

FOOD CHOICES

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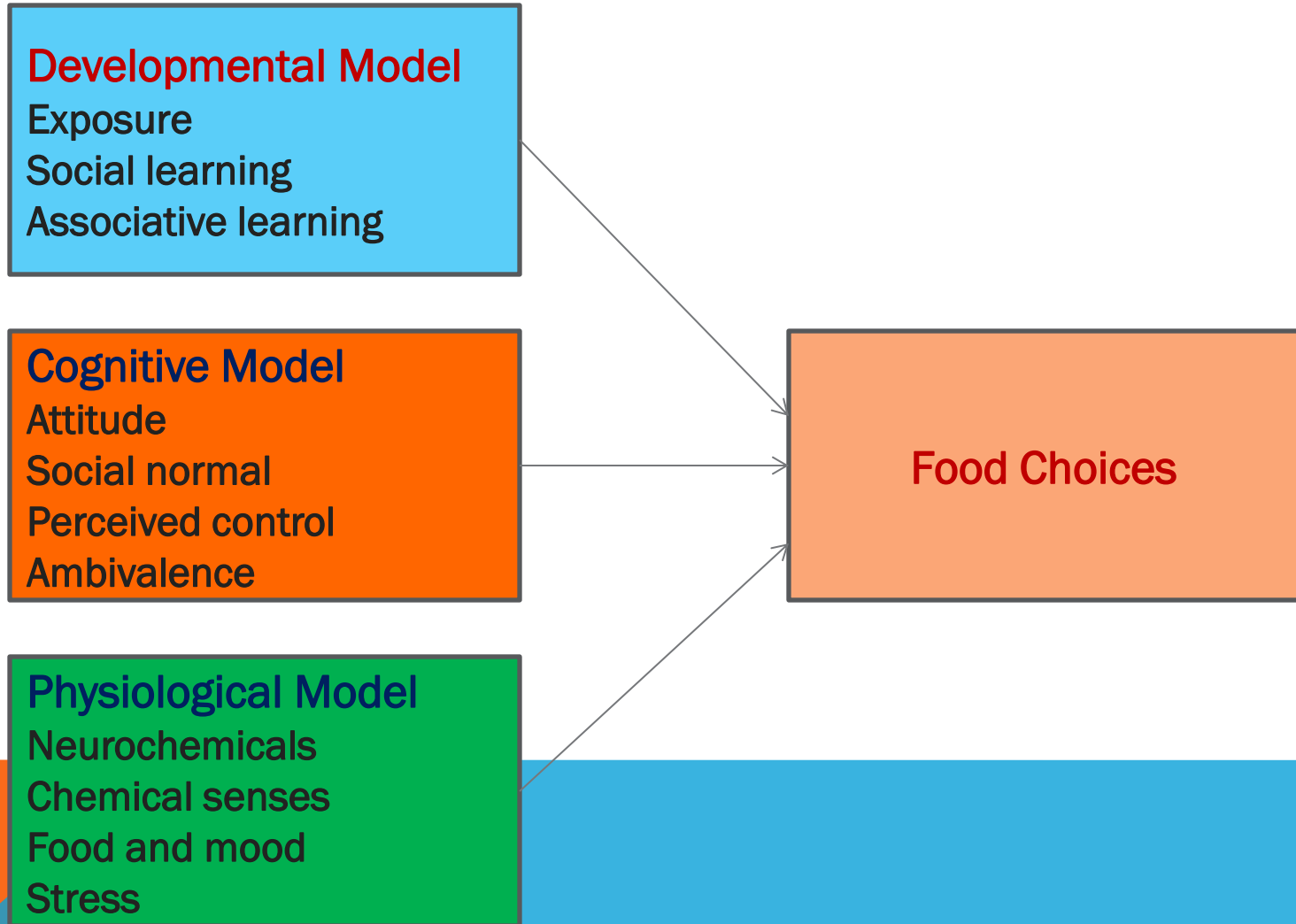
HESC 470

FOOD CHOICES

Why Do People Eat What They eat?



THREE BASIC MODELS



DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL (1)

- Emphasizes the impact of learning through exposure, social learning, and associative learning. This approach highlights the role of important others, cues, and associations in the development of food preferences

Exposure:

- Human beings show a fear and avoidance of novel food— “neophobia”
- Young children will show “neophobic” responses to food, but must come to accept and eat foods
- Study showed that about 8-10 exposures was necessary before preferences began to shift significantly
- Neophobia has been shown to be greater in males than females
- One hypothesized explanation for the impact of exposure is the “learned safety” view

DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL (2)

Social learning:

- Modeling– “observational learning”
- Studies showed that parental and peer modeling have great impact on children’s food preferences
- The impact of social learning has been shown in an intervention study designed to change children’s eating behavior
- Parental attitudes to food and food choices are also central to the process of social learning—parental purchase of food influence children’s food exposure
- Television and advertising is another aspect of social learning

DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL (3)

Associative Learning– impact of contingent factors on behavior

- Rewarding food choice – “if you eat your vegetables, I’ll be pleased with you.” This was shown to increase food preference
- Food as the reward – “if you are well behaved, you can have a cookie.” This suggests that using food as a reward increases the preference for that food.
- Not all the research studies agree with the above point: because this increase children’s preferences for deserts
- The association between food and rewards highlights a role of parental control over food choices.
- Food and physiological consequences – acquisition of food and negative gastrointestinal consequences, food flavor

COGNITIVE MODEL OF FOOD CHOICE

- Emphasizes food choice as the end-product of individuals' cognitions and explores the extent to which cognitions predict and explain behavior
- HBM – risk, threat, benefits, and barriers
- TRA and TPB – attitude, social norms and perceived behavior control
- Decision Making Model – value, probability, moment salience
- Self-efficacy
- The attitudinal research described that individuals either holds a positive or negative views towards a given object.
- In terms of food choice it is assumed that people either like or dislike certain foods and this value-laden attitude predicts food intake
- Ambivalence – “ a conflict aroused by competing evaluative predispositions”, “an approach-avoidance conflict” as individuals may hold contradictory attitudes towards foods in terms of “tasty”, “healthy”, “fattening”, and “a treat”, etc...

PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGICAL MODEL

- Emphasizes on chemical senses, the impact of psychopharmacological drugs and neurochemicals on hunger and satiety, and the relationships between stress and eating
- The role of chemical senses – food appearance, food odor, food taste
- Research studies indicate that food odor and taste play a central role in food choice –the impact of sweet, fatty and salty tastes
- Psychopharmacological drugs and neurochemicals – impact of drugs on food choice and basis for hunger and satiety
 - Nicotine has been shown to decrease food intake
 - Anti-psychotics – shown to cause weight gain
 - Antidepressants – associated with a craving for sweet food and weight gain
 - Appetite suppressants – some drugs have been shown to reduce appetite
- Stress and eating – stress-eating link is complex and research is contradictory. At times, stress decreases food intake while at others it causes an increase.

MEANING OF FOOD

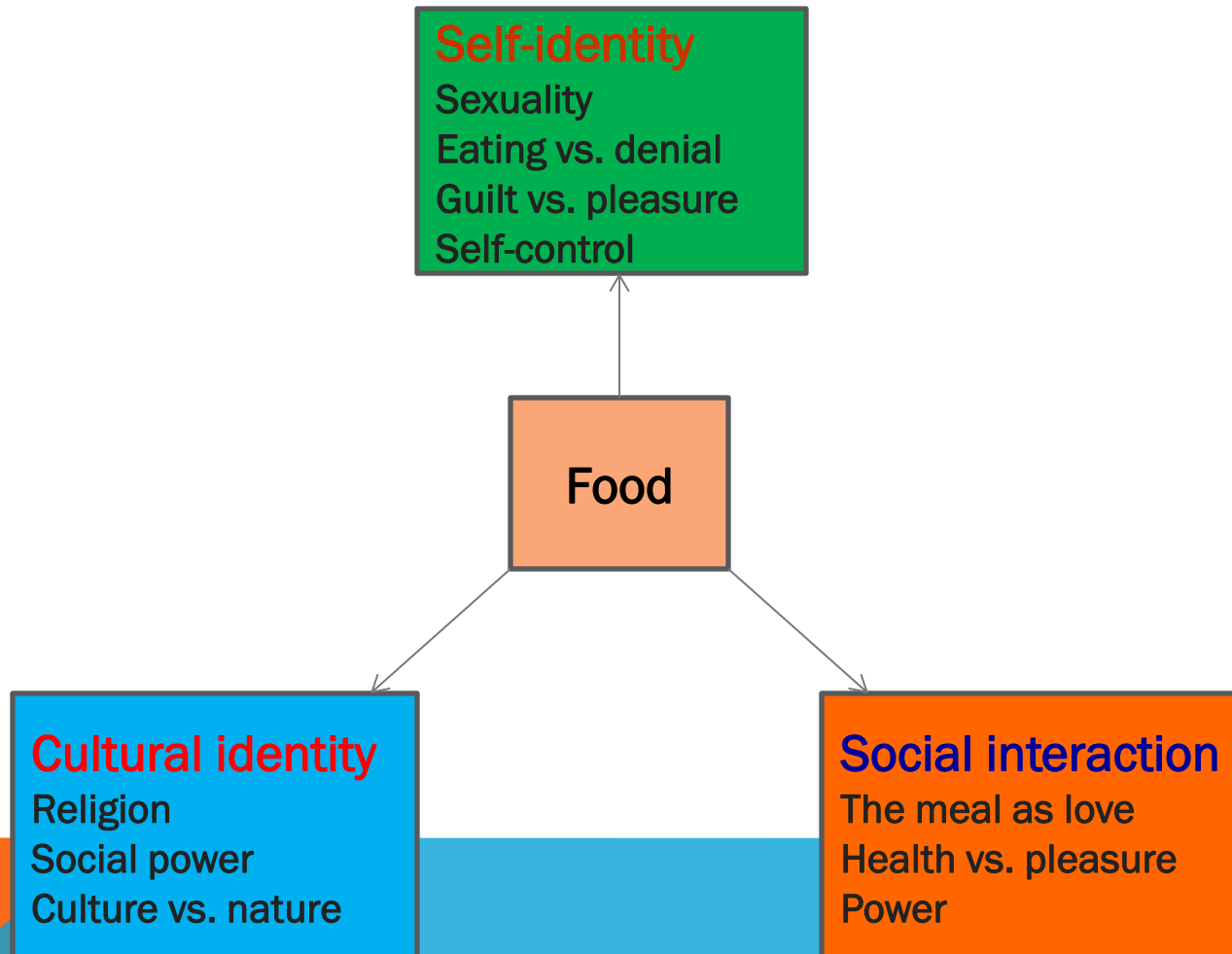
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FOOD CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Five type of food classification systems:

- 1. Food vs. non-food – those that are edible and those are not**
 - Wheat is food, grass is not. Frog can be food, worms rarely are
- 2. Sacred vs. profane foods – those that are based on religious beliefs and those are not**
 - Cloven hooped animals are sacred for Muslims and Jews, pig products are profane for Jews and Muslims, and beef is profane for Sikhs and Hindus
- 3. Parallel food classifications – described as “hot” (e.g., wheat, potato, garlic) or “old” (e.g., rice, peas, beans).** Within this framework, health is equated as a balance between hot and cold foods
- 4. Food as medicine and medicine as food – e.g.,** certain foods are used or avoided during states such as pregnancy, or are given to remedy problems such as diarrhea
- 5. Social food – social function of food. e.g.,** developing relationships, symbolizing status by offering rare, expensive or delicious dishes, traditional types such as “the national dish” or “the family meal.”

THE MEANING OF FOOD



FOOD AND SEXUALITY—EATING VS. DENIAL

- *Some foods are linked with sex and sexuality*
 - Advertisement of ice-cream offer their products as the path to sexual fulfillment
 - Chocolate is often consumed in a erotic fashion
 - At a more prosaic level, “going out for dinner” “a dinner for two”, and “a candlelit dinner” are frequently precursors to sex.
- *Eating vs. Denial*
 - Food is also a forum for many intrapersonal conflicts.
 - While food planning and providing takes up a large part of a woman’s day, a woman is also aware that she must remain thin and desirable.
 - Evidence from research studies suggest that women take control of food, while simultaneously denying themselves the pleasure of it.
 - Women have occupied this dual role of feeding others while needing to deny themselves

GUILT VS. PLEASURE—FOOD AND SELF-CONTROL

Guilt vs. pleasure:

- Some food such as chocolate and cakes are also associated with a conflict between pleasure and guilt. E.g., those who describe themselves as “chocoholics” reported eating chocolates in secret and craving chocolate but feeling guilty afterwards
- “I bought a pound of chocolate and ate it as I ran”

Food and self-control:

- Studies showed that parental and peer modeling have great impact on children’s food preferences
- The impact of social learning has been shown in an intervention study designed to change children’s eating behavior

FOOD AS SOCIAL INTERACTION

- **Food is a common tool for communication within the family**
 - The dinner table is often the only place where the family gets together and the family meal can become the forum for sharing experience of the day
- **The meal as love: sweet food are often used to pacify children and to maintain family harmony**
 - Food is the medium through which women demonstrate their love and concern for their children, lovers, husbands and friends.
 - **Health vs. pleasure:**
 - Conflicts – unhealthy food are often preferred
 - Mother know that they give junk food to children, they will love you. However, mothers have to live with guilt about children's teeth, weight, and vitamins.
 - **Power relations:**
 - In nearly every particular group, it is expected that the dominant male will eat first or better; and even when the sexes feed together, the male shall be served by the females.

FOOD AS CULTURAL IDENTITY

- **Food as religious identity:**
 - Food and family meals play a central role in the establishment of religious identity.
 - E.g., Middle Eastern Jewish women see feeding others as representing Jewish identity, tradition, law, and holiness.
- **Food as social power:**
 - Powerful people eat well and are fed well by others (Wolf, 1990)
 - In parallel, feed avoidance also serves to regain control over the social world
 - When political prisoners need to make a social statement they refuse to eat and initiate a hunger strike
- **Culture vs. nature: the meaning of meat**
 - Food, particularly meat, also signifies the relationship between people and nature
 - Meat is, to many, synonymous with “real” food
 - Meat is therefore a central part of what we eat (or avoid eating)
 - Meat is more than just a meal, it also represents a way of life.