

Solutions: Support for Emotional and Binge Eating

Session 3: The Different Parts of My Emotional Eating

Check-In

What is a success and a challenge from the past week? How did you support yourself through these experiences?

Did you try any new natural reinforcers? Did you enjoy them?

How can the group support you this week?

Quote of the Week

Healing can be so hard when your inner child wants love, your teenage self wants revenge, and your current self only wants peace.

-Unknown

Session 3: Defining My Compulsive Habit

Continuing to use a substance or engaging in a behavior despite negative consequences to multiple areas of my life.

Our Different Parts of Self

- We internalize models of parents, children, and adults and utilize those models in our external and internal relationship roles.
- We want to learn to integrate the voices; or identify “Who’s in charge here?”



Parent Voice

State of consciousness in which people think, feel, behave, and believe by modeling the previously observed and learned actions of parents, or other authority figures and institutions, and how they interpreted those actions.

- Nurturing Parent
- Critical Parent

Nurturing Parent

- Caring and concerned.
- Tries to keep the Child safe by establishing clear and reasonable boundaries with growing autonomy as the child demonstrates maturity.
- Offers unconditional love and acceptance
- Comforts the Child
- Helps the child learn to deal with emotional issues.

Critical Parent

- Tries to compel the Child do as the parent wants them to do, usually by establishing strict, sometimes harsh, absolute boundaries.
- The Child's behavior is regulated through guilt, shame, and criticism.
- Offers only conditional love and acceptance, earned only through absolute obedience to the Parent's rules and expectations.

Child Voice

State of consciousness in which people think, feel, behave, and believe as they did in childhood.

- Natural Child
- Rebellious Child

Natural Child

- The **Natural Child** is comprised of the Little Professor (curious and exploring) and the Free Child (open, trusting and vulnerable)
- Actions are spontaneous, sensual, inquisitive, trusting, but also egocentric, reckless, shameless, angry, aggressive, spiteful, and uncooperative.
- The Natural Child says “I want...”

Rebellious Child

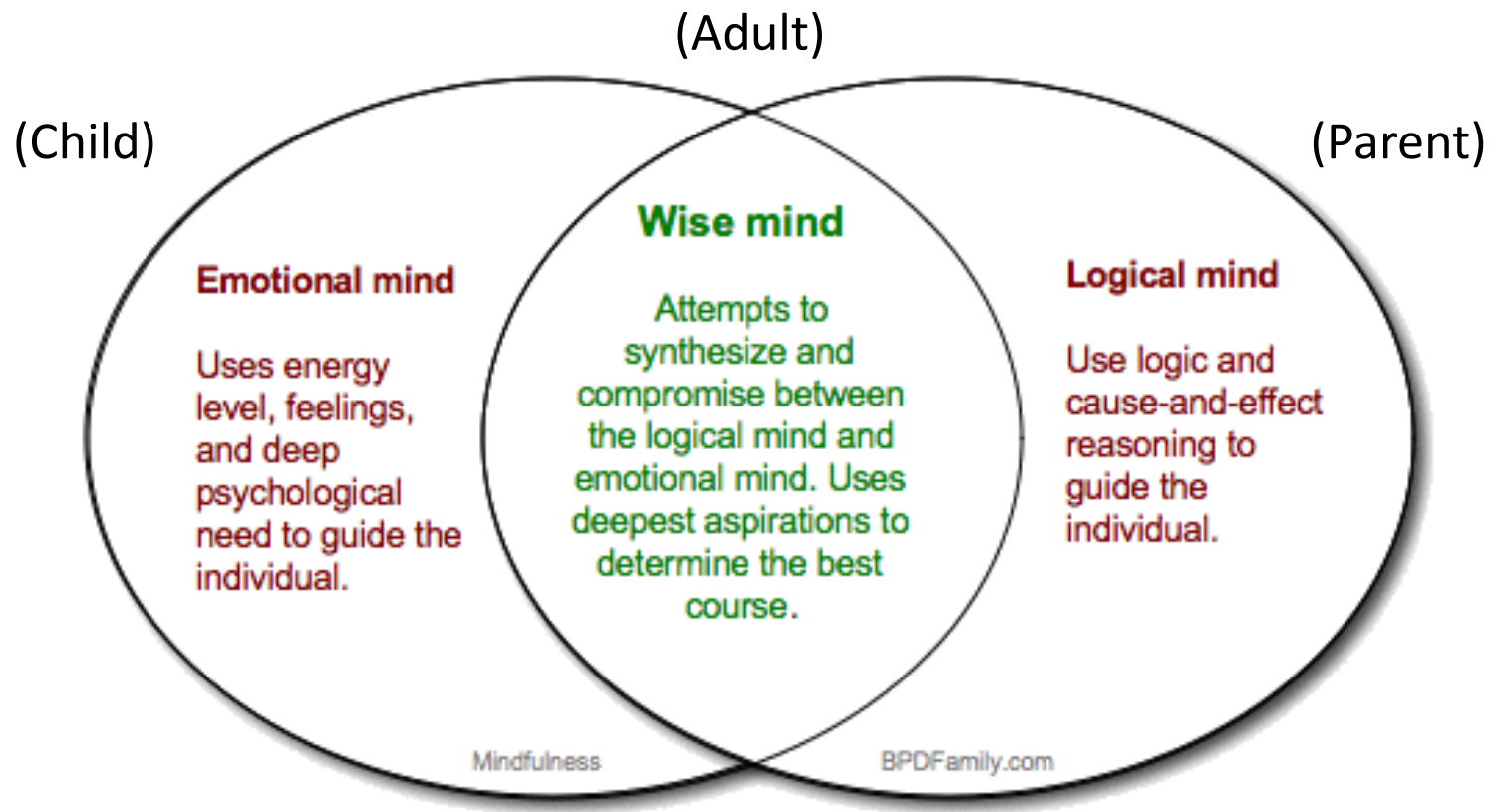
- Reacts to the world around it, either changing self to fit in or rebelling against the boundaries and rules that prevent meeting the emotional and other needs of self.
- Lacks trust in self and others, is suspicious, manipulative, devious, and negative about self and others.
- The Rebellious Child says “I need...”

Adult Voice

State of consciousness in which people think, feel, behave, and believe in response to what is going on in the present, using their resources as an adult human being with prior life experience as a guide.

Adult Voice

- The ideal, rational part of self who acts reasonably and assertively in relationships with others.
- Internally, the Adult doesn't try to control the behavior of the Child or the Parent, instead acts as neutral arbiter or referee.
- Comfortable with and accepting of others and self.



Inter- and Intrapersonal Communication Patterns

- Each communication exchange is a transaction. Internal communications (the chatter in our heads) are also transactions.
- These transactions are often life-long scripts continually reenacted. The familiar scripts give us a sense of control and identity and reassure us, even when they produce negative consequences for us.
- Many interpersonal and intrapersonal problems and life-long issues come from transactions which are unsuccessful.

Inter- and Intrapersonal Communications (Transactions)

- Parent and Child parts of consciousness usually evoke each other (Rebellious Child will usually evoke the Critical Parent in self and others).
- Acting as an Adult usually evokes the Adult.

Discussion Question

What does your Critical Parent voice sound like? Whose voice is it? Critical, controlling, censoring statements

- "I shouldn't be eating that"
- "What is wrong with you?"
- "Stop eating that, you'll gain the weight back"
- "You should be more in control"
- "I knew you would mess up! Just give up, you can't do it!"
- "You can't leave the table until your plate is clean, there are starving children in the world."

Discussion Question

What does your Rebellious Child Voice sound like?

Includes excuses to use behaviors; comes from defensiveness

- “I’ve been so good today, I deserve this!”
- “It’s not fair.”
- “I can eat this today. I’ll just exercise more later.”
- “I’ve already failed my diet today, I might as well have it all.”
- “I’m tired of being so good all the time!”
- “I’ll just have a little bit, no one will know.”

Discussion Question

What do your critical parent and rebellious child voices sound like together?

Example:

Critical Parent: “I need to stay on track today so I don’t feel like a failure.”

Rebellious Child: “I want it and I deserve it. I’m too tired to use coping skills right now.”

Critical Parent: “Just give up, you always fail eventually!”

Rebellious Child: “Now I *need* to eat so I don’t have to feel this bad anymore.”

How do we strengthen the Adult Voice?

- Validate the Critical Parent voice's intention of care for the Child.
What care is the Parent trying to give?
- Validate the emotions and needs of the Rebellious Child voice.
What care does the Child need?
- Find a compromise that best matches the care needed and the care being given based on present-moment circumstances.

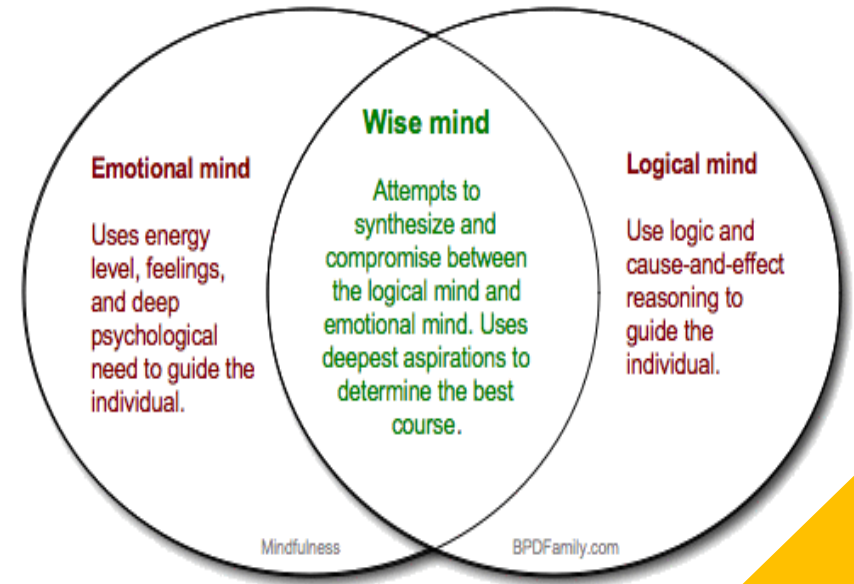
TIP: Acknowledge the unwanted behavior as a means to take care of yourself vs judging the behavior and denying underlying needs.

Discussion Question

What does/could your Adult Voice sound like?

Adult voice: *“Even though it feels like my rebellious child is in control right now, I can make a different choice that supports me. I can thank my old coping skills for being a source of comfort for me when I had no other recourse. But, now I have other options and tools, so I can take care of myself in other ways.”*

“What I’m feeling is loneliness, not hunger. I’ll call a good friend first and have this cookie later if I still want it.”



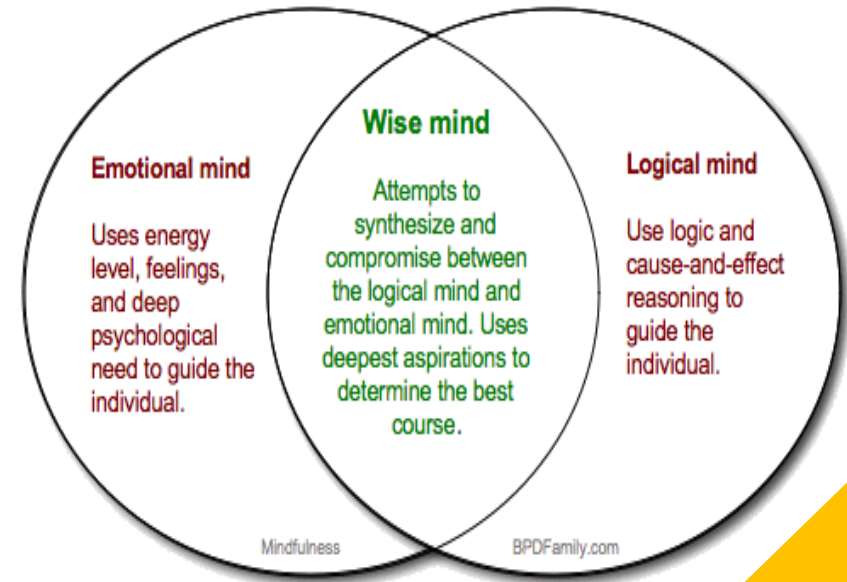
Discussion Question

What does/could your Adult Voice sound like?

Situation: going down the snack aisle at the grocery store and see my favorite cookies. I really want to eat those cookies.

Adult voice: *“I know if I take the bag home, I will eat it all. Instead, I can go to another area of the store and purchase two cookies to take home with me. That way I don’t have to depend so much on self-control.”*

“If I don’t take home cookies, what else can I enjoy once I’m home.”



Flow Chart for Compulsive Habits

- I feel bad. I want to feel good. A behavior helps me *feel good*.
- I feel bad more often. I choose to engage in the *feel good* behavior more often.
- My Parent tries to rein in the *feel good* behavior using guilt and shame.
- I use the *feel good* behavior to overcome the guilt and shame.
- My Parent becomes Critical and makes rules against the *feel good* behavior.

Flow Chart for Compulsive Habits

- My Child rebels against the rules and demands the *feel good* behavior.
- My Critical Parent becomes more restrictive, controlling, and censoring, attempting to enforce the rules and stop the *feel good* behavior.
- My Rebellious Child becomes my compulsive voice and defies the Critical Parent.
- I identify with my Critical Parent wanting to please it and be loved and accepted.

Flow Chart for Compulsive Habits

- I begin to perceive my compulsive habit as outside myself and out of my control.
- My compulsive voice becomes insistent, whining, wheedling, manipulative, and never relenting.
- My compulsive voice gives me excuses to engage in my compulsive behavior.
- My compulsive voice distorts reality, twisting the rules of my restrictive voice.

Flow Chart for Compulsive Habits

- The importance of the compulsive *feel good* behavior increases and it displaces other activities.
- People who try to interfere with my compulsive behavior become targets of my rage and blame.
- I sacrifice people, intimacy, and previously pleasurable activities to my compulsions.
- I isolate myself from others. Only my compulsive behavior matters.
- I am consumed by my compulsions.

Discussion Questions

- Where do you currently see yourself in the flow chart?
- What have you sacrificed to compulsive habits?
- What do you think will stop you from moving to the next step of the flow chart?

Any last thoughts or questions?