

Using your Nourishing Values Cards

What are “values?”

Values reflect your own personal desires for how you want to show up in the world. Values are not about what you want to get or achieve; they are about how you want to behave and live on an ongoing basis. Values are not “goals” – they cannot be ticked off a list, but rather serve as a foundation for who we want to be, and what’s most important to us. Values are unique to us, but also may be shared in a community with which we identify.

Values work is one of the parts of Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT), and provides a framework for valued-driven action, the part where we actually DO what’s most important to us!

Why clarify our values?

Many people get stuck in loops of perfectionism or “should-land”, living their lives according to more of an external set of rules, or prioritising what others will think rather than what’s most important. Taking the time to consider our values offers us an opportunity to reconsider, recalibrate and reconnect with the life we want to be leading, and puts some **action** behind it. We can act with integrity

Why Nourishing Values?

It is common that people have lost contact with what feels nourishing, what foods they actually like, the pleasure available from food and eating and more. Through connecting with the values underpinning our food choices, we can gain a stronger sense of groundedness in our choices, and have clarity about how feeding ourselves connects with acts of self care. Rather than being swayed by external influences, we are able to skilfully navigate experiences feel more confident & centered.

Values associated with food and eating may be different from other domains, for example work, personal life or spirituality. Or they may be very similar. For example, “tradition” may be something which is very important as a nourishing value, but less important in other domains.

Suggested steps to use with individuals or groups:

1. Introduce “values” as an idea, or concept – ask the group what they already know, elevate their ideas and wisdom. Explain what values are, differentiate them from goals and offer some examples.
2. Explain that values can be helpful in supporting us in reconnecting with food and eating, and ask if they may be interested in learning more?
3. Explain (or reiterate from a previous discuss) that it’s so common that we get caught up
4. Lay the cards out so all words are face up.
5. Ask the person, or group to take – or write down if you’re in a group - the cards which immediately stand out to them as feeling important in some way.
6. If not already, reduce the values to 4, choosing those are MOST important. Sometimes we can cover similar ground with several cards. Remind participant(s) that there are no “perfect” values, be mindful of self criticism or comparing etc. This might be hard, remind participants that it’s just an opportunity for reflection, it doesn’t mean the others aren’t important etc.
7. You might stop here and invite participants to share as much as they comfortable about why they chose those cards. Prompt participant(s) to speak about how that value connects with the food & eating experience
8. Alternatively, you might continue on to one of the activities – prompting **values-driven action** - then invite discussion and sharing.