best friend.		
Sabotaging Thoughts	Reminders	Strategies
<p>I'm lonely. I deserve to treat myself with extra ice cream.</p> <p>Ice cream is the only thing that makes me feel better.</p> <p>It's not fair that I can't comfort myself with food.</p>	<p>It's true that I'm lonely. I need to accept the feeling and deal with loneliness on another way.</p> <p>If I binge on ice cream, I'll still feel lonely plus I'll feel bad about myself.</p> <p>It's not true that ice cream is the only thing that makes me feel better. I'd also feel better if I called my friends and connected with them.</p> <p>What would be even more unfair is if I let a sense of unfairness stand in my way of losing weight, which is really important to me.</p>	<p>Start buying only a single ice cream treat each day to eat at night. Throw away the pints of ice cream that are already in the freezer.</p> <p>Figure out ways to get together with friends on at least a couple of evenings a week.</p> <p>Go to the movies by myself</p> <p>Save errands for night time.</p> <p>Call Ruthie! Call Maureen!</p> <p>Connect with Lois and Barbara through email.</p> <p>Ask Phyllis to take a walk with me after dinner on week days.</p> <p>Look into taking a Spanish course.</p> <p>Enlist my friends to help me figure out what else to do to make my life better.</p>

Consider some of your/your child's emotional eating traps. Using this table as an example what are your sabotaging thoughts, your reminders and your strategies to avoiding the emotional trap.