



## Eating Together Brings You Together



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*Content on this side is intended for the educator's reference. The information on the back can be photocopied and shared with clients.*

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**Objective:** Clients will recognize the health and relationship benefits of eating meals together as a couple and/or family.

**Audience:** Use this tool to help clients identify how their relationship may be shaped by their eating habits. This tool may also be useful for clients who report having limited time with their partner.

**Estimated Time:** 10-15 minutes

**Educator Instructions:** After reviewing the instructions on the tool, have the clients share some examples of what a typical mealtime looks like in their family. When they eat together, talk about how this makes them feel. When they eat separately or with distractions, talk about how that feels. Encourage your clients to consider ways of using meal times to focus on their partner (and/or children). *Also, to promote healthy eating, share additional resources that can help your client choose and prepare healthy meals.*

**Discussion Starter:** Think about a typical meal. Do you and your partner and/or children usually eat together? Did you know something as simple as eating meals with your partner could strengthen your relationship? For instance, when both partners support one another in losing weight and exercising, they report less conflict and actually are likely to achieve their goal for weight loss. Though eating healthy is an important part of caring for ourselves, spending meal time together with your partner may also be good for your relationship. Eating meals at the same time allows partners to chat about daily events and catch up with everything going on in each other's lives. If free time is hard to come by, it is important that you take any opportunity you can get to connect with your partner. I have a simple worksheet that will help you figure out whether your daily eating habits affect your relationship. I would like you to track your meal time behaviors for the next week and think about some changes you could make to find more time together.

**Follow-up:** During your next visit, talk about how eating together affected their relationship and what types of changes they noticed. If it was helpful, have them talk about why eating together made them more satisfied with their relationship. If not, ask "Did anything keep you from enjoying meal time with your partner?" Talk about how they can minimize distractions or barriers to help make their experience with their partner more enjoyable.





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Eating healthy and exercising are two important ways to take care of yourself. A healthy lifestyle can also be good for your relationships. Couples who eat meals together and talk about the things going on in their life tend to be happier and more satisfied with their relationships.

Sometimes work schedules and other activities interfere with shared mealtimes. The important thing is to find a time that works for you – it can be breakfast, lunch, dinner, or even snack time. Try to eat together at least 5 times every week. Limit distractions, including the TV, and focus on each other. Encourage each family member to talk about good things that happened that day and things you are looking forward to in the next few days.

During the next week, fill in the chart below. At the end of the week, talk with your partner and/or children about changes you all saw in how you got along. Were you more positive? Did you feel more connected? What did you learn?

	What meal(s) did you have together?	Who was there?	What went well? Why?	What could you do differently to make it more enjoyable?
Sunday				
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				

***Spend mealtime together to improve your health and strengthen your relationship!***