



— SOAR *with Tammie* —

SOAR



Stop. Observe. Assess. Respond.

One pause at a time.



FREE WORKBOOK



What You Will Find Inside

A guided path through awareness, triggers, coping, and reflection.

Welcome to SOAR	A compassionate opening and a reminder that this is not about shame.
About Tammie	Why SOAR was created and the personal story behind the work.
How to Use This Workbook	Suggestions for using the workbook at your own pace.
Complete SOAR in One Week	A one-week plan for finishing the entire starter workbook.
My 7-Day SOAR Calendar	A one-page fill-in calendar for choosing your own Day 1 through Day 7 dates.
Section I - Understanding My Patterns	The SOAR framework, hunger awareness, and early reflection pages.
Section II - Understanding My Triggers	Time-based factors, internal states, environmental influences, thought patterns, and trigger chains.
Section III - Building My Coping Plan	The SOAR pause, emergency coping actions, evening reset, and deeper-need question.
Section IV - Reflection and Moving Forward	Daily journaling, weekly reflection, closing reflection, and next steps.

Welcome

Welcome to SOAR.

SOAR stands for Stop - Observe - Assess - Respond.

This free starter workbook was created for people who are tired of believing that their struggles with food are simply about willpower.

For many of us, overeating is not just about hunger. It can be connected to stress, loneliness, grief, exhaustion, boredom, reward, anxiety, caregiving, work pressure, or the need for comfort at the end of a long day.

SOAR is a simple framework designed to help you pause before reacting automatically, understand what is happening emotionally, and choose a more supportive response.

- This is not a diet plan.
- This is not about shame, punishment, or perfection.
- This is a new beginning.
- This is a tool for empowerment.
- This is a tool to help you feel more aware, empowered, and in control of your choices.

The goal

The goal of this starter workbook is to help you notice your patterns with honesty and compassion. This journey is not about perfection. This journey is about understanding yourself differently.

About Tammie - Why I Created SOAR

A personal note from Tammie Cumming, Ph.D.

For decades, I believed my struggles with food were simply about discipline.

My husband died after years of bravely dealing with cancer, and when he died, we had no money. I was grieving, raising three sons, working, and trying to hold a family together when everything felt uncertain. Like many mothers, I became very good at taking care of everyone else. I fought for my children. I found ways forward. One of my sons went on to play the title role in *Billy Elliot the Musical* on Broadway. My oldest son worked for two presidents at the White House. My youngest son successfully started his own business. I am deeply proud of them. But the cost to myself was high. While I thought I was hiding the exhaustion, grief, fear, and pressure I was carrying, it was showing in my body. It was showing in my weight. At my highest, I weighed 296 pounds. I could take care of almost everyone else, but I had to learn how to take care of myself — and I was the hardest person I have ever had to take care of.

Professionally, I spent my career in education, research, and leadership. My work focused on understanding patterns, systems, behavior, and human development. But privately, I had to learn to understand my own patterns, especially the emotional and behavioral patterns underneath my eating.

What I began to realize

My relationship with food was not just about food.

Food had become a powerful source of comfort, relief, reward, escape, and emotional regulation during difficult seasons.



Highest Weight



Current Weight

What changed my life was not perfectionism, punishing myself, or starting another extreme diet. I had to learn to understand the emotional and behavioral patterns underneath my eating. Once I understood this, I began to change — one pause at a time.

I realized I was not alone. Many intelligent, capable, successful people are not struggling because they “do not know what to eat.” They are struggling because stress, grief, loneliness, exhaustion, caregiving, overwhelm, and emotional survival quietly shape behavior in ways most diet programs never address.

That realization became the beginning of SOAR.

This is my story.

Someday I hope to read yours. You have got this!

The Idea Behind SOAR

SOAR stands for Stop - Observe - Assess - Respond.

SOAR is based on a simple but powerful idea: if we can pause long enough to understand what we are actually feeling, what triggered us, and what we truly need, we create the possibility of responding differently - not perfectly, but differently.

SOAR was designed to provide a more compassionate, emotionally honest, and sustainable approach to change.

Through guided reflection, behavioral tools, emotional awareness exercises, journaling, and supportive audio sessions, my hope is that SOAR becomes a space where people feel:

- understood,
- less ashamed,
- more emotionally aware, and
- more empowered to rebuild trust with themselves.

Remember

You do not need to become perfect to begin changing your life. You only need to begin noticing your patterns with honesty and compassion... one pause at a time.

- Tammie Cumming, Ph.D.

How to Use This Workbook

You can complete this workbook all at once or slowly over several days.

You may want to print it, write directly into the digital PDF, or use a separate journal.

As you work through the pages, try not to judge your answers. Your patterns developed for a reason. Many eating behaviors begin as attempts to cope, comfort, escape, soothe, celebrate, or survive difficult emotional states.

Your purpose

The goal is not to criticize yourself. The goal is to understand yourself well enough to respond differently.

Strategies to Succeed with SOAR

Prioritize yourself and take the time that you need to succeed.

SOAR is designed to help you slow down, reflect, notice patterns, and build emotional awareness over time. You may complete some sections quickly and spend longer in others. That is normal. This is your personal journey and you can succeed.

Remind yourself that there is no perfect way to complete this workbook. The goal is not perfection. The goal is awareness.

- Complete the workbook at your own pace rather than trying to finish everything at once.
- Repeat journal pages and revisit sections that feel emotionally important.
- Focus on noticing patterns with curiosity rather than judgment.
- Use calming audio support while journaling or reflecting.
- Return to your coping plans during moments of emotional eating or overwhelm.
- Allow yourself to begin again whenever needed. You may notice patterns you have never fully recognized before.

Awareness creates the possibility of change.

Each pause matters. Each reflection matters. Each moment of honesty matters. Progress is not built through perfection; progress is built through repeated moments of awareness, compassion, and intentional response... one pause at a time.

Complete SOAR in One Week

A simple 7-day starter plan for finishing the entire workbook.

The purpose of this free starter workbook is to help you get started, build momentum, and complete the full workbook in one week. Each day gives you a focused set of pages to complete, along with one small practice to carry into daily life.

Your one-week goal

By the end of Day 7, you will have completed the starter workbook and identified your strongest patterns, triggers, coping tools, and next steps.

Day	Pages	What to complete
Day 1	Pages 3-7	Welcome, Tammie story, SOAR idea, and how to use the workbook.
Day 2	Pages 8-10	One-week plan 7-day calendar and starting reflections.
Day 3	Pages 11-13	Vision, commitment, note before beginning
Day 4	Pages 14-19	Section I, patterns, SOAR framework, quick reflection, and hunger awareness.
Day 5	Pages 20-25	Section II, emotional eating triggers, top triggers, and eating chain.
Day 6	Pages 26-31	Section III, pause practice, emergency plan, evening reset, and deeper need.
Day 7	Pages 32-36	Section IV, daily journal, weekly reflection, closing, and next steps.

My 7-Day SOAR Calendar

Choose your own dates for Day 1 through Day 7 and map out your starter week.

Use this one-page calendar to choose your Day 1 through Day 7 dates. The goal is to complete the entire starter workbook in one week. Fill in the date for each day and jot down a brief focus or note.

Day	Date	Focus or Notes
Day 1	_____	_____
Day 2	_____	_____
Day 3	_____	_____
Day 4	_____	_____
Day 5	_____	_____
Day 6	_____	_____
Day 7	_____	_____

Simple idea

Choose seven dates for your starter week. The goal is steady momentum: one day, one focused session, one pause at a time.

My SOAR Completion Plan

Begin with intention

This workbook belongs to:

Today's Date:

My SOAR Start Date:

My Target Completion Date:

Why Am I Starting SOAR?

Beginning Reflection

What made me decide to begin this workbook now?

What do I most hope will change in my life?

What emotional eating pattern am I most tired of repeating?

My Vision for Myself

If I continue learning healthier coping skills and emotional awareness, I hope my life begins to feel:

☐ calmer	☐ less controlled by food
☐ healthier	☐ more hopeful
☐ more peaceful	☐ more confident
☐ less emotionally reactive	☐ more energized
☐ more emotionally regulated	☐ more self-compassionate
☐ more intentional	☐ Other: _____

My Commitment to Myself

As I complete this workbook, I will try to remember:

- awareness matters,
- small changes matter,
- pauses matter, and
- perfection is not required for progress.

Commitment

I am learning new skills. I am learning to respond differently. I am building a healthier relationship with myself.

Sign and date

Signature:

Date:

A Note Before You Begin

This workbook is educational and reflective. It is not medical, psychological, nutritional, or mental health treatment.

SOAR is intended to support self-awareness, emotional reflection, and behavior change. It is not a substitute for individualized care from a qualified healthcare, nutrition, or mental health professional.

If you have a history of an eating disorder, severe depression, trauma, substance dependence, self-harm, or a medical condition affecting eating or weight, please consider working with a qualified professional as you use this workbook.

If using this workbook brings up distressing emotions, difficult memories, or urges that feel unsafe or overwhelming, pause and seek support.

Important safety note

If you feel at risk of harming yourself or someone else, or you are in immediate danger, call emergency services or contact a crisis support resource right away.

You deserve support.

You do not have to do this alone.

SECTION I

Understanding My Patterns

Sustainable change begins when we stop asking, "What is wrong with me?" and start asking, "What do I need?"

In this section, you will:

- recognize emotional and behavioral patterns,
- learn the SOAR framework, and
- distinguish emotional hunger from physical hunger.

One pause at a time.

Move through this section gently. The goal is awareness, not perfection.

Understanding My Patterns

Many eating behaviors are not random.

Over time, patterns quietly develop around stress, exhaustion, loneliness, grief, reward, overwhelm, routine, and emotional survival. These patterns can become automatic, especially during vulnerable moments when we are emotionally depleted or disconnected from what we truly need.

This section is designed to help you begin noticing those patterns with greater awareness and compassion.

As you move through these pages, you may begin to recognize:

- emotional triggers,
- thought patterns,
- vulnerable times of day,
- coping habits, and
- the emotional needs underneath your eating behaviors.

Section intention

The goal is not to criticize yourself. The goal is to understand yourself more honestly and gently. Awareness creates the possibility of change... one pattern at a time.

The SOAR Framework

STOP Pause before reacting automatically. This might mean waiting five minutes before eating, closing the refrigerator door, taking three breaths, stepping away from the kitchen, or saying: "I do not have to act on this urge immediately."	OBSERVE Notice what is happening inside and around you. Ask: What am I feeling? What just happened? What am I thinking? What does my body feel like? Where am I? Who am I with? What time of day is it?
ASSESS Ask what you actually need. Sometimes the answer is food. Sometimes it is rest. Sometimes it is comfort, quiet, reassurance, connection, movement, prayer, or permission to stop pushing.	RESPOND Choose one caring action. Not the perfect action. Not the most disciplined action. Just one action that supports the person you are becoming.

Quick Reflection

My Relationship with Food

When I think about my relationship with food, I feel:

The eating pattern I most want to understand is:

One thing I am tired of repeating is:

One thing I hope SOAR helps me build is:

How I Will Practice SOAR This Week

This week I will practice by...

One moment when I can pause is:

One question I want to ask myself is:

One supportive response I can try is:

Emotional Hunger vs. Physical Hunger

One of the most useful first steps is learning to distinguish emotional hunger from physical hunger.

Physical Hunger

Usually develops gradually. It may be felt in the stomach or body. Many types of food may sound appealing. Eating brings satisfaction, and stopping when full feels possible.

Emotional Hunger

Often feels sudden, urgent, and specific. It may feel like you need a certain food or drink right now. It may be connected to stress, sadness, loneliness, anger, exhaustion, or reward. Emotional hunger can be difficult to satisfy because the true need may not be food.

Awareness note

Neither type of hunger makes you bad or weak. The purpose of this distinction is awareness.

Hunger Awareness Check

Before eating, pause and ask:

Am I physically hungry?

☐ Yes

☐ Maybe

☐ No

☐ I am not sure

My hunger level

What is my hunger level right now? 0 = not hungry at all, 5 = comfortably hungry, 10 = extremely hungry. My hunger level:

What emotion is present?

☐ Stress

☐ Exhaustion

☐ Anxiety

☐ Overwhelm

☐ Sadness

☐ Reward seeking

☐ Loneliness

☐ Numbness

☐ Anger

☐ Celebration

☐ Boredom

☐ Other: _____

What do I actually need right now?

My answer:

SECTION II

Understanding My Triggers

Triggers are clues. They help you see what tends to happen before an emotional eating urge.

In this section, you will:

- identify common trigger categories,
- name your top three triggers, and
- map one emotional eating chain from trigger to consequence.

One pause at a time.

Move through this section gently. The goal is awareness, not perfection.

Common Emotional Eating Triggers

Emotional eating is often triggered by predictable patterns. Check any that apply to you.

Time-Based Factors

☐ Evening	☐ Weekends
☐ Late night	☐ After everyone else goes to bed
☐ After work	☐ During unstructured time

Internal States

☐ Stress	☐ Boredom
☐ Loneliness	☐ Feeling unappreciated
☐ Grief	☐ Feeling rejected
☐ Anxiety	☐ Feeling overwhelmed
☐ Anger	☐ Feeling empty

Environmental Influences

☐ Kitchen counter food	☐ Alcohol
☐ Refrigerator grazing	☐ Social events
☐ Watching TV	☐ Food delivery apps
☐ Driving past favorite food places	☐ Eating alone
☐ Restaurants	

Thought Patterns

☐ "I deserve this."	☐ "This is the only thing I have to look forward to."
☐ "I already blew it."	☐ "I cannot handle how I feel."
☐ "I will start again tomorrow."	☐ "I just need comfort."

My Top Three Triggers

Trigger 1

When does this usually happen?

What emotion is usually present?

Trigger 2

When does this usually happen?

What emotion is usually present?

Trigger 3

When does this usually happen?

What emotion is usually present?

The Emotional Eating Chain

Many eating behaviors follow a pattern.

Trigger -> Thought -> Emotion -> Urge -> Action -> Consequence

The chain is not meant to shame you. It is meant to help you see the moment where change is possible.

Trigger	A stressful day at work
Thought	"I cannot deal with anything else today."
Emotion	Overwhelmed
Urge	Order takeout and keep eating
Action	Eat quickly while distracted
Consequence	Temporary relief, then regret

My Emotional Eating Chain

Think of one recent moment when you ate in a way that did not feel aligned with your goals.

My chain

Trigger - What happened before the urge?

Thought - What did you say to yourself?

Emotion - What were you feeling?

Urge - What did you want to do?

Action - What did you do?

Consequence - How did you feel afterward?

SECTION III

Building My Coping Plan

Once you can see the pattern, you can begin choosing one supportive response before reacting automatically.

In this section, you will:

- practice the five-minute SOAR pause,
- choose emergency coping actions, and
- create evening supports for vulnerable times.

One pause at a time.

Move through this section gently. The goal is awareness, not perfection.

The SOAR Pause Practice

The next time you feel an emotional eating urge, try this simple pause. You deserve the gift of five minutes.

Step 1: Stop Say: "I can pause for five minutes."	Step 2: Observe Ask: "What am I feeling right now?"
Step 3: Assess Ask: "What do I actually need?"	Step 4: Respond Choose one supportive action before eating impulsively.

Supportive actions to try:

- drink water or tea
- take a short walk
- sit quietly for five minutes
- journal
- listen to calming audio
- prepare a planned snack or meal
- call or text someone
- take a shower
- breathe slowly
- pray or meditate
- move to a different room

My SOAR Emergency Plan

When I feel an emotional eating urge, before I decide to eat, I will first try:

☐ Drinking tea or water	☐ Taking a shower
☐ Walking for 5-10 minutes	☐ Rocking in a chair
☐ Listening to calming audio	☐ Delaying eating for 20 minutes
☐ Journaling	☐ Leaving the kitchen
☐ Calling or texting someone	☐ Going outside
☐ Eating protein first	☐ Other: _____
☐ Sitting quietly and breathing	

My top three emergency coping actions are:

1.

2.

3.

Evening Eating Reset

Evenings are difficult for many people.

By the end of the day, stress has accumulated, decision-making is weaker, emotions may rise, and structure often disappears. Food can begin to feel like relief, reward, comfort, or escape.

Before emotionally eating in the evening, ask:

1. Am I physically hungry?

2. What emotion is strongest right now?

3. What did I need today that I did not receive?

4. What would help me feel cared for tonight?

5. What is one supportive thing I can do before eating impulsively?

My Evening Protection Plan

Evening plan

My most vulnerable evening time is:

My most common evening eating trigger is:

The feeling I most often try to soothe at night is:

Three evening actions that could support me are:

A calming evening routine I can try is:

The Question That Changes Everything

Before eating emotionally, ask:

What do I actually need right now?

Possible answers:

- rest
- comfort
- connection
- quiet
- reassurance
- structure
- movement
- sleep
- emotional release
- a real meal
- support
- prayer
- a transition out of work mode
- permission to stop for the day

Food may offer temporary relief. But sometimes the deeper need is asking to be noticed.

SECTION IV

Reflection and Moving Forward

Reflection helps turn awareness into practice and practice into change.

In this section, you will:

- capture daily observations,
- review what you noticed this week, and
- close the starter workbook with compassion and next steps.

One pause at a time.

Move through this section gently. The goal is awareness, not perfection.

Daily SOAR Journal Page

Date: _____

Today I feel:

My strongest trigger today was:

Before eating, I noticed this emotion:

What I actually needed was:

One supportive response I chose was:

One thing I did well today:

One thing I want to remember tomorrow:

Weekly Reflection

At the end of the week, reflect on what you noticed.

This week...

This week, I learned that I often eat when I feel:

My strongest trigger was:

One pattern I noticed was:

One coping action that helped was:

One thing I want to practice next week is:

One thing I can forgive myself for is:

Closing Reflection

You do not need to change everything overnight.

You do not need to become perfect.

You do not need to punish yourself into becoming healthier.

You only need to begin noticing your patterns with honesty and compassion.

- Each pause matters.
- Each moment of awareness matters.
- Each time you ask, "What do I actually need?" you are building a different relationship with yourself.

This is SOAR

Stop. Observe. Assess. Respond. One pause at a time.

Invitation to Continue

Welcome to SOAR.

If this workbook helped you pause, reflect, or feel less alone, you are already beginning the work.

You have completed the SOAR Starter Workbook - and that matters.

You have already begun doing something powerful: pausing, noticing your patterns, naming your triggers, and asking what you actually need.

This free workbook is only the beginning.

The full SOAR workbook goes deeper into emotional eating patterns, urge cycles, evening eating, shame recovery, self-compassion, identity change, and guided reflection.

To keep going, you can:

Listen to the SOAR podcast

Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/033z1OmbGtIZm0OQglqAon>

Join the SOAR email list

Receive encouragement, reflection prompts, podcast updates, and future SOAR resources.

Continue with the full SOAR workbook

Go deeper into the emotional and behavioral patterns underneath eating, stress, overwhelm, and self-care.

You do not need to change everything overnight.

You only need to keep practicing the pause.

I'm so glad you're here.

Welcome to SOAR.

One pause at a time.