

Teach sheet B

When does eating well become dieting?

Scenario 1:



Scenario 2:



Scenario 3:



Scenario 4:



The pictures walk you through this scenario: imagine meeting a group of four people who are each eating an apple. When you say - "that sounds crunchy, is it nice?!" - they each reply with the text in the apples on the teach sheet. Who do you think is on the diet?

What makes you suspect this?

Isn't it interesting that even when our behaviour is the same - after all everyone is eating apple - how we experience what we do can be very different for each of us?

If you guessed two people you'd be right.

The activity makes the point that in this context when I say diets and dieting I'm talking about eating that is linked to trying to control weight in any way. I don't mean the special diet for people with a nut allergy, or coeliac disease, for instance.

Another way of talking about dieting is calling it a 'weight-centric' approach to health. This refers to how the focus on weight (thinness) becomes the central goal of public health. In other words, it's centred around weight.

It can also be called 'BMI-based' healthcare for the same reason.

Weight-centric public health services promote the message "eat less, move more" with the goal that people will become thin, and thereby improve health.

This is based on a number of faulty assumptions about weight, social factors, eating, and wellbeing.

Having just spent time thinking through dieting you've reminded yourself that it's simply not a straightforward case of 'eat better, move more, lose weight, feel great.'

The good news is that there are other ways of promoting public health that actually promote public health.