Compulsive Overeating
Topics to cover

- Definition and description
- Various expressions of compulsive overeating
- Complications
- Causes
- Regulation issues
What is Non-Compulsive Eating?

- Most often feeling control over eating habits
- Eating when you are hungry and stopping when you are satisfied.
- This involves being able to distinguish:
  - Emotional hunger from physical hunger
  - Satiety from over-fullness.
Compulsive Eating

- Compulsive behavior = acting on an internal force that leads persons to act against their will.
- Compulsive overeating
  - Excessive grazing
  - Bingeing
Psychological Disorders involving Bingeing

- DSM-IV
  - Bulimia Nervosa
  - Eating Disorders not Otherwise Specified (EDNOS)
    - Binge eating disorder
    - Partial bulimia nervosa
Binge (defined in DSM-IV)

- Eating, in a discrete period of time (e.g. within any 2-hour period) an amount of food that is definitely larger than most people would eat in a similar period of time under similar circumstances
- A sense of lack of control over eating during the episode (e.g. a feeling that one cannot stop eating or control what or how much one is eating)
Characteristics of a Binge

- Usually in secrecy
- Rapid consumption
- Continues until painfully full
- Can be triggered by emotions
- Feels out of control
- Temporary increase in mood/numbing out
- Followed by depressed mood
- Usually high calorie foods
**Bulimia Nervosa**

- Recurrent episodes of binge eating.
- Recurrent inappropriate compensatory behavior in order to prevent weight gain
  - Purge subtype: self-induced vomiting; misuse of laxatives, diuretics, enemas, or other medications
  - Non-purge subtype: fasting; or excessive exercise **
- These behaviors both occur, on average, at least twice (once) a week for 3 months.
- Self-evaluation is unduly influenced by body shape and weight.
Warning signs of Bulimia Nervosa

- Bathroom after meals
- Mood swings
- Unexplained disappearance of food
- Laxative wrappers
- Frequent tooth brushing
- Swelling around the jaw
- Excessive dental decay, blood shot eyes, “Russell’s sign”
- Excessive exercise
- Skipping meals
EDNOS: Partial Bulimia Nervosa

- Binge/compensation occurs less than 2 times per week or for a duration of less than 3 months
- Compensatory behaviors after eating small amounts of food (but normal weight)
Binge Eating Disorder

- Recurrent episodes of binge eating.
- Marked distress regarding binge eating.
- The binge eating occurs, on average, at least 2 (1) days a week for 6 (3) months.
- The binge eating is not associated with the regular use of inappropriate compensatory behaviors.
Are BED and compulsive overeating different?

- **Similarities**
  - Emotional aspects
  - Weight
  - Self-esteem
  - Health problems

- **Differences**
  - Less regular bingeing
  - May not always fit definition of a “binge”
BED vs. Bulimia Nervosa

- Prevalence
- Compensatory behaviors
- Overeating between binges
- Body weight
- Dieting
Complications of Compulsive Overeating

- Diabetes
- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Gall bladder disease
- Obesity
- Psychological distress

None of that is as bad as the inner pain, the low self-esteem, the shame, the isolation, the embarrassment. This is what I really want to work on.”
Psychological Distress

- Low self-esteem
- Feel a void, emotionally empty, hungry
- Overwhelmed by stress, problems, life in general
- Shame
- Interpersonal problems
- Social withdrawal
- Spirals!!
Weight fluctuations
Obesity
An estimated 30% of individuals in behavioral weight control programs have BED

Obesity is defined as a BMI of 30.0 or over.

\[ \text{BMI} = \frac{703 \times \text{body weight in pounds}}{(\text{height in inches})^2} \]
Energy Intake > Energy Expenditure?

- Burger = 1120 kcal
- Curly fries = 400 kcal
- Dipping sauce = 130 kcal
- Soda = 170 kcal

Total = 1820 kcal
Obesity Trends* Among U.S. Adults

BRFSS, 1985

(*BMI ≥30, or ~ 30 lbs overweight for 5’ 4” person)
Obesity Trends* Among U.S. Adults

BRFSS, 2008

(*BMI ≥30, or ~ 30 lbs. overweight for 5’ 4” person)
Causes of Compulsive Overeating?

- Socio-cultural issues
  - Body image
  - Food bombardment
  - Diet craze
- Interpersonal issues
  - Emotional eating
  - Susceptibility to addiction

★ Self-Regulation Issues
GI Joe
## Compulsive Eating as an Addiction?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance dependence</th>
<th>Compulsive eating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance</td>
<td>More food/binges needed for satiety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Withdrawal</td>
<td>Depressed mood, guilt, shame</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excessive intake</td>
<td>Binges are defined as excessive</td>
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<td>Loss of control</td>
<td>Loss of control in definition of binge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Narrowing of behavioral repertoire</td>
<td>Social withdrawal; lie about and hide eating activities; steal, hoard food</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use continues despite problems</td>
<td>Extreme dieting attempts, obesity, psychological distress</td>
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Self-Regulation Failure: Underregulation

- Conflicting standards
  - Junk food vs. cultural issues of body image
  - Joy of eating vs. guilt of eating
- Inertia
  - Key issue in binge eating
  - Satiation (fats and simple carbs)
- Reduction in monitoring
  - Insensitivity to internal cues
- Renegade attention
  - Increased sensitivity to external cues
- Strength
  - Fatigue and distress
## Cognitive Behavioral Therapy: Self-Monitoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time eating began/time eating ended</th>
<th>Food eaten: Type and quantity</th>
<th>Meal (M) Snack (S) Binge (B)</th>
<th>With whom and location of eating</th>
<th>Activity while eating</th>
<th>Eating speed (0-10) 1=very slow 10=very fast</th>
<th>Other eating-style behaviors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exercise:</td>
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Exercise:
## Binge Triggers Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Binge circumstances</th>
<th>Events prior to binge</th>
<th>Mood prior to binge</th>
<th>Thoughts prior to binge</th>
<th>Coping alternatives used and degree of success</th>
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Self-Regulation Failure: Misregulation

- Inadequate or wrong knowledge
  - Incorrect cues for hunger/satiety
  - Childhood patterns, family influence
  - Media

- Trying to control the uncontrollable
  - Genetic influence over body types
  - Are “those bodies” possible??
  - Are diets effective??
Spiraling Distress: BN

Preoccupation/Anticipation

Binge/Intoxication

Compensation

Withdrawal/Negative Affect

Preoccupation/Anticipation

Binge

Binge/Intoxication

Withdrawal/Negative Affect
Spiraling Distress: BED

Preoccupation/Anticipation

Binge/Intoxication

Dieting attempts

Withdrawal/Negative Affect

Preoccupation/Anticipation

Binge/Intoxication

Withdrawal/Negative Affect

Binge