

2015 Summary of Intuitive Eating and Related Studies

By Evelyn Tribole, MS, RD

Anderson LM, Reilly EE, Schaumberg K, Dmochowski S, Anderson DA. (2015). Contributions of mindful eating, intuitive eating, and restraint to BMI, disordered eating, and meal consumption in college students. *Eat Weight Disord.* 2015 Aug 5.

This is the first study to compare intuitive eating, mindful eating, and restraint in college students. Higher restraint was associated with increased BMI and disordered eating. Whereas, intuitive eating was associated with decreased BMI and disordered eating. Mindful eating was not related to outcome variables.

Augustus-Horvath, C. L., & Tylka, T. L. (2011). The acceptance model of intuitive eating: A comparison of women in emerging adulthood, early adulthood, and middle adulthood. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 58, 110-125.

Body acceptance by others was found to help women appreciate their own body and resist adopting an observer's perspective of their body, which contributes to eating intuitively.

Avalos, L., & Tylka, T. L. (2006). Exploring a model of intuitive eating with college women. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 53, 486-497.

This study found that college women who had unconditional acceptance with an emphasis on body function and body appreciation was predictive of intuitive eating.

Bush H.E., Rossy, L., Mintz, L., & Schopp, L., (2014) Eat for Life: A Work Site Feasibility Study of a Novel Mindfulness-Based Intuitive Eating Intervention.

The study provides support for a worksite intervention program combining intuitive eating and mindfulness for treatment of problematic eating behaviors and body dissatisfaction. Mothers and romantic partners were both found to have a role to play in predicting women's intuitive eating via their influence on women's motivation for regulating eating behaviors.

Carbonneau N, Carbonneau E, Cantin M, Gagnon-Girouard MP. (2015). Examining women's perceptions of their mother's and romantic partner's interpersonal styles for a better understanding of their eating regulation and intuitive eating. [Appetite](#). 2015 Sep;92:156-66.

The main purpose of this research was to examine the role played by both the mother and the romantic partner in predicting women's intuitive eating. Overall, these results attest to the importance of considering women's social environment (i.e., mother and romantic partner) for a better understanding of their eating regulation and ability to eat intuitively.

Cole RE & Horacek T. (2010). Effectiveness of the "My Body Knows When" Intuitive-eating Pilot Program. *American Journal Health Behav*, 34(3):286-297.

This study evaluated the effectiveness of an Intuitive Eating program tailored to assist military spouses in rejecting the dieting mentality. The program was able to significantly transition participants away from a dieting mentality towards intuitive-eating lifestyle behaviors.

Denny, K. N., Loth, K., Eisenberg, M. E., & Neumark-Sztainer, D. (2013). Intuitive eating in young adults. Who is doing it, and how is it related to disordered eating behaviors? *Appetite*, 60, 13–19.

Large study evaluated Intuitive Eating as a possible healthier, more effective, and more innate alternative to current strategies of weight management among 2,287 young adults from Project EAT-III. Overall, this study found that intuitive eating practices are inversely associated with a number of harmful outcomes, including binge eating and eating disorders behaviors.

Dockendorff, S. A., Petrie, T. A., Greenleaf, C., & Martin, S. (2012). *Intuitive Eating Scale: An examination among early Adolescents. Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 59(4):604-611.

Tylka's Intuitive Eating scale was adopted for adolescents, with a sample size of 515 middle school boys and girls. Four key factors were identified: Unconditional Permission to Eat, Eating for Physical Rather Than Emotional Reasons, Trust in Internal Hunger/Satiety Cues, and Awareness of Internal Hunger/Satiety Cues. Intuitive Eating was associated with health benefits including lower BMI, without internalizing the thin ideal, and positive mood.

Eneli IU, Tylka T et al (2014). Maternal and Child Roles in the Feeding Relationship: What Are Mothers Doing? *Clinical Pediatrics*.

Mothers who ate intuitively used less controlling feeding practices with their children; they were more likely to allow their child to carry out their eating responsibility, such as eating based on biological cues of hunger and fullness. Mothers with the overweight children were more likely indicate use of more restrictive and pressure to eat behaviors.

Galloway A.T., Farrow, C.V., & Martz DM. (2010). Retrospective Reports of Child Feeding Practices, Current Eating Behaviors, and BMI in College Students. *Behavior and Psychology* (formerly *Obesity*), 18(7):1330-1335.

Nearly 100 college-aged students and their parents completed retrospective questionnaires of parental feeding practices regarding the college students' childhood. The results showed that parental monitoring and restriction of food intake had a significant impact on their college student's body mass index, emotional eating, and Intuitive Eating Scale scores.

Gast, J. Madanat H., & Nielson A. (2011). Are Men More Intuitive When It Comes to Eating and Physical Activity? *American Journal Men Health*. doi:10.1177/1557988311428090.

Men scoring high on Hawks' Intuitive Eating scale, was associated with lower body mass index. Men placed value on being physically fit and healthy, rather than on an ideal weight

Gast, J., Nielson A., Hunt A., Leiker J. (2014). Intuitive Eating: Associations With Physical Activity Motivation and BMI. *Am J Public Health*.

Women who reported high levels of Intuitive Eating had lower body mass index. Individuals who eat intuitively also experience more intrinsic motive to engage in physical activity and do so because they enjoy it.

Gravel K, Deslauriers A, Watiez M, Dumont M, Dufour Bouchard AA, Provencher V. (2014). Sensory-Based Nutrition Pilot Intervention for Women. [Acad Nutr Diet](#). 2014;114 :99-106.

A sensory-based intervention, taught women how to experience eating based on 1) hunger & fullness cues 2) eating sensations based on the senses (taste, touch, hearing, smell and sight) and 3) pleasurable associations with eating. Women in the intervention group scored higher on the Intuitive Eating Scale. Researchers concluded that this is a promising strategy that, if implemented in clinical practice, can promote healthy eating in a positive way rather than through restrictive strategies that focus mainly on weight and calories. Such intervention seems to effectively reduce overeating episodes and promote the eating of desired foods when hungry.

Gravel K, St-Hilaire G, Deslauriers A, Watiez M, Dumont M, Dufour Bouchard AA, Provencher V. (2014). Effect of sensory-based intervention on the increased use of food-related descriptive terms among restrained eaters. *Food Quality & Preference*. 32:271-276.

A sensory-based intervention may help restrained women (those with concerns about dieting and weight) to become more objective, and to enjoyably connect to food and their own bodies, which may promote a more intuitive approach to eating.

Herbert BM et al. (2013). Intuitive eating is associated with interoceptive sensitivity. Effects on body mass index. *Appetite* 70:22-30.

This is the first study to demonstrate that relevant role of interoceptive sensitivity and the appraisal of bodily signals for Intuitive Eating. Interoceptive sensitivity was a positive and significant predictor for Intuitive Eating and BMI.

Hahn K.O., Wiseman M.C., Hendrickson J., Phillips J.C., & Hayden, E.W. (2012). Intuitive Eating and College Female Athletes. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*. doi: 10.1177/0361684311433282

Preliminary data indicate favorable results between Intuitive Eating and collegiate females.

Hawks, S. R., Madanat, H., Hawks, J., & Harris, A. (2005). The relationship between intuitive eating and health indicators among collegewomen. *American Journal of Health Education*, 36, 331-336.

Intuitive eating was associated with reduced body mass index, lower serum triglyceride levels, and with reduced risk for overall risk for heart disease.

Hawks, S. R., Merrill, R. M., & Madanat, H. N., (2004 a). The Intuitive Eating Validation Scale: preliminary validation. *American Journal of Health Education*, 35, 90-98.

This study developed a scale to define and operationalize intuitive eating. Intuitive eating is a valid orientation that can help individuals regain a normal relationship with food and achieve a healthy body size, when dieting so far has been ineffective or even harmful.

Hawks, S. R., Merrill, R. M., Miyagawa, T., Suwanteerangkul, J., Guarin, C. M., & Shaofang, C. (2004 b). Intuitive eating and the nutrition transition in Asia. *Asia Pacific journal of clinical nutrition*, 13, 194-203.

The intuitive eating scale (IES), a measure of food consumption that is primarily characterized by the satisfaction of physical hunger, was used to evaluate agreement with intuitive eating principles in the US and four Asian countries.

Heilesen J.L., & R. Cole (2011). Assessing Motivation for Eating and Intuitive Eating in Military Service Members. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 111 (9 Supplement), Page A26.

Intuitive Eating was associated with lower body mass index levels in 100 active military troops.

Kroon Van Diest, A. M., & Tylka, T. (2010). The Caregiver Eating Messages Scale: Development and psychometric investigation. *Body Image*, 7, 317-326.

Critical & restrictive caregiver messages were negatively associated with intuitive eating.

MacDougall E. C. (2010). An Examination of a Culturally Relevant Model of Intuitive Eating with African American College Women. University of Akron, 2010. Dissertation 218 pages.

The present study explores the model intuitive eating with African American college women. Results show that intuitive eating may extend and generalize to diverse cultures.

Madanat, H. N., & Hawks, S. R. (2004). Validation of the Arabic version of the Intuitive Eating Scale. *Global Health Promotion (Formerly Promotion and Education)*, 11, 152-157.

The Hawks Intuitive Eating Scale, was validated for a completely different culture, and may be and may be an appropriate tool to assess Intuitive Eating status among Arabs.

Madden C.E., Leong, S.L., Gray A., and Horwath C.C. (2012). Eating in response to hunger and satiety signals is related to BMI in a nationwide sample of 1601 mid-age New Zealand women. *Public Health Nutrition*, Mar:1-8.

Women with high Intuitive Eating Scale (IES) scores had significantly lower BMI, which suggests that people who eat in response to hunger and satiety cues, have unconditional permission to eat, and cope with feelings without food, are less likely to engage in eating behaviors that lead to weight gain. A 10-point improvement in (IES) scores would equate to a decrease of nearly 10 pounds.

Mensing, J. (2009, November) Intuitive eating: A novel health promotion strategy for obese women. Paper presented at the American Public Health conference annual, in Philadelphia.

Intuitive eating is a novel health improvement strategy that considers the temporality of dieting and negative consequence of weight cycling.

Madden C.E., Leong, S.L., Gray A., and Horwath C.C. (2012). Eating in response to hunger and satiety signals is related to BMI in a nationwide sample of 1601 mid-age New Zealand women. *Public Health Nutrition*, Mar:1-8.

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Satter, E. (2012 November). Versions of Internally Regulated Eating. Family Meals Focus—75. [free full text at <http://ow.ly/kW85T>]

This brief paper defines and distinguishes between non-diet approaches. Intuitive Eating is described as a well-defined model that is evidence based with a validated assessment test.

Schoenfeld SJ, & Webb JB. (2013). Self-compassion and intuitive eating in college women: Examining the contributions of distress tolerance and body image acceptance and action. *Eat Behav.* Dec;14(4):493-6.

Self-compassion has been linked to higher levels of psychological well-being. Results provide preliminary support for a complementary perspective on the role of acceptance in the context of intuitive eating.

Schaefer, J. T., & Magnuson, A. B. (2014). A review of interventions that promote eating by internal cues. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 114, 734-760.

A review of 20 intervention studies that encourage individuals to eat intuitively, shows that participants improve metabolic fitness, increase body satisfaction, improve psychological distress, and abandon unhealthy weight control behaviors.

Shouse S. J. & Nilsson, J. (2011). Self-Silencing, Emotional Awareness, and Eating Behaviors in College Women *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 35: 451-457.

Expression of thoughts, feelings, or needs seems to be a critical aspect of healthy eating behaviors. The suppression of voice, combined with high levels of emotional awareness, may decrease trust of internal signals of hunger and satiation and disrupt Intuitive Eating. Intuitive eating is maximized when a woman has high levels of emotional awareness and low levels of self-silencing. Conversely, intuitive eating is disrupted.

Smith M.H. et al. [2010, May]. Validation of Two Intuitive Eating Scales Among Females Receiving Inpatient Eating Disorder Treatment. Paper presented at the 2010 annual ICED conference, Salzburg, Austria.

Validation of intuitive eating scales in a clinical population provides strong foundation for further examination of the role of intuitive eating in prevention and intervention of eating disorders, as well as highlights the rationale for the inclusion of intuitive eating principles in inpatient, residential, and outpatient eating disorder treatment.

Smith, T. S., & Hawks, S. R. (2006). Intuitive eating, diet composition, and the meaning of food in healthy weight promotion. *American Journal of Health Education*, 37, 130-136.

Higher Intuitive eating scores were associated with an increase in the enjoyment and pleasure of eating lower BMI, less dieting, and reduced anxiety over food.

Smitham L. (2008). Evaluating an Intuitive Eating Program for Binge Eating Disorder: A Benchmarking Study. University of Notre Dame, Dissertation. 26 November 2008.

An 8-week Intuitive Eating intervention program was used on 31 women meeting the DSM IV criteria for Binge Eating Disorder (BED). Overall, the women experienced significant improvement, with a significant reduction in binge eating.

Tylka, T. L. (2006). Development and psychometric evaluation of a measure of intuitive eating. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 53, 226-240.

Seminal study identified the three key components of Intuitive Eater and associated health benefits. Intuitive eaters were found to be more optimistic, had better self-esteem, a lower body mass index (BMI), and were less likely to internalize the culture's unrealistic thin ideal.

Tylka, T. L., & Wilcox, J. A. (2006). Are intuitive eating and eating disorder symptomatology opposite poles of the same construct? *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 53, 474-485.

Intuitive Eating and trust in responding to hunger & satiety cues, predicts psychological health above and beyond disordered eating.

Tylka, T.L. (2013). A psychometric evaluation of the Intuitive Eating Scale with college men. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, Jan;60(1):137-53.

Large study on 1405 women and 1195 men, which updates and validates the new Intuitive Eating assessment scale (IE-2), which added Body-Food Choice congruence, to reflect the principle of Gentle Nutrition. Intuitive eating scores were positively related to body appreciation, self-esteem, and satisfaction with life; and were inversely related to eating disorder symptomatology, poor interoceptive awareness, body surveillance, body shame, body mass index, and internalization of media appearance ideals. IES-2 scores also predicted psychological well-being above and beyond eating disorder symptomatology.

Tylka, T.L., Calogero, R.M., & Danielsdottir S. (2015). Is intuitive eating the same as flexible dietary control? Their links to each other and well-being could provide an answer. *Appetite* 95: 166-175.

Flexible control strategies include monitoring portion sizes, eating smaller amounts and lower calorie versions of comfort foods, staying within a predetermined daily calorie range, and self-monitoring weight. Flexible control have been touted by certain scholars as adaptive approaches to eating that stand in contrast to rigid restriction of food intake. This is the first study to compare Intuitive Eating with flexible control. Results indicate 1) Intuitive Eating was related to well-being, as well as a lower BMI. 2) Intuitive Eating is an adaptive and distinct construct from flexible control. 3) Flexible control was found to overlap with rigid control. The researchers concluded that health professionals or health organizations should not adopt flexible control eating strategies.

Tylka TL, Homan KJ. (2015). Exercise motives and positive body image in physically active college women and men: Exploring an expanded acceptance model of intuitive eating. *Body Image*. 2015 Aug 14;15:90-97.

To improve positive body image and intuitive eating, efforts should encourage body acceptance by others and emphasize functional, rather appearance motives for exercise.

Tylka TL, Lumeng JC, Eneli IU. (2015). Maternal intuitive eating as a moderator of the association between concern about child weight and restrictive child feeding. *Appetite*. Dec 1;95:158-65.

Mothers who are concerned about their young child's weight are more likely to use restrictive feeding, which has been associated with increased food seeking behaviors, emotional eating, and overeating in young children across multiple studies. Researchers examined whether mothers' intuitive eating behaviors would moderate the association between their concern about their child's weight and their use of restrictive feeding. Their findings indicate that it may be important address maternal intuitive eating within interventions designed to improve self-regulated eating in children, as mothers who attend these interventions tend to be highly concerned about their child's weight and, if also low in intuitive eating, may be at risk for using restrictive feeding behaviors that interfere with children's self-regulated eating.

Van Dyke, N., & Drinkwater, E. J. (2013). Relationships between intuitive eating and health indicators: literature review. *Public Health Nutrition*, 17, 1757e1766.

A review of 26 studies on Intuitive Eating research shows that intuitive eating has a positive link to health and well-being.

Weigenberg, M.J. (2009). Intuitive Eating Is Associated with Decreased Adiposity (Abstract). http://professional.diabetes.org/Abstracts_Display.aspx?TYP=1&CID=72812 [accessed 12-30--2011.]

Intuitive Eating was associated with lower adiposity and less insulin resistance, especially for girls who valued general health more highly, than physical appearance.

Weigenberg, M.J. et al (2014). Imagine HEALTH: results from a randomized pilot lifestyle intervention for obese Latino adolescents using Interactive Guided ImagerySM. BMC Complementary & Alternative Med. 14:28. <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6882/14/28> [accessed 4-28--2014.]

Consistent with adult findings showing cross sectional relationships between intuitive eating practices and health markers [66,67], our findings suggest that intuitive eating can be safely used in obese adolescents without fear of sustained consumption of unhealthy foods. In other words, no sustained increases in calories, sugars or fats were seen despite the curriculum suggesting all foods are allowable, dieting is counterproductive, and portion size should be addressed using awareness of internal satiety and hunger signals rather than external rules.

Wheeler BJ, Lawrence J, Chae M, Paterson H, Gray AR, Healey D, Reith DM, Taylor BJ (2015). Intuitive eating is associated with glycaemic control in adolescents with type I diabetes mellitus. [Appetite](#). Sep 25;96:160-165.

In adolescents with type 1 diabetes mellitus, there appears to be a strong association between intuitive eating, in particular the effect of emotion on eating, and glycaemic control. Higher values of both total Intuitive Eating Scale and the Eating for physical rather than emotional reasons subscale were associated with lower HbA1c.

Young, S. (2011). Promoting healthy eating among college women: Effectiveness of an intuitive eating intervention. Iowa State University, 2011, 147 pages; Dissertation. AAT 3418683.

This is the first study to evaluate the effectiveness of an intuitive eating program designed to increase normative eating behaviors and reduce eating disorder risk factors. The intuitive eating model can be a promising approach for disordered eating prevention on college campuses.

SELECTED STUDIES ON THE EFFECTS OF DIETING

General Bacon L and Aphramor L (2011). Weight Science: Evaluating the Evidence for a Paradigm Shift. *Nutrition Journal*, 10:9. [Free fulltext]. <http://bit.ly/f4CKOK>

Danielsdóttir S, Burgard D and Oliver-Pyatt W. (2009). Academy of Eating Disorder 2009 Guidelines for Childhood Obesity Prevention Programs. <http://www.aedweb.org/policy/index.cfm>

Katan, Martijn B. (2009). Weight-Loss Diets for the Prevention and Treatment of Obesity *NEJM*, 360:923-925.

Tsai, AG et al. (2005). Systematic review of commercial weight loss programs. *Annals Internal Medicine*, 42:56.

Weight Gain, Increases Risk of Binge Eating & Eating Disorders

*Dulloo AG et al (2012). How dieting makes some fatter: from a perspective of human body composition autoregulation. *Proceedings Nutrition Soc.* 71:379-389.

Field AE et al. (2003). Relation Between Dieting and Weight Change Among Preadolescents and Adolescents. *Pediatrics*, 112:900-906.

Liechty JM & Lee MJ (2013). Longitudinal predictors of dieting and disordered eating among young adults in the U.S. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*. Article first published online: 28 AUG 2013.

G C Patton et al. (1999). Onset of adolescent eating disorders: population based cohort study over 3 years. *British Medical Journal*, 318:765-768.

Mann, T. (2007). Medicare's search for effective obesity treatments: Diets are not the answer. *Am Psychologist*, 62(3): 220- 33

Neumark-Sztainer D et al. (2006). Obesity, disordered eating, and eating disorders in a longitudinal study of adolescents: how do dieters fare five years later? *J Am Diet Assoc*, 106(4):559-568.

Neumark-Sztainer D et al. (2011). Dieting and Disordered Eating Behaviors from Adolescence to Young Adulthood: Findings from a 10-Year Longitudinal Study. *J Am Dietetic Assoc* 111:1004-11.

Pietiläinen, K.H. et al. (2012). Does dieting make you fat? A twin study. *Int J Obesity*, 1-9.

Polivy, J. (1996). Psychological consequences of food restriction. *J Am Dietetic Assoc* 96(6):589-592.

Polivy, J., Zeitlin, S. B., Herman, C. P., & Beal, A. L. (1994). Food restriction and binge eating: A study of former prisoners of war. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 103(2), 409-411.

Saarni, S. E. et al (2006). Weight cycling of athletes and subsequent weight gain in middle-aged. *International J Obesity*, 30:1639-1644.

Thompson, JL et al. (1996). Effects of diet and diet-plus-exercise programs on resting metabolic rate: a meta-analysis. *Intl. J Sport Nutrition*, (6):41-61.

Tomiyaama, A. et al (2010). Low Calorie Dieting Increases Cortisol. *Psychosom Med*, 72:357-364.

Yang Q. (2010). Gain weight by "going diet?" Artificial sweeteners and the neurobiology of sugar cravings. *Yale J Biology Medicine*, 83:101-108.



SELECTED STUDIES ON THE EFFECTS OF Biggest Loser

Darcy L. Johannsen, Nicolas D. Knuth, Robert Huizenga, Jennifer C. Rood, Eric Ravussin, & Kevin D. Hall (2012). Metabolic Slowing with Massive Weight Loss despite Preservation of Fat-Free Mass *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism* : [10.1210/jc.2012-1444](https://doi.org/10.1210/jc.2012-1444)

Freedhoff. Y (2013). When Science Meets Biggest Loser. US World & News Reports. [accessed 1-8-2014 <http://bit.ly/1hwi5Ah>]

Food Restriction/Dieting Increases Rewarding Value Of Food

Cabeza de Vaca & Carr (1998). Food Restriction Enhances the Central Rewarding Effect of Abused Drugs *J Neuroscience*, 18(18):7502–7510.

Carr (2011). Food scarcity, neuroadaptations, and the pathogenic potential of dieting in an unnatural ecology: Binge eating and drug abuse. *Physiology & Behavior*, 104:162–167.

Massey A. & Hill A.J. (2012). Dieting and food craving. A descriptive, quasi-prospective study *Appetite*. Jun;58(3):781–5.

Stice E., et al (2008). Fasting Increases Risk for Onset of Binge Eating and Bulimic Pathology: A 5-Year Prospective Study. *J J Abnorm Psychol*. 2008 November ; 117(4): 941–946.

Stice E. et al (2013). Caloric deprivation increases responsivity of attention and reward brain regions to intake, anticipated intake, and images of palatable foods. *NeuroImage*. 67(15):322– 330.

Stice E. et al (2013). Elevated Reward Region Responsivity Predicts Future Substance Use Onset But Not Overweight/Obesity Onset. *Biol Psychiatry*;73:869-876.

Binge Eating Disorder and Forbidden Foods

Kristeller JL, & Wolever RQ (2011). Mindfulness-based eating awareness training for treating binge eating disorder: the conceptual foundation. [Jan 2011; Eating disorders, 19\(1\), 49-61.](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eatdis.2011.01.001)

Smitham.L.(2008). Evaluating an Intuitive Eating Program for Binge Eating Disorder: A Benchmarking Study. University of Notre Dame, 26 November 2008



INTUITIVE EATING RESOURCES

Intuitive Eating Official Website

www.IntuitiveEating.org

Get the latest news from blog and calendar of events. You will also find articles, research, interviews and general information about Intuitive Eating.

Intuitive Eating Professionals on LinkedIn

<http://linkd.in/mMrn2M>

This is an international group of over 2,500 allied health professionals, where we share news, views, and resources. It's free to join

COUNSELING AND SUPPORT

Certified Intuitive Eating Counselor Directory

www.IntuitiveEatingCounselorDirectory.org

This is a listing of allied health professionals who are trained and certified in the Intuitive Eating process.

Intuitive Eating Online Community

www.IntuitiveEatingCommunity.org

Get inspired, share your story, and partake of the many tools to empower your Intuitive Eating journey. There are nearly 9,000 members—it's free.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

www.IntuitiveEatingTraining.com

Individual and group training available for allied health professionals:

- Intuitive Eating Pro Skills Teleseminar Training
- Group or Individual Supervision
- Become a Certified Intuitive Eating Counselor