

# Food and Mood Toolbox: Coping Methods and Emotional Eating

Eating in response to our feelings can be part of a healthy relationship with food, as long as food is not our only coping method. It's important to keep in mind that food will not solve the root problem of how we are feeling.

Try the **HALTS method** to ask yourself if you are really feeling:

**H** Hungry?

**A** Angry?

**L** Lonely?

**T** Tired?

**S** Stressed?

It can be helpful to make a list of other coping methods before you start feeling this way. Food cravings can mean that you need to add more pleasurable moments in your life! **Brainstorm and pick coping methods that bring you pleasure.**

**Fill in the toolbox below with your coping methods:**

Take a walk outside

Exercise and stretch

Take a bubble bath

Drink water

Meditate

Do yoga

Journal

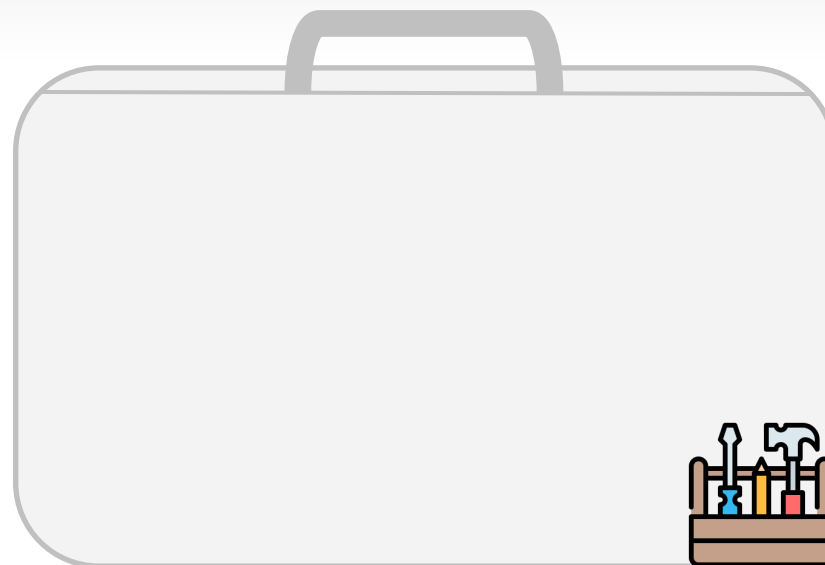
Practice gratitude

Call a loved one

Try breathing exercises

**For kids:** Create a sensory toolkit with playdoh, fidget toys, crayons, stuffed animals.

**Comfort foods** can be part of your toolbox too! The point is to have many coping methods to help you feel better.



- If you are feeling **hungry and stressed**, try these good-for-you crunchy foods to help with stress: Apples, carrots, snap peas, peppers, cucumbers, nuts (especially pistachios in the shell) and popcorn drizzled with olive oil.
- **We can teach kids about coping methods too!** It's important to not always use food to calm emotions because kids may start to rely on food to help them soothe and feel better. Brainstorm coping methods with your kids when they are not feeling upset to help them manage their emotions. You can add coping methods to your toolbox together!