



Presentation by Carrie Kirkpatrick & Nicole Rue

### **RECAP ON THE TOPIC:**

Keep in mind when you share the kitchen with your children:

- Recognize your own issues around wanting to nurture and protect your children
  - We often utilize food as a way for pleasure-seeking and to avoid pain
  - Control - let our kids have some say in what they'll eat or won't eat
  - Phases- kids oftentimes go through phases in foods they want to eat, sometimes options are unhealthy but not worth fighting over (which can have long term deleterious effects in its own right)
  - Sharing what's going on with us (internally) - Can be helpful for kids to relate to parents' struggles/feelings as long as they don't feel responsible for their parents' care; Parents are often invisible in their minds, they assume we have it all together
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- Prioritize Family Meals:  
Encourage them to help prepare food with you once a week, that involvement is important.
  - Never talk about portion size, allow them to decide how much they will eat
  - Light-touch and curiosity on conversations about food and the conclusions they have come to on certain foods.
  - Kids are perceptive, it's not always about the content of what you're saying they pay attention to but your behavior (so if a parent is crash dieting but touting balanced eating practices for health, there is a disconnect)
  - Listen to your body to find out what it needs, our bodies are incredibly intelligent
  - Talk about exercise as it relates to a strategy for stress relief; not body
  - Avoid discussing weight
  - Do not talk about food in an effort to change your child's weight
  - Divorce the language around weight, health, and food.



## Feelings & Food Takeaways

### **MAIN TAKEAWAYS:**

#### **Mealtime:**

1. When drama occurs around meal times and feelings are heightened, it's best to wait for another time or day to negotiate about food after strong feelings have subsided
2. Picky eaters: Parents may offer a couple of options prior to mealtime so food selections feel like more of a joint decision

#### **Model what to say to them:**

1. Social currency at school lunches - Insecure about food and being accepted by our friends/peers. Comparing what I eat to others and the high value of fitting in adolescence. How do people feel about me? (Notice the subtext in your child when relational insecurities may be at the forefront of conversations about food)
2. When kids say self-derogatory comments about their relationship to food and/or their bodies- The immediate impulse is to reassure them but try to avoid jumping to that reaction first. Instead, hold space and listen to their feelings. Acknowledgment and validation of feelings increase the feeling of being understood.
3. ***"I hear you say that you feel out of control with your eating right now. It sounds like you're afraid nothing will help you. I want you to know you can always come to me and I love you, even when these kinds of thoughts get their hold on you"***
4. Unhelpful comments from family members (different generations) surrounding food:
  - a. Encourage open discussion about value-laden communication in food talk, identify outdated, unhealthy, and/or misinformed information about food
5. Respond to feelings kids share about their relationship to food with statements that validate the underlying emotional communication first: ie. *"I can't stop eating when I get home from school and it's disgusting."*  
***"You feel helpless when you can't control your eating."*** Linger here, help them find words to describe the feelings (fear, anger, shame, sadness, etc)