



FROM DIET CULTURE TO FOOD FREEDOM: A RETROSPECTIVE MIXED-METHODS PRACTICE EVALUATION OF INTUITIVE-EATING-INFORMED NON-FORMAL NUTRITION EDUCATION ACTIVITIES IN GREECE

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Abstract:

This retrospective mixed-methods practice evaluation examined participant feedback from a portfolio of intuitive-eating-informed, non-formal nutrition activities delivered in Greece between 2023 and 2026. The portfolio included a webinar on workplace stress and overeating, two in-person overeating workshops, in-person and online workshops on emotional eating, a five-session online support group and a mindful dining event. In total, 30 anonymous post-activity feedback records were reviewed. Quantitative feedback was summarised descriptively, while open-ended responses were analysed using a descriptive thematic approach. Overall, feedback was generally positive across formats. Respondents valued non-judgmental facilitation, peer exchange, reflective exercises, mindful and sensory eating activities, and opportunities to question restrictive food rules and food-related guilt. The findings suggest that the activities were acceptable to those who completed feedback and that the most meaningful elements were not limited to the provision of nutrition information. Instead, respondents valued the combination of experiential learning, self-reflection and group-based discussion. The findings should be interpreted cautiously. The dataset was small, feedback was voluntary, forms differed across activities, and no pre-post measures, follow-up data or behavioural outcomes were collected. Therefore, the study does not demonstrate effectiveness. Its contribution is more modest: it documents real-world practice, identifies participant-valued design features and provides a basis for developing a structured intuitive-eating-informed adult-learning programme with a stronger prospective evaluation design.

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1. Introduction

Diet culture, repeated dieting, food guilt and rigid food rules can shape the way adults think, feel and behave around food. In everyday life, these patterns often appear as moralised judgments about “good” and “bad” foods, anxiety after eating, difficulty trusting hunger and fullness cues, and a tendency to respond to stress or negative emotions through food. Although these experiences are common, they are not always addressed effectively through conventional nutrition education, especially when educational messages focus mainly on restriction, weight control or compliance with external rules. Emotional eating, commonly described as eating in response to negative emotions rather than physiological hunger, is one important aspect of this broader relationship with food, but it does not fully capture the wider set of beliefs, habits and embodied experiences involved (Reichenberger *et al.*, 2020).

Intuitive eating provides a broader, non-diet framework for understanding and supporting a healthier relationship with food. Rather than prescribing fixed rules, it emphasises rejecting the diet mentality, honouring hunger, making peace with food, challenging the “food police”, respecting fullness, discovering satisfaction in eating, coping with emotions with kindness, respecting the body, engaging in enjoyable movement and approaching nutrition gently. This makes intuitive eating particularly relevant for non-formal nutrition education, where the goal is not to provide a clinical treatment or a weight-loss programme, but to create structured opportunities for reflection, awareness, self-compassion and practical everyday learning (Tribble & Resch, 2020; Tylka & Kroon Van Diest, 2013).

Mindful eating is closely connected to this approach, but it is not identical to intuitive eating. Mindful eating focuses primarily on attention, sensory awareness and present-moment experience during eating, while intuitive eating also addresses diet culture, food rules, body respect and gentle nutrition. Mindfulness-based and mindful eating approaches have been used to support awareness of emotional eating, binge eating and eating in response to external cues, although findings remain mixed and should not be overstated (Katterman *et al.*, 2014; Lattimore, 2020; Warren *et al.*, 2017). This supports the need for careful documentation of real-world, small-scale educational formats before stronger claims about outcomes can be made.

Non-formal learning settings may be especially appropriate for this kind of work. Workshops, webinars, peer-supported groups and experiential activities allow participants to explore food-related experiences through discussion, reflective exercises, sensory activities, role-play, creative expression and guided self-observation. Such formats can make space for questions and experiences that are difficult to address in standard didactic nutrition sessions. They can also support participants in noticing how social norms, workplace routines, emotional triggers and internalised food rules influence

their everyday eating practices. Previous educational research has highlighted the value of structured but flexible learning designs, participatory activities and evaluation processes that combine participant feedback with reflective interpretation of implementation experience (Armakolas *et al.*, 2019; Gomatos *et al.*, 2018; Karachalios, 2024; Karachalios & Manesis, 2025; Karachalios & Palugay, 2026; Karachalios & Tantaroudas, 2025)

At the same time, practice-based interventions often remain under-documented. Nutrition professionals may develop meaningful educational activities, collect feedback and refine their practice over time, but these data are rarely analysed systematically or shared as evidence that can inform future programme design. This is particularly relevant for small professional teams and community-based initiatives, where implementation knowledge is rich but usually fragmented across presentations, worksheets, facilitator notes, feedback forms and informal reflections. Recent work on educational evaluation, digital and sustainability-related learning interventions, and monitoring frameworks has shown the importance of documenting not only outcomes but also intervention design, participant engagement, implementation context and feedback loops (Karachalios, Tantaroudas, Steinhauser, *et al.*, 2026; Karachalios, Velaoras, *et al.*, 2026; Tasakou & Karachalios, 2025).

The present study responds to this gap by retrospectively examining a portfolio of intuitive-eating-informed, non-formal nutrition activities delivered in Greece between 2023 and 2026. The portfolio included a webinar on workplace stress and overeating, two in-person workshops on overeating, in-person and online workshops on emotional eating, a five-session online support group and a mindful dining event. These activities were not designed as a clinical intervention and did not aim to treat eating disorders or demonstrate behavioural effectiveness. Instead, they were developed as educational and reflective formats to help adults explore food guilt, diet culture, emotional eating, hunger and fullness cues, mindful eating, body respect and gentle nutrition.

The aim of this retrospective mixed-methods practice evaluation was to examine feedback-based acceptability and identify the educational components that respondents valued across different formats. Specifically, the study explored: (a) ratings of content, facilitation, organisation and practical usefulness where these were available; (b) perceived learning and self-reflection reported in open-ended responses; and (c) recurring design features that may inform the development of a more structured future programme. The study did not assess intervention effectiveness or behavioural change. Instead, it provides preliminary practice-based evidence on the delivery and acceptability of intuitive-eating-informed nutrition education in non-formal adult learning settings.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Intuitive Eating and the Move Beyond Diet Culture

Intuitive eating is a non-diet approach that shifts the focus from external food rules to internal bodily cues, flexibility, body respect and a more compassionate relationship with

eating. Rather than treating food choices as a matter of control, restriction or moral discipline, intuitive eating emphasises recognising hunger and fullness, rejecting diet mentality, challenging internalised food judgments, discovering satisfaction in eating, coping with emotions with kindness, respecting the body and approaching nutrition in a gentle and non-restrictive way (Tribole & Resch, 2020; Tylka & Kroon Van Diest, 2013).

This framework is relevant for adults who experience food guilt, repeated dieting, rigid food rules or difficulty trusting bodily signals. Higher intuitive eating has been associated with more favourable psychological and eating-related indicators, including lower eating pathology, more positive body image and better psychological wellbeing (Linardon *et al.*, 2021; Van Dyke & Drinkwater, 2014). At the same time, the evidence should be interpreted carefully. Reviews of intuitive eating interventions suggest promising outcomes, but also point to variability in intervention design, delivery format, target population and outcome measurement (Babbott *et al.*, 2023). However, less attention has been given to how intuitive-eating-informed approaches are operationalised in short, real-world educational formats such as workshops, group sessions and community events. This creates a need for practice-based studies that describe intervention content, delivery format and participant feedback in sufficient detail to inform future programme design.

The activities examined in this study are described as intuitive-eating-informed because the portfolio addressed emotional eating alongside diet culture, food rules, hunger and fullness cues, mindful eating, body respect and gentle nutrition. The term therefore reflects the breadth of the educational content rather than indicating delivery of a standardised intuitive eating intervention.

2.2. Emotional Eating as One Part of the Food Relationship

Emotional eating is commonly defined as eating in response to emotional states rather than physiological hunger. It is often linked with negative emotions, stress, anxiety, sadness or frustration, although the relationship between emotion and eating is not simple or uniform. Emotional eating may be associated with dietary restraint, reduced interoceptive awareness, difficulty identifying emotions, emotion dysregulation and stress-related physiological responses (Van Strien, 2018).

This matters because advice based only on willpower, restriction or avoidance may fail to address the processes that maintain emotional eating. When eating is followed by guilt or self-criticism, individuals may return to restrictive intentions, which can reinforce a cycle of food rules, perceived failure and further emotional eating. A non-diet educational approach can help participants examine this cycle without treating food-related difficulty as a personal failure. In this sense, emotional eating is not approached here as a clinical diagnosis, but as an everyday experience that can be explored through reflection, self-observation and practical self-care strategies.

Recent reviews suggest that interventions targeting emotional eating can reduce emotional eating symptoms, especially when they include psychological or behaviour-change components, but the evidence remains heterogeneous and often comes from

weight-management or clinical contexts (Smith *et al.*, 2023). The present study does not claim clinical or behavioural effectiveness. Instead, it examines whether small-scale, non-formal activities were acceptable to participants and what they perceived as meaningful.

2.3. Mindful Eating and Attention to Bodily Cues

Mindful eating is closely related to intuitive eating but should not be treated as the same concept. Mindful eating focuses on present-moment attention to the eating experience, including taste, smell, texture, hunger, fullness, satisfaction and emotional responses. Intuitive eating is broader because it also includes rejecting diet culture, making peace with food, body respect and gentle nutrition (Tribole & Resch, 2020; Warren *et al.*, 2017). Mindful eating practices have been used in interventions addressing binge eating, emotional eating and eating in response to external cues. Reviews suggest that mindfulness-based approaches may help participants become more aware of appetitive cues and automatic eating patterns, although effects on weight outcomes are less consistent and should not be overstated (Katterman *et al.*, 2014; Warren *et al.*, 2017). Emotional-eating-specific mindfulness training has also been proposed as a way to support awareness of emotional triggers, appetite-related traits and self-regulation processes (Lattimore, 2020).

In the activities examined in this study, mindful eating was used as an experiential learning tool rather than as a clinical technique. Exercises such as hunger-fullness scales, blind tasting, mindful tasting, body scans and sensory reflection were designed to help participants notice bodily signals, distinguish between physical and emotional cues, and reflect on satisfaction and self-care. These activities are therefore best understood as educational components within an intuitive-eating-informed programme.

2.4. Non-formal and Experiential Nutrition Education

Conventional nutrition education often focuses on information: nutrients, food groups, portions, labels or dietary recommendations. Such information is useful, but it may be insufficient when the central issue involves food guilt, stress, emotional triggers, diet culture, body respect or self-critical internal dialogue. These issues require formats that allow participants to connect knowledge with personal experience, everyday routines and social meanings around food.

Non-formal education offers a useful setting for this kind of work because it can combine structure with flexibility, participation and reflection. In the present portfolio, this was reflected in group agreements, peer exchange, role-play, reflective writing, art-based activities, sensory exercises, practical worksheets, guided discussion and closing reflections. These methods allowed participants to engage with food-related experiences not only cognitively, but also emotionally, socially and bodily.

Previous educational work by Karachalios and colleagues supports the value of structured but participatory educational design, especially when small-scale interventions are documented through participant feedback, implementation materials and reflective evaluation. Studies on the design, implementation and evaluation of

educational resources and training activities provide useful methodological grounding for the present practice evaluation (Armakolas *et al.*, 2019, 2021; Gomatos *et al.*, 2018). Intervention studies in education also show how feedback, perceived learning, attitudes and self-efficacy can be used cautiously to understand educational processes and inform programme improvement (Karachalios & Manesis, 2025; Karachalios & Tantaroudas, 2025).

Experiential and game-informed learning approaches are also relevant to this article. Educational gaming and gamified learning have been used to support engagement, reflection and active participation in different educational contexts (Karachalios, 2024; Tasakou & Karachalios, 2025). This is connected to the present portfolio, where participants engaged in activities such as human bingo, speed dating, empty-chair reflection, art-based emotional regulation, blind tasting, SWOT analysis, mindful eating and peer reflection. These activities were not simply icebreakers or entertainment elements; they were used as structured prompts for self-observation and discussion.

2.5. Practice-based Evaluation and Participant Feedback

Small professional teams often develop meaningful educational practice before they have the resources to conduct large-scale evaluation. In such cases, practice-based evidence can be useful if it is presented honestly and proportionately. Workshop plans, facilitator notes, participant worksheets and post-activity feedback forms cannot demonstrate effectiveness by themselves, but they can document feasibility, acceptability, perceived usefulness and participant-valued design features.

Participant feedback should therefore be understood as formative evidence. It can show whether participants found the activities clear, relevant, safe, engaging and worth continuing. It can also identify which elements were most meaningful, such as peer exchange, sensory eating exercises, recognition of triggers, questioning food rules or developing alternative self-care strategies. However, feedback collected only after participation cannot establish behavioural change, health outcomes or long-term impact. This distinction is central to the present article. The study does not claim that the activities reduced emotional eating, improved health or changed eating behaviour. Instead, it examines participant acceptability, perceived learning and recurring design features across a small portfolio of intuitive-eating-informed activities. This approach is consistent with feedback-oriented evaluation frameworks that emphasise implementation context, stakeholder engagement, continuous improvement and cautious interpretation of available evidence (Karachalios, Tantaroudas, & Makropoulos, 2026; Karachalios & Palugay, 2026).

2.6. Rationale for the Present Study

Existing reviews highlight the need for clearer descriptions of intervention content, delivery format and evaluation design, as well as cautious interpretation of outcomes (Babbott *et al.*, 2023; Katterman *et al.*, 2014; Linardon *et al.*, 2021; Warren *et al.*, 2017).

The present study addresses this gap by analysing existing feedback and intervention materials from a portfolio of intuitive-eating-informed, non-formal nutrition activities delivered in Greece between 2023 and 2026. The portfolio included a webinar, in-person and online workshops, a five-session support group and a mindful dining event. Rather than testing effectiveness, the study focuses on a more limited question: what respondents found acceptable, meaningful and useful for future programme development. This approach allows the documentation of real-world practice while keeping the interpretation of findings proportionate to the available data.

3. Material and Methods

3.1. Study Design

This study was designed as a retrospective mixed-methods practice evaluation of intuitive-eating-informed, non-formal nutrition education activities delivered in Greece between 2023 and 2026. The aim was to examine feedback-based acceptability, perceived learning and recurring design features across different educational formats. The study did not aim to test clinical effectiveness, diagnose eating-related problems or measure behavioural change.

The analysis used two sources of existing material: anonymous post-activity feedback forms and intervention documentation. Feedback forms were used as the main evaluation dataset, while intervention materials were reviewed to describe the content, format and educational design of each activity. The intervention description was informed by the TIDieR checklist, while the analysis of open-ended responses followed a descriptive thematic approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Hoffmann *et al.*, 2014; O'Brien *et al.*, 2014).

3.2. Intervention Portfolio

The portfolio was developed and delivered by Eutrofia Nutrition Practice in Patras, Greece. The activities were facilitated by qualified dietitians-nutritionists and were implemented in different formats, including webinars, in-person workshops, online workshops, an online support group and a mindful dining event.

The activities were not delivered as a single standardised intervention. They are therefore treated as a practice-based portfolio of related educational activities. Across the portfolio, the main themes included diet culture, food guilt, overeating, emotional eating, hunger and fullness cues, mindful eating, body respect, gentle nutrition and self-care strategies.

Table 1: Overview of the intervention portfolio and feedback records

Activity case	Format	Period / date	Core focus	Main educational components	Feedback records
Workplace stress and overeating webinar	Online webinar	2023	Workplace stress, overeating and practical coping strategies	Psychoeducation, distinction between biological and emotional hunger, practical strategies, SWOT-based reflection	8
Overeating workshop 1	In-person workshop	20/04/2024	Overeating, triggers and food guilt	Expectations-fears-contributions, trigger reflection, diet culture discussion, emotional regulation, mindful eating, future-self letter	3
Overeating workshop 2	In-person workshop	06/07/2024	Overeating and self-critical inner dialogue	Human bingo, speed dating, empty-chair reflection, art-based emotional regulation, blind tasting, future-self letter	3
Emotional eating workshop	In-person workshop	09/12/2024	Emotional eating and emotion regulation	Emotional-food icebreaker, “iceberg” activity, pair reflection, art-based expression, wall of ideas, mindful eating	2
Emotional eating online workshop	Online workshop	17/02/2025	Emotional eating in an online format	Emotional-food icebreaker, group agreement, “iceberg” activity, drawing, mindful eating, Menti wall of ideas	3
Online support group: “Find your food freedom”	Five-session online group	24/11/2025-09/03/2026	Food relationship and intuitive eating	Diet culture, food rules, hunger-fullness cues, emotional eating, body respect, gentle nutrition, joyful movement, peer reflection	3
Mindful dining event	In-person experiential event	28/09/2025	Mindful eating, sensory awareness and satiety cues	Welcome and human bingo; introduction to mindful eating; discussion of supportive eating conditions; guided sensory eating during the main course; satiety-scale reflection; closing reflection	8
Total					30

Implementation documentation was available for all activity cases and included workshop plans, slide decks, facilitator notes, worksheets, participant-facing resources and structured activity summaries. For the mindful dining event, the documentation described a 120-minute sequence comprising a welcome and human bingo activity, an

introduction to mindful eating, discussion of supportive eating conditions, guided sensory attention during the main course, use of a satiety scale and a closing reflection. The level and format of documentation varied across activities, reflecting differences in duration, mode of delivery and educational design.

3.3. Feedback Records and Data Sources

The dataset consisted of 30 anonymous post-activity feedback records submitted by adults who attended one or more of the activities. Feedback was voluntary and collected after the activities. The forms included rating-scale items, categorical items and open-ended questions.

The feedback forms were not identical across activities. Items addressed aspects such as content, clarity, practical usefulness, facilitation, organisation, activities, perceived self-discovery and interest in future participation. Open-ended questions asked participants to comment on what they found useful, what they discovered, what they would change and what they would like to explore further.

No demographic data, attendance records or response rates were consistently available. It was therefore not possible to determine whether all feedback records represented unique individuals or whether some participants attended more than one activity.

3.4. Data Analysis

Quantitative feedback was analysed descriptively. For rating-scale items, means were calculated only when the same scale was used within a specific activity. For categorical items, frequencies were reported. No inferential statistical analysis was conducted because of the small sample size, the voluntary nature of the feedback and the heterogeneity of the forms.

Open-ended responses were analysed using descriptive thematic content analysis. The analysis followed four steps: familiarisation with all responses, initial coding of meaningful comments, grouping of similar codes into themes and refinement of themes in relation to the study aim. The analysis focused on acceptability, perceived learning, emotional safety, peer exchange, self-reflection, practical usefulness and interest in future participation.

The analysis remained descriptive. It did not attempt to infer psychological mechanisms, behavioural change or long-term outcomes. Initial coding of the open-ended responses was conducted by the third author and then discussed with the two facilitators to check whether the themes were plausible in relation to the intervention context. The open-ended responses were analysed in Greek. Themes were then reported in English, and any participant wording used in the manuscript was translated or paraphrased by the authors to preserve meaning and anonymity.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

Formal ethics approval was not sought because the study was conducted as a retrospective practice evaluation of anonymous routine feedback collected after non-clinical educational activities. No identifiable personal data, health records or diagnostic information were included in the analysed dataset, and no additional data were collected specifically for this study. Results are reported in aggregated form, while open-ended responses were analysed in Greek and translated or paraphrased in English to preserve meaning and protect anonymity.

3.6. Limitations and Scope of the Evidence

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The sample was small and based on voluntary feedback. The feedback forms differed across activities, which limited comparability. No pre-post measures, follow-up data, attendance records or behavioural outcomes were collected. Participant demographic characteristics were also unavailable. As a result, the findings should be interpreted as exploratory practice-based evidence of acceptability and perceived usefulness, not as evidence of effectiveness.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Overview of the Feedback Dataset

The analysis included 30 post-activity feedback records collected across seven activity cases. The dataset covered one workplace stress and overeating webinar, two in-person overeating workshops, one in-person emotional eating workshop, one online emotional eating workshop, one five-session online support group and one mindful dining event. Because the feedback forms differ across activities, results are presented descriptively and by activity type. No inferential comparisons were conducted.

Across the available records, feedback was generally positive. The most consistent findings concerned facilitation, perceived usefulness, peer exchange and interest in further participation. These results should be interpreted as formative, practice-based feedback from respondents, not as evidence of effectiveness.

Table 2: Descriptive Summary of Quantitative Feedback by Activity Case

Activity case	Feedback records	Descriptive findings	Interpretation
Workplace stress and overeating webinar	8	Mean ratings ranged from 4.50 to 4.63 out of 5 for content, practical ideas, understanding, speaker communication and duration.	The webinar format was rated positively as a psychoeducational activity.
Overeating workshops	6	Facilitation was rated “very” in 6/6 records. Organisation and activities were rated “very” in 5/6 records. Interest in a future workshop was reported in 5/6 records, with 1/6 answering “maybe”.	The workshops showed high acceptability, especially for facilitation and activity design.

Emotional eating workshops	5	Facilitation was rated “very” in 5/5 records. Organisation was rated “very” in 4/5 records. All records indicated interest in future participation.	Both in-person and online formats were acceptable, although feedback remained limited in volume.
Online support group	3	Usefulness of themes, organisation/facilitation, self-discovery and changes in thinking were rated “very” in 3/3 records. All records stated that the experience was worth the cost.	The multi-session format appeared particularly meaningful, but the sample was very small.
Mindful dining event	8	Flow and duration were rated “ideal” in 7/8 records. All 8 records identified conscious eating with all senses as a memorable element.	Feedback on the mindful dining event was positive, particularly regarding flow, duration and sensory awareness. Given the descriptive post-activity design, these findings indicate acceptability rather than behavioural change.
Total	30		

Note: The original feedback options were in Greek. The term “very” is used here to translate the response option “Πολύ”. Because feedback forms differ across activities, denominators vary by activity and item. Percentages were avoided where denominators were very small.

4.2. Qualitative Themes from Open-ended Feedback

The open-ended responses added contextual information to the rating items by showing what respondents found meaningful across formats. Five recurring themes were identified: shared experience and emotional safety; self-observation and trigger recognition; questioning food rules and diet culture; mindful and sensory eating; and interest in continuation.

Table 3: Main Themes Identified in Open-ended Feedback Records

Theme	Activity cases where the theme appeared	What appeared in the feedback	Interpretation
Shared experience and emotional safety	Overeating workshops; emotional eating workshops; online support group	Respondents referred to not feeling alone, meeting others with similar difficulties and feeling safe within the group.	Peer exchange appeared to be a central element of acceptability, especially in group-based formats.
Self-observation and trigger recognition	Overeating workshops; emotional eating workshops; online support group	Feedback referred to recognising emotions, triggers, patterns of overeating, self-criticism and links between feelings and food.	The activities supported perceived self-awareness around emotional eating and automatic food-related responses.
Questioning food rules and diet culture	Overeating workshops; online support group	Respondents referred to changing the way they thought about food, reducing deprivation and	This theme reflected perceived learning related to restrictive food rules, deprivation-based thinking

		reconsidering restrictive food rules.	and the wider social influence of diet culture.
Mindful and sensory eating	Emotional eating workshops; online support group; mindful dining event	Mindful eating, blind tasting, eating with all senses and noticing hunger/fullness cues were repeatedly mentioned.	Embodied and sensory activities appeared to make the learning experience more concrete and memorable.
Interest in continuation	Overeating workshops; emotional eating workshops; online support group; mindful dining event	Respondents asked for further workshops, longer programmes, more frequent meetings or additional themes.	The feedback indicates demand for a more structured programme and follow-up evaluation.

4.3. Discussion of Findings

Across the open-ended feedback, respondents did not focus only on the nutritional information provided. They also valued facilitation, group atmosphere, opportunities for reflection, embodied exercises and the possibility of connecting personal experiences with the educational content. This is relevant because the activities addressed themes such as food guilt, internalised food rules, stress-related eating and self-criticism after overeating. These themes may require reflective and experiential formats in addition to information-based nutrition education.

The feedback indicates that acceptability was linked to the combination of educational content and delivery methods. Respondents referred to food rules, hunger and fullness cues, emotional triggers, body respect and peer-supported reflection, suggesting that the activities were valued as a broader food-relationship learning experience rather than as isolated information sessions. This interpretation is consistent with literature that describes intuitive eating as a multidimensional framework involving internal bodily cues, flexible eating and body-related attitudes (Linardon *et al.*, 2021; Tylka & Kroon Van Diest, 2013; Van Dyke & Drinkwater, 2014).

The open-ended feedback also suggests that mindful eating and sensory exercises were valued as practical learning tools. Respondents referred to these activities not only as pleasant experiences, but also as opportunities to slow down, notice satisfaction, observe bodily cues and reflect on eating differently. This aligns with previous evidence suggesting that mindful eating approaches may support awareness of emotional eating, binge eating and eating in response to external cues, although effects vary and should not be overstated (Katterman *et al.*, 2014; Lattimore, 2020; Warren *et al.*, 2017).

At the same time, the results must be interpreted cautiously. The dataset is small, self-selected and based only on post-activity feedback. The feedback forms were not standardised across activities, and there were no pre-post measures, follow-up data or behavioural outcomes. For this reason, the study cannot show that the activities reduced emotional eating, changed eating behaviour or improved health. It can only show that the activities were perceived as acceptable, useful and meaningful by those who responded.

These limitations define the scope of the evidence rather than invalidating the study. The study is best understood as an early-stage practice evaluation that documents a real-world portfolio of activities, identifies participant-valued design features and provides a basis for developing a more structured programme. Such documentation is useful in small-scale educational innovation, particularly when the next step is to move from promising practice to a clearer evaluation framework (Karachalios, Tantaroudas, Steinhäuser, *et al.*, 2026; Karachalios & Palugyay, 2026).

4.4. Implications for Programme Development

The findings point to the need for a more structured programme pathway and a more consistent evaluation design. The most relevant elements to preserve are non-judgmental facilitation, peer exchange, reflective exercises, mindful and sensory eating activities, and practical self-care strategies. At the same time, the portfolio would benefit from common educational materials, standardised feedback tools and clearer documentation of each activity. These implications are developed further in the recommendations section.

4.5. Summary of Results and Discussion

In summary, the available feedback indicates that intuitive-eating-informed, non-formal nutrition education activities can be delivered across different formats and receive positive responses. Recurring valued components included reflective exercises, sensory activities, peer exchange and non-judgmental facilitation. The evidence remains exploratory and does not demonstrate effectiveness, but it provides a basis for developing a structured programme pathway and a prospective evaluation using standardised tools.

5. Recommendations

The findings support the development of a more structured intuitive-eating-informed nutrition education programme for adults. The current portfolio shows positive acceptability and identifies useful design elements, but the activities now need a clearer programme structure, common materials and a stronger evaluation plan.

A future programme should keep the strongest elements of the existing practice: non-judgmental facilitation, peer exchange, reflective exercises, mindful and sensory eating activities, and practical self-care strategies. At the same time, it should move from separate workshops to a coherent learning pathway. A possible structure could include six core modules: diet culture and food rules; hunger and fullness cues; emotional eating and self-care; mindful and sensory eating; body respect; and gentle nutrition. This structure would align more clearly with the wider intuitive eating framework while remaining educational rather than clinical (Tribole & Resch, 2020; Tylka & Kroon Van Diest, 2013).

The next step should also include a shared facilitator guide and participant workbook. These materials would make the programme easier to replicate, adapt and evaluate. They should include learning objectives, session plans, timing, materials,

facilitator prompts, reflection questions, worksheets and take-home activities. This would strengthen implementation consistency while still allowing facilitators to adapt examples and discussions to each group (Hoffmann *et al.*, 2014).

The evaluation design should be improved before wider delivery. Future activities should use the same feedback form across sessions and collect basic non-identifiable demographic and attendance data. A simple pre-post design could assess changes in perceived knowledge, confidence, self-awareness and intention to apply strategies. Where appropriate, validated tools related to intuitive eating, mindful eating or emotional eating could be added, but only if the aim is to evaluate outcomes beyond acceptability (Tylka & Kroon Van Diest, 2013; Warren *et al.*, 2017). Follow-up feedback after one or three months would also help examine whether participants continue to use the strategies in everyday life.

The programme should remain clearly positioned as non-formal nutrition education, not as psychotherapy or treatment for eating disorders. This distinction is important for ethical, scientific and communication reasons. Participants who require clinical or psychological support should be referred to appropriate professionals. The educational programme can still address food guilt, emotional eating and body respect, but its claims should remain focused on learning, reflection, acceptability and self-awareness.

Finally, the findings can support the design of a small-scale collaborative adult-learning initiative. Such an initiative could develop and test a structured intuitive-eating-informed toolkit, prepare facilitator and participant materials, pilot the programme with adult learners in different settings and produce an improved evaluation framework. The present study can function as preliminary practice-based evidence for that next stage.

Table 4: Recommendations for Future Programme Development

Area	Recommendation	Purpose
Programme structure	Develop a modular pathway covering diet culture, food rules, hunger-fullness cues, emotional eating, mindful eating, body respect and gentle nutrition.	To move from separate activities to a coherent programme.
Educational materials	Create a facilitator guide and participant workbook.	To improve consistency, transferability and future replication.
Evaluation	Use common pre-post and post-activity tools across all sessions.	To generate stronger and more comparable evidence.
Follow-up	Add one-month or three-month follow-up feedback.	To explore whether future participants report continued use of the strategies.
Ethics and safety	Clearly frame the programme as educational, not therapeutic.	To avoid clinical overclaiming and protect participants.
Future development	Pilot the structured programme with adult learners in different settings.	To prepare for broader implementation and stronger evaluation.

6. Conclusion

This retrospective mixed-methods practice evaluation examined a small portfolio of intuitive-eating-informed, non-formal nutrition activities delivered in Greece between 2023 and 2026. The findings indicate that the activities received positive feedback from respondents and that the valued elements extended beyond the provision of nutrition information. Across formats, recurring valued elements included reflective exercises, peer exchange, non-judgmental facilitation, mindful and sensory eating activities, and opportunities to question restrictive food rules and food-related guilt.

Across the portfolio, positive feedback was linked to the combination of non-judgmental facilitation, peer exchange, self-reflection and sensory learning. The findings therefore support retaining these components in a future structured programme, while emotional eating, food rules, hunger and fullness cues, body respect and gentle nutrition can be organised as complementary content areas within a coherent learning pathway. The evidence remains preliminary. The dataset was small, feedback was voluntary, the forms differed across activities, and no pre-post measures or follow-up data were collected. Therefore, the study cannot demonstrate behavioural change, clinical effectiveness or long-term impact. Its contribution is more modest but still useful: it documents real-world practice, identifies design features valued in the feedback and provides a basis for developing a more structured adult-learning programme.

Future work should build on this portfolio by creating a common facilitator guide, participant workbook and evaluation framework. A prospective pilot using standardised pre-post tools, post-session feedback and follow-up assessment would allow stronger conclusions about learning, self-awareness, confidence and possible behavioural outcomes. Until then, the present findings should be understood as preliminary practice-based evidence that intuitive-eating-informed nutrition education can be feasible and acceptable in small-scale non-formal adult learning settings.

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Data Availability Statement

The data analysed in this study consist of anonymised post-activity feedback records and internal intervention materials. Due to the small number of feedback records and the risk of deductive identification in open-ended responses, the raw qualitative data are not

publicly shared. Aggregated descriptive results and thematic findings are presented in the article.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

Mema Lampropoulou and Markella Symeopoulou are affiliated with Eutrofia Nutrition Practice, which designed and delivered the activities evaluated in this study. Ilias Karachalios contributed to the retrospective evaluation, analysis and manuscript preparation. The authors declare that the study was conducted as a practice-based evaluation and that the findings are reported with the methodological limitations described in the manuscript.

About the Authors

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educational evaluation, sustainability competences, digital tools, gamification and stakeholder engagement.

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