

## **Obesity Surgery Backlash - Doctors Turn to Happiness Training Instead - National Conferences Launched in San Diego and Los Angeles Beginning on October 18, 2007.**

*There is a growing backlash against weight loss surgery within some health organizations. A series of national conferences on *The Solution Method*, a proven program that teaches the skills of self-nurturing and effective limits that retrain the brain to favor joy - a natural appetite suppressant - will launch at the University of San Diego on October 18-19 and the University of California, Los Angeles on October 22-23, 2007.*

San Rafael, CA ([PRWEB](#)) October 1, 2007 -- With [weight loss](#) surgeries increasing tenfold in the last decade, second and third surgeries planned to avoid weight regain and more than 60 documented complications of the procedures, there is a growing backlash against weight loss surgery within some health organizations.

"Many primary care doctors who treat complications after weight loss surgery, such as diarrhea, infections, depression, eating disorders and weight regain, are motivated to offer their patients other [weight loss](#) alternatives," according to Laurel Mellin, obesity expert and associate clinical professor of family and community medicine at the University of California, San Francisco.

On October 18th, at the University of San Diego and on October 22 at the University of California, Los Angeles, Mellin and colleagues will launch a nationwide series of conferences for health professionals on a method that was developed at the University of California, San Francisco and which equips patients with the developmental skills to nurture and set limits from within, easing stress and enhancing joy. Research on its use with both adult and [childhood obesity](#) has supported its effectiveness.

According to Mellin, "It's all about stress and feeling discouraged and unrewarded. Of course we turn to food for comfort because most of us feel pulled in all directions. The root cause of the obesity epidemic is not super-sized portions but the chronic stress that ramps up cravings, cuts into resolve and favors weight gain."

The brain is reward driven and when stuck in chronic stress, the brain does not receive needed surges of "feel good" neurotransmitters from natural sources like going for a walk, eating an apple or savoring the moment. The cravings for pleasure mount and with access to other coping strategies such as smoking, drinking, overspending and recreational drug constrained by financial and legal limits, we're more likely to turn to overeating.

"When we're stressed, we don't crave celery. We're specifically drawn to consuming sugary, fatty comfort foods -- just the foods that pack on pounds," says Mellin.

To ease stress and enhance feelings of satisfaction and reward, program participants learn to monitor their state throughout the day, based on a 1 to 5 scale. Being at 1 means being at a high level of well-being - feeling so great that ice cream doesn't look all that appealing. Being at 5 means being in a full-blown stress response. In that state, hormones and neurotransmitter changes trigger unstoppable appetites and cravings. Ice cream may seem to be all that matters.

Instead of forcing ourselves to eat less, we use the skills to change our state with the goal of experiencing more



moments in high-level reward - at 1. Once you know your number, instead of reaching for food, you reach for one of five tools that involve checking thoughts and being aware of feelings. Each tool reflects emerging understandings of neuroscience, providing the most effective way to move the brain from stress to joy at that specific level of stress.

"Can you imagine losing weight by holding yourself accountable for popping your brain from stress to joy throughout the day, rather than for counting calories? Each time you use the tools, you get an immediate pulse of neurotransmitters, a surge of pleasure. Over time, repeatedly changing one's state from stress to joy changes one's trait. Soothing and comforting ourselves from within becomes spontaneous more of the time and appetites tend to fade," said Mellin.

The response to this method by the health community has been positive. According to [obesity](#) expert John Foreyt, professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Baylor College of Medicine, "The Solution is the first treatment to show continued weight loss after the program ends." The national obesity watchdog group, Shape-Up America! reported that the method "provides new hope to overweight Americans" and Health magazine named the program "One of the 10 Top Medical Advances of the Year."

Solution Groups conducted by health professionals trained in the method, self-help Solution Circles and self-study Internet training all provide support, giving health professionals another option for their patients who struggle with weight issues.

Margaret Suddeth, a program graduate who lost 60 pounds using the method, and who has kept it off for three years reports: "I exercise more now, but the biggest change in me is internal. I have the skills to pop my brain out of stress and into this zone of happiness that makes me forget about food."

For more information about the conferences or about for local groups based on The Solution Method, visit [www.thesolutionmethod.org](http://www.thesolutionmethod.org)] or telephone 415.457.3331. For information on the pediatric obesity treatment, The SHAPEDOWN Program, visit [www.shapedown.com](http://www.shapedown.com)].

Upcoming conferences:

October 18-19, 2007 University of San Diego  
October 22-23, 2007 University of California, Los Angeles  
January 14-15, 2008 University of Florida  
March 13-14, 2008 University of Illinois, Chicago  
March 17-18, 2008 New York University  
March 24-25, 2008 University of California, Davis  
March 27-28, 2008 University of Virginia, Charlottesville  
April 7-8, 2008 University of Oregon Health Sciences University  
April 21-22, 2008, Loma Linda University

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