



Mind Matters

COACHING, COUNSELING & PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATES

Monthly Newsletter

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Clinician Spotlight:

Annalisa Bova, MSW, LCSW

Annalisa is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who graduated from Marywood University and received a Masters of Social Work degree. Annalisa attended SUNY Oneonta for her undergraduate education and earned a Bachelor of Science in Child and Family Studies. Annalisa has been working in an outpatient setting for over five years.

Annalisa has experience working with adults, adolescents and children. Annalisa has experience with but not limited to bereavement, parenting issues, depression, anxiety, and mood disorders. Annalisa has a strong passion for eating disorders and self-esteem issues in men and women. Annalisa identifies as an anti-diet therapist and utilizes intuitive eating principles when treating eating disorders. Annalisa uses cognitive behavioral therapy to deconstruct and reframe negative thinking patterns. Annalisa provides positive reinforcement and uses the humanistic theory to allow for a safe and inviting environment.

Annalisa commissioned in the Pennsylvania Army National Guard as a Behavioral Health Officer in 2018. Annalisa has a passion for working with active military as well as veterans. Annalisa's hands on experience in the military helps with understanding the cultural and social dynamics of the military.



Intuitive Eating

'The holiday times are among us and most of us struggle have struggled with food or know a loved when that has struggled with food. If you've ever struggled with dieting, food rules, or the endless cycle of restriction and indulgence, then intuitive eating might be just what you need to rediscover your natural relationship with food.

What Is Intuitive Eating?

Intuitive eating is not a diet. It's a philosophy and practice that encourages individuals to reconnect with their body's natural hunger and fullness cues, promoting a healthier, more balanced relationship with food. Developed by two dietitians in the 1990s, intuitive eating focuses on rejecting the diet mentality and instead embracing self-compassion, flexibility, and mindfulness.

Rather than counting calories or following external rules, intuitive eating allows you to listen to your body's cues and eat in a way that feels good for you. It's about tuning in to your physical hunger and satisfaction signals, as well as honoring your emotional needs without guilt or shame.

This theory has been out since the 90's but in the 90's this theory fell off due to the diet industry. Specific diet programs and diet pills were the big corporations making money off of people and weight loss.

The 10 Principles of Intuitive Eating

To better understand intuitive eating, let's look at its foundational principles:

1. *Reject the Diet Mentality:* Let go of the belief that there's a "perfect" way to eat. Ditch the dieting mindset and all the shame that comes with it.
2. *Honor Your Hunger:* Feed your body when it signals hunger. Starving yourself leads to overeating later.
3. *Make Peace with Food:* Give yourself permission to eat all foods without guilt. All foods can fit into a balanced, satisfying diet.
4. *Challenge the Food Police:* Combat the inner critic that labels foods as "good" or "bad." There are no moral judgments when it comes to food.
5. *Feel Your Fullness:* Pay attention to your body's signals of fullness and satisfaction. Eat until you're comfortably full, not stuffed.
6. *Discover the Satisfaction Factor:* Eating should be enjoyable. Choose foods that you truly enjoy and savor every bite.
7. *Honor Your Feelings Without Using Food:* Find ways to cope with emotions without turning to food, whether it's through exercise, journaling, or talking to a friend.
8. *Respect Your Body:* Appreciate your body for all it does for you. Stop comparing yourself to others and focus on what makes your body feel good.
9. *Exercise—Feel the Difference:* Focus on movement that feels good for your body, not as a form of punishment.
10. *Honor Your Health with Gentle Nutrition:* Nourish your body with foods that make you feel energized, but don't stress over perfection.

Why Intuitive Eating Works

Intuitive eating isn't about restrictions or rigid rules. It's about reconnecting with your body's innate wisdom. Over time, diets can damage your relationship with food and your body. Intuitive eating, on the other hand, fosters a sense of peace, freedom, and respect for yourself.

- ***Emotional freedom:*** You stop obsessing over what you should eat and instead enjoy food with less stress.
- ***Improved body image:*** As you focus on health and how foods make you feel, rather than on how they make you look, your body image naturally improves.
- ***Sustainable habits:*** Unlike diets that often lead to short-term results and eventual relapse, intuitive eating encourages sustainable, long-term habits.

How to Start Practicing Intuitive Eating

If you're ready to take the leap into intuitive eating, here are some practical tips to help you get started:

1. *Begin with curiosity:* Start by noticing when you're hungry and how different foods make you feel. Try to tune into your body's signals and ask yourself what you need at any given moment.
2. *Let go of food rules:* If you've been following strict rules about what's "healthy" or "unhealthy," begin to challenge those thoughts. All foods can be part of a balanced eating plan.
3. *Mind your portions without restriction:* Rather than measuring or limiting, listen to your body's fullness cues. Stop eating when you're satisfied, not stuffed.
4. *Eat without distractions:* Turn off the TV, put down your phone, and truly savor your food. Mindful eating can help you recognize hunger and fullness cues more clearly.
5. *Practice self-compassion:* If you find yourself overeating or eating when you're not hungry, be kind to yourself. Intuitive eating isn't about perfection, it's about progress.

Intuitive eating invites you to let go of rigid food rules and diets and instead reconnect with your body's innate wisdom. By practicing mindfulness, honoring your hunger, and learning to trust your body, you can build a lasting, positive relationship with food and improve your overall well-being.

Stay nourished and listen to your body!