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## 4-Week Mindfulness Skills Workshop with Clinical Psychologist Dr. Megan Pietrucha *Transformation Weight Control*

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This 4-week workshop is designed to help you develop and deepen your mindfulness practice, with a particular focus on its applications for weight loss, preventing regain, and handling general life stress. Each session will introduce you to different mindfulness exercises, followed by group discussions, journaling, and processing to help integrate the practice into your everyday life. The goal is to increase your ability to manage stress and food cravings, and enhance mindful choices that support your health and well-being.

**Commitment:** You will be expected to complete weekly homework assignments, including practicing mindfulness exercises daily outside of the group sessions. This will help you fully integrate the skills you'll be learning into your daily life, especially as they relate to managing your stress and mindful eating.

### **Week 1: Introduction to Mindfulness and Body Awareness**

**Focus:** Introduction to mindfulness and how it can be applied to stress reduction, weight management, and healthy eating.

First, we'll review the foundations and attitudes of mindfulness and basic mindfulness skills to increase awareness of thoughts, emotions, and bodily experiences.

**Handouts:** Attitudes of mindfulness, Observing & Describing skills of Mindfulness, Mindfulness Core Skills Calendar  
**Exercises:**

1. Mindful breathing
2. Body scan meditation (focusing on physical sensations)
3. Group Processing: Discuss experiences of practicing mindfulness and its effects on stress and eating habits.

**Homework:** Practice mindful breathing and the body scan 3 to 5 times throughout the week. Journal about your experience and/or use the "Mindfulness Core Skills Calendar" to document your observations. Also, please bring a small snack to the next group (i.e. raisins, nuts, cranberries, grapes, etc.). We will use the food to engage in a mindful eating exercise together.

### **Week 2: Mindful Eating and Emotional Awareness**

**Focus:** Exploring the connection between thoughts, emotions, food, and stress. Learning to eat mindfully without distractions.

**Handouts:** Wise Mind, Balancing Doing Mind and Being Mind, Emotional Awareness and Urge Surfing  
**Exercises:**

1. Mindful eating (slowing down and paying attention to the sensory experience of eating)
2. "Urge surfing": Noticing emotional, cognitive, and environmental triggers for impulsive or over eating
3. Group Processing: Discuss how emotions impact food choices and how mindfulness can change the way you eat.

**Homework:** Practice mindful eating at least 3 times during the week. Reflect on any emotional, cognitive, bodily experiences, or environmental situations related to eating and journal about them.

### **Week 3: Stress Reduction and Mindfulness in Everyday Life**

**Focus:** Explore how non-judgmental mindfulness can increase self-compassion which can reduce your stress and improve decision-making in everyday situations, including those related to health, food, and body weight.

**Handouts:** Stress Reduction, Practicing Loving Kindness, Nonjudgmental Calendar

**Exercises:**

1. Meditation for stress reduction and self-compassion.
2. Noticing negative self-talk and shame experiences and practicing softening these impulses with mindful awareness and non-judgment.

3. **Group Processing:** Discuss how mindlessness and stress has affected food and exercise behaviors in your daily life and weight management.

Homework: Practice mindful self-compassion and cognitive reframing using the “Nonjudgmental Calendar” and “Loving Kindness” worksheets. Journal about the experience and any changes in how you respond to shame, stress and food.

#### **Week 4: Building Long-Term Mindfulness Habits**

Focus: Establishing a sustainable mindfulness practice for ongoing stress management and weight control.

Handouts: Ideas for Practicing Balancing Doing Mind and Being Mind Exercises:

1. Guided self-efficacy and confidence meditation.
2. Reviewing your progress and setting future mindfulness goals.
3. **Group Processing:** Reflect on the progress you’ve made over the past 4 weeks and create an individual mindfulness practice plan for continued and sustainable success.

Homework: Create and follow your own a personalized mindfulness plan that includes daily practices for stress management and mindful eating. (Focus on extending your practice for another 4 weeks at which time there will be a group check-in via the TWC Message Board on 3/26/25.)

**Closing Notes:** At the end of the series, you will have developed a solid foundation in mindfulness techniques, as well as practical strategies for using mindfulness in your daily life, particularly when it comes to weight management and reducing stress. Continuing to practice mindfulness will support your ongoing journey toward healthier living.

#### **About Dr. Pietrucha**

Dr. Pietrucha is a licensed clinical and sports psychologist. She specializes in eating concerns, body image, college student and athlete mental health, mood disorders, life transitions, stress management, effective communication, and performance psychology. Dr. Pietrucha also provides assessment services, supervision, and clinical consultation. She completed her bachelor's degree in psychology from Illinois Wesleyan University and her master's and doctoral degrees in clinical psychology from the Illinois School of Professional Psychology at Argosy University.

