

# **How Emotional Starvation lead to Overeating**

## **Introspection through the relationship with food and eating - As a creative way of Empathy**

**Roni Maislish, M.S.W**

Part 1

Background – How many times you had been surprised by overweight patients that told you to "fix them quickly", who for years after years trying to lose weight, sometime seceded and then gain the weight back? How many times your faith in your patient dissipate and you felt anger and frustration that he or she is not committed enough to the process? And how many times you felt that you are not able to understand emphatically (near-experience) why those patients can't keep on fighting, controlling and avoiding in their food and eating's issues? and how many times you realize and told yourself that something is missing?

For all those of you psychotherapists from a variety of methods and approach who are dealing with the emotional aspect of overeating, overweight, emotional eating, emotional non-eating, non-acute eating disorder, obesity and more – you all most welcome to this presentation where you become familiar, study and also go in depth to a new dimension which will enable you to see, understand and experience the "food and eating's issue" not as a "problem to solve" but as a unique way that a specific person use to "tell his story" while he integrate and keep safe his "self". And From this kind of listening stance, we will be able to make place to our patients, while helping them finding their own subjective way toward healing and restoring their wounded, un-develop and neglected self.

The presentation – In the beginning I will present my attitude in the last 15 years (which I am changing and modifying in time) for dealing with emotional eating's issues. I will share with you my own straggles, dilemmas and personal questions that occupied me since early childhood and connect it to my journey (both personal, academic and professional) and how I established and combined theories which gradually help me to meet myself and my patients from a "different" perspective.

Later on, I will present the "Self-Psychology" paradigm while understanding deeply that defense and resistance is not something that the therapist need to break, remove, overcome, or even to melt. On the contrary. We will explore the emotional reasons for the gaining weight's process as a reminder from a depress self which struggle to survive a non-emphatic world. This self, as I see it, is still hoping that someone (maybe the therapist) will see beyond the "fat story" and help the patient to restart its "inner self program" and recover those years of deprivation.

If we will have enough time, I will also speak about Didier Anzieu's work (manly his book: "I-Skin", in French : "La Moi-Peau") who dealt on the emotional-sensorial clothing ("I-Skin") that a human being wear from early childhood and making adaptation trough the years to avoid invasiveness and secure the self from hurts and fragmentation.

In his work Anzieu present 8 functions of this psyche-soma clothing like holding, handling and more. In my work, regarding Anzieu's ideas, I explore the fat, and its role to establish and contributing to the building of those 8 functions in case that the self is no longer develop normally. For instance, we will learn together about the connection of the stimulation-shield function in the "I-Skin" clothing to the gaining weight process to build a "fat armor" against attacks on the self.

The combination between Anzieu's theory and Kohut's perspective, while adding the work of Eigen (Toxic Nourishment, Emotional Starvation) and McDougall (Theatres of the Body) – will help us to build new platforms and ideas which will open new possibilities to understand the patient's pain, to find beauty in his defensive-structure (his overeating patterns) and further on to develop the patient self-ability to heal and grow himself.

Then we will have time for Q & A

Break – 15 min

Part 2 – Experimental work – “mindfulness lunch”

The main part in this section will be the "mindfulness meal" where we will be able, to search different possibilities to help our patients connecting between their relationship with food/eating to others relationship (family, marriage, career, friends, money, faith and more). In this mindfulness-experiential process, we will use motives like choice, miss, lose, regret, planning, disintegration, esthetics and more. My guiding questions will help the participants to explore new directions in their therapeutic work including a more pro-active approach about how a change in a relationship (for example with money) might lead to a change with his/her relationship with food and eating.

Please bring food to the presentation (few types of food so you will have the feeling of choosing from a buffet and try to come hungry but not starving around noon time).

If we will have enough time, we will practice the question: “for what I am really hungry for? (The dialogue between emotional hunger and physical hunger) and mediate on the **"role of the fat"** and more.

Part 3 - We will complete our journey with sharing, and we will have a time for discussion.

Learning objectives:

1. The students will learn to approach obesity from a social-emotional perspective.
2. The students will understand both theoretical and clinical, how the self-psychology's paradigm is being practiced through the relationship with food and eating.
3. The students will learn the meaning of the term empathic self-object.

Price: 75 Euros

Date: February the 19<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM (GMT), February 5<sup>th</sup> at 5 PM (GMT)

For registration, send me an email to [ronimaislish33@gmail.com](mailto:ronimaislish33@gmail.com)

**About the instructor –Roni Maislish M.A (psychotherapist and clinical social worker).**

From 2005 I am working with overweight's patients dealing with emotional eating who suffer most of their childhood from emotional long-term neglected. Between 2018-2020 I worked in Tel Hashomer (Sheba) hospital in an overweight treatment center (part of the endocrine institute) Between 2006-2011 I saw eating disorder's patients (and their parents) in Soroka Hospital. From 2007 I am working as emotional eating's therapist. Among my work I am leading groups both for therapist and non-therapist, short workshop and year-long dynamic-study groups. Beside working with patients, I involve deeply in education-prevention roles in schools, pre-school, eating disorder's clinics, dietitians, mantel health department, and much more .in 2008 I participated in a 6-day retreat in California leaded by Geneen Roth (the auteur of the bestseller "When food is Love").