

# Honouring Your Body's Hunger and Fullness Cues



**AUDIENCE**  
Late Primary, Secondary



**SESSION LENGTH**  
40 mins

## About BodyKind Schools

BodyKind Schools runs every September in conjunction with Body Image and Eating Disorder Awareness Week (BIEAW). BodyKind Schools main call to action is kindness; it encourages young people to be *kind* to their own body and to others. Online, face to face, everywhere!

## Why supporting students to honour their body cues is important.

Unfortunately, many young people skip meals or avoid eating at school. There may be a number of reasons why this happens, but by doing so young people may struggle to meet their nutritional needs which can impact their growth and development and also can lower their immunity.

Skipping meals can also lead to persistent hunger which can impact mental and physical health and wellbeing, contributing to young people feeling tired, moody or irritable. It can impact their ability to focus and concentrate and can hinder academic performance at school. It can also increase the likelihood of binge eating episodes and increase their risk of developing disordered eating.

This activity aims to help young people be BodyKind, by acknowledging and positively responding to their hunger and fullness cues.

To learn more, see the Body Kind tip Sheet for Educators *"Creating a Positive Eating Environment for Students at School"*

### To find out more, contact:

E: [education@butterfly.org.au](mailto:education@butterfly.org.au)  
[www.butterfly.org.au](http://www.butterfly.org.au)

### ACTIVITY AIM :

This activity encourages young people to be BodyKind by helping them to become aware of their own body's hunger and fullness cues.

It guides students to identify their emotional and physical cues for hunger and fullness, and to develop strategies which honour and respect those cues.

### HOW TO RUN – Honouring Your Body's Hunger and Fullness Cues

#### You will need:

- Pens and printed Student Activity Sheets.

#### For the extension activity:

- Coloured, Cardboard,
  - Pen, Pencils, Textas, Glue sticks,
  - Old magazines (optional)
- Introduce the activity - you can use the notes on the left-hand side and the first 2 paragraphs on the next page.
- Discuss the reasons **why** we lose the ability to be body aware and tune into our hunger and fullness cues. You could highlight the following:
- Relying on external cues, such as following any diet plan or strict eating patterns and relying on the opinions of others will disrupt and negatively impact our hunger and fullness cues.
  - It's diet culture that tells us that we need external rules to keep our bodies under control
  - When it is ignored, our body begins to lose trust that we will respond to it in the appropriate way.
- Next, provide each student with the *Honouring Your Hunger and Fullness Cues Activity Sheets*.
- Students are to work in pairs to answer the questions on the activity sheet and complete the related tasks. If they would prefer to do it alone, that's ok too as the eating experience is unique to everyone.
- After students have completed the activities come together to share their answers and explore the strategies they have identified.
- If time permits or as an extension activity, students may create a poster/collage/illustration depicting the ways that we can nurture and fuel our bodies.

### POST ACTIVITY DISCUSSIONS

1. Why is it important that we practice tuning into our hunger and fullness cues?
2. What part of the activity did you find most interesting? Why?
3. How will you practice body kindness and honour your body cues throughout the school day?

## Teachers Guide

# Honouring Your Hunger and Fullness Cues

### ENSURE A 'DO NO HARM' APPROACH when adopting this activity with students:

- This activity supports students to have a positive relationship with eating.
- Please be aware that students who may be experiencing an eating disorder, in treatment or recovery from an eating disorder may find this content challenging, or even triggering. Please ensure you share this lesson with parents/care-givers prior to running to ensure they can determine suitability of their child being involved.
- It may also pose a challenge for neuro-divergent students and/or students experiencing food insecurity.
- As this activity explores eating and eating practices, it is recommended that this activity be used at the Educator/Teachers discretion.
- Avoid sharing personal details about your own eating experiences.
- Aim to ensure discussions are strength-based.

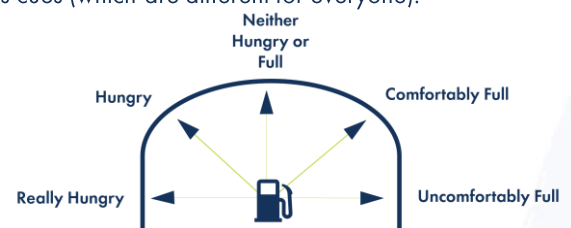
### STEP 1: Introduce BodyKind and the activity.

We are proud to be participating in BodyKind Schools, which is an initiative of Butterfly Foundation. BodyKind Schools aims to raise awareness and promote a positive body image, by being BodyKind. It's not always easy to like, love or appreciate your body so instead BodyKind Schools encourages young people to find ways to be *kind* and practice *kindness* towards their own body and also to others.

Being BodyKind includes nourishing and fuelling our bodies regularly throughout the day with a wide variety of fun and nutritious foods. This is important for our brain and our body, so we can function and perform at our best and ensures we have adequate nutrition to do all the things that are important to us. Skipping a meal occasionally and having fluctuations in our appetite is pretty typical, however if we are not eating regularly and this happens often then it can really impact our mental and physical health; impacting our mood, concentration, we can be more prone to colds, illnesses and also injuries.

As babies we instinctively know how much we need to eat, and we give strong signals that let our parent/care-giver know that we are hungry, full or need more. Unfortunately, as we get older, we listen less to our own body and more to what's happening around us. Maybe we eat what others eat or eat what and when we're told to eat. This can get in the way of us honouring what our own body needs and ignores our hunger and fullness cues (which are different for everyone).

Hunger and fullness sit along a continuum. At different times of the day and even during a meal or snack, we can sit anywhere along that continuum. Imagine it's a bit like a fuel tank gauge in a car! Checking in and tuning into our body cues and being aware of what our body needs will help prevent us from getting too hungry or too full.



We can show our body kindness by eating regular meals and snacks over the day, eating mindfully which involves using all our senses when we eat, sitting down and taking time to eat meals, and eating foods that we like and enjoy that also and importantly nourish our body and mind.

Today, we are going to explore the emotional and physical cues for hunger and fullness and discuss some strategies that can help us honour and respect our own body's cues.

### Step 2: Ask students to:

1. Work in pairs to complete the Activity Sheet
2. Come back together and share their strategies for honouring their bodies hunger and fullness cues.
3. Check in with students at the end and offer a help-seeking reminder.

# Honouring Your Hunger and Fullness Cues Student Activity Sheet (1)

## Activity Outline

Work in pairs (or on your own if you prefer) and answer the questions below, then complete the 3 tasks.

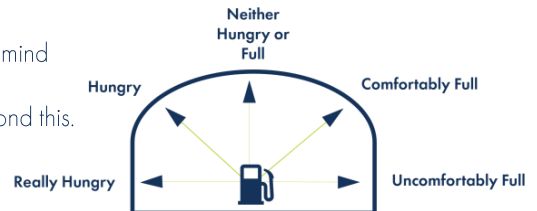
## Identifying and tuning into your body's hunger cues.

When we begin eating, our body will send us cues along the way.

Listening to these cues is really important so at the end of eating, our body and mind feels satisfied, comfortable and no longer hungry.

Remember, sometimes and on special occasions, it's natural and ok to eat beyond this.

Food and eating helps to fuel us but can and should be really enjoyable too!



When are you most hungry in the day?	
What does hungry feel like for you?	
How does being hungry effect your emotions? Do you get moody, grumpy, snappy, silly?	
Where do you feel hunger in your body? Do you get a headache, light-headed, tired, have stomach pains?	
How might being hungry impact your performance/output at school, in sport, dance, in other activities?	

Sometimes talking about our body and eating may be uncomfortable and challenging for some young people.

If this is happening for you, please let you teacher know as it's ok to step out for a while. If after completing this activity you feel you might like to talk to someone about your relationship with eating, please chat with your teacher, school wellbeing staff or a trusted adult.

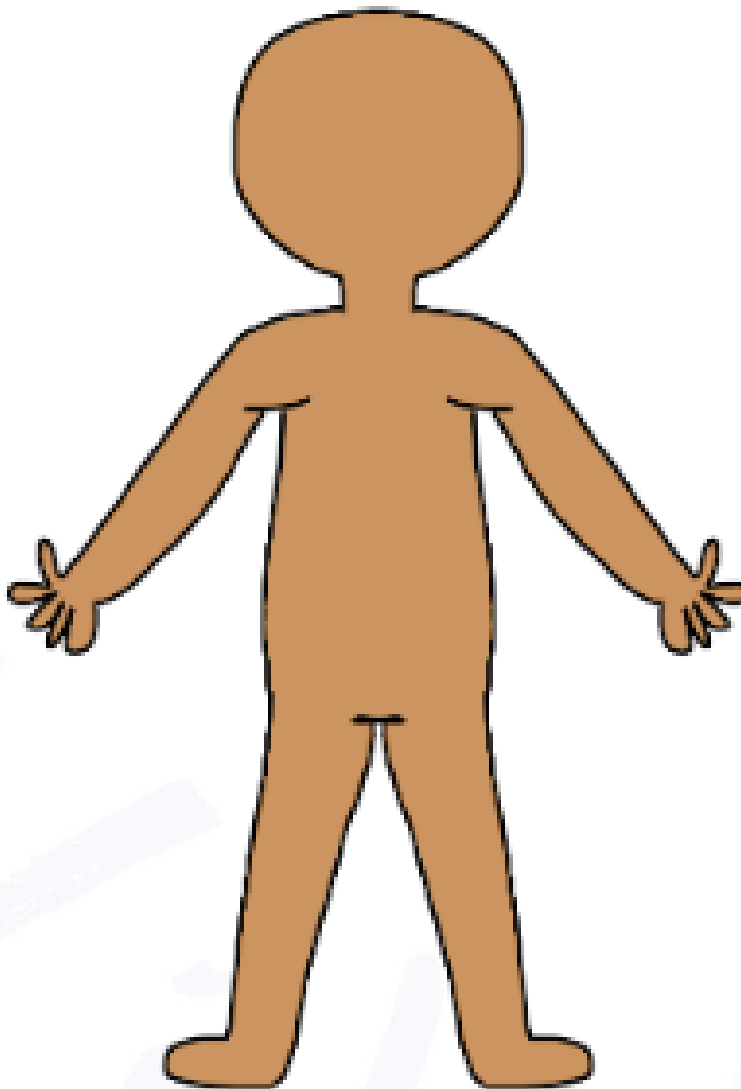
### TALKING HELPS!

Butterfly Foundation operates a free National Helpline for anyone struggling with their body image or eating.  
8am-Midnight (AEST), 7 days a week.  
Phone, webchat or email  
(1800 33 4673)  
[www.butterfly.org.au/helpline](http://www.butterfly.org.au/helpline)

## Honouring Your Hunger and Fullness Cues Student Activity Sheet (2)

**Task 1: Use the figure below to show all the different ways hunger may feel in your body**

1. Draw an arrow to the part of the body where you might feel hunger (note this can be different for different people)
2. Add a descriptive word to explain how it feels.



## Honouring Your Hunger and Fullness Cues Student Activity Sheet (3)

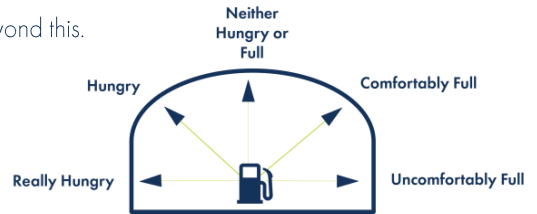
### Identifying and tuning into your body's fullness cues.

When we begin eating, our body will send us cues along the way.

Listening to these cues is really important so at the end of eating, our body and mind feels satisfied, comfortable and no longer hungry.

Remember, sometimes and on special occasions, it's natural and ok to eat beyond this.

Food and eating helps to fuel us but can and should be really enjoyable too!



What does feeling full when eating mean to you? Is it comfortable/uncomfortable?	
What does feeling satisfied around eating mean to you? Are you sharper and able to concentrate on your work and tasks.	
What cue does your body send you to let you know that you're comfortably full? Do you feel happy, content, energized, focused?	
What is something that your body can do better when you are comfortably full and nourished? Do you have more energy for sports and social activities? Do you communicate more clearly?	

Sometimes talking about our body and eating may be uncomfortable or even challenging for some young people.

If this is happening for you, please let your teacher know as it's ok to step out for a while. If after completing this activity you feel you might like to or feel you need to talk to someone about how you're feeling, please chat with your teacher, school wellbeing staff or a trusted adult.

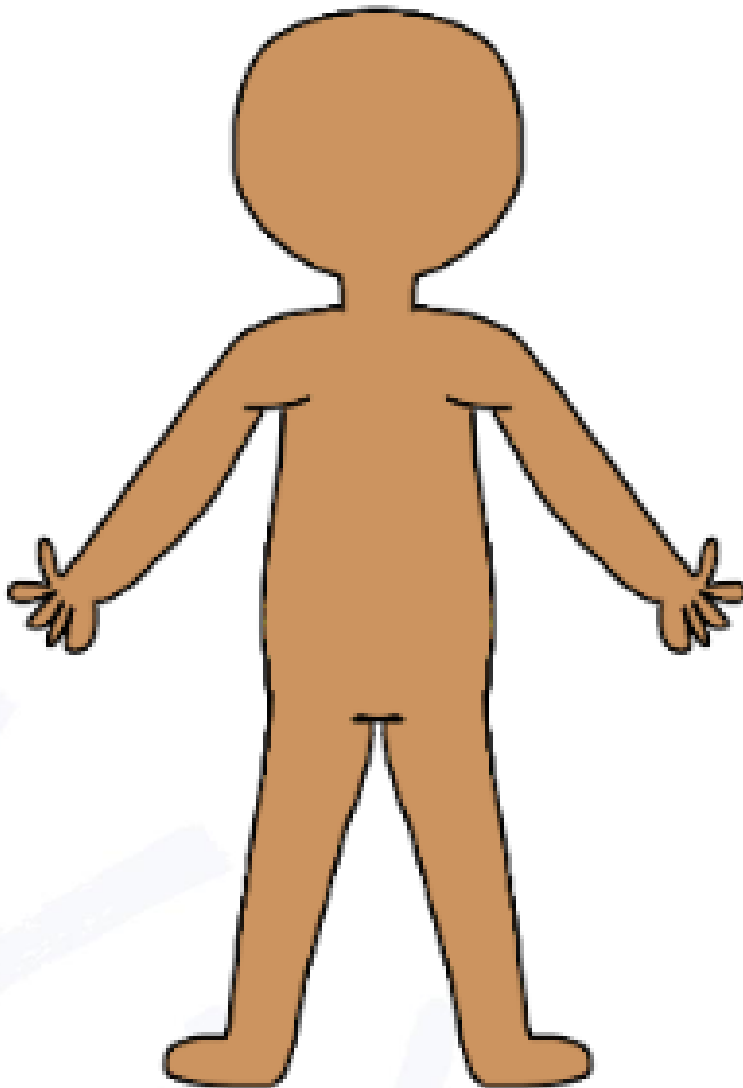
#### TALKING HELPS!

Butterfly Foundation operates a free National Helpline for anyone struggling with their body image or eating.  
8am-Midnight (AEST), 7 days a week.  
Phone, webchat or email  
(1800 33 4673)  
[www.butterfly.org.au/helpline](http://www.butterfly.org.au/helpline)

## Honouring Your Hunger and Fullness Cues Student Activity Sheet (4)

**Task 2: Use the figure below to show how your body can function when it is adequately fueled.**

1. Draw an arrow to the body part (or body system)
2. Use some words to explain how it can function when adequately fueled.



## Honouring Your Hunger and Fullness Cues Student Activity Sheet (5)

**Task 3: Using the bubbles below, what are things you can do to be Body Kind and honour your hunger and fullness cues when eating?**

1. Some examples have been included – circle any that you think might be helpful for you.
2. Add in other strategies that you use or think might be helpful (discuss with your partner, it's ok to share ideas!!)

Plan ahead and prepare the night before so you have snacks and food that you like to take to school.

Be aware of when you are tired/  
bored/stressed/sad  
/excited.  
What non-food related strategies can you use to soothe your mood?

Pause and remove distractions when eating.

Eat slowly and with all your senses!