

# SELF GUIDED BINGE EATING DISORDER WORKBOOK



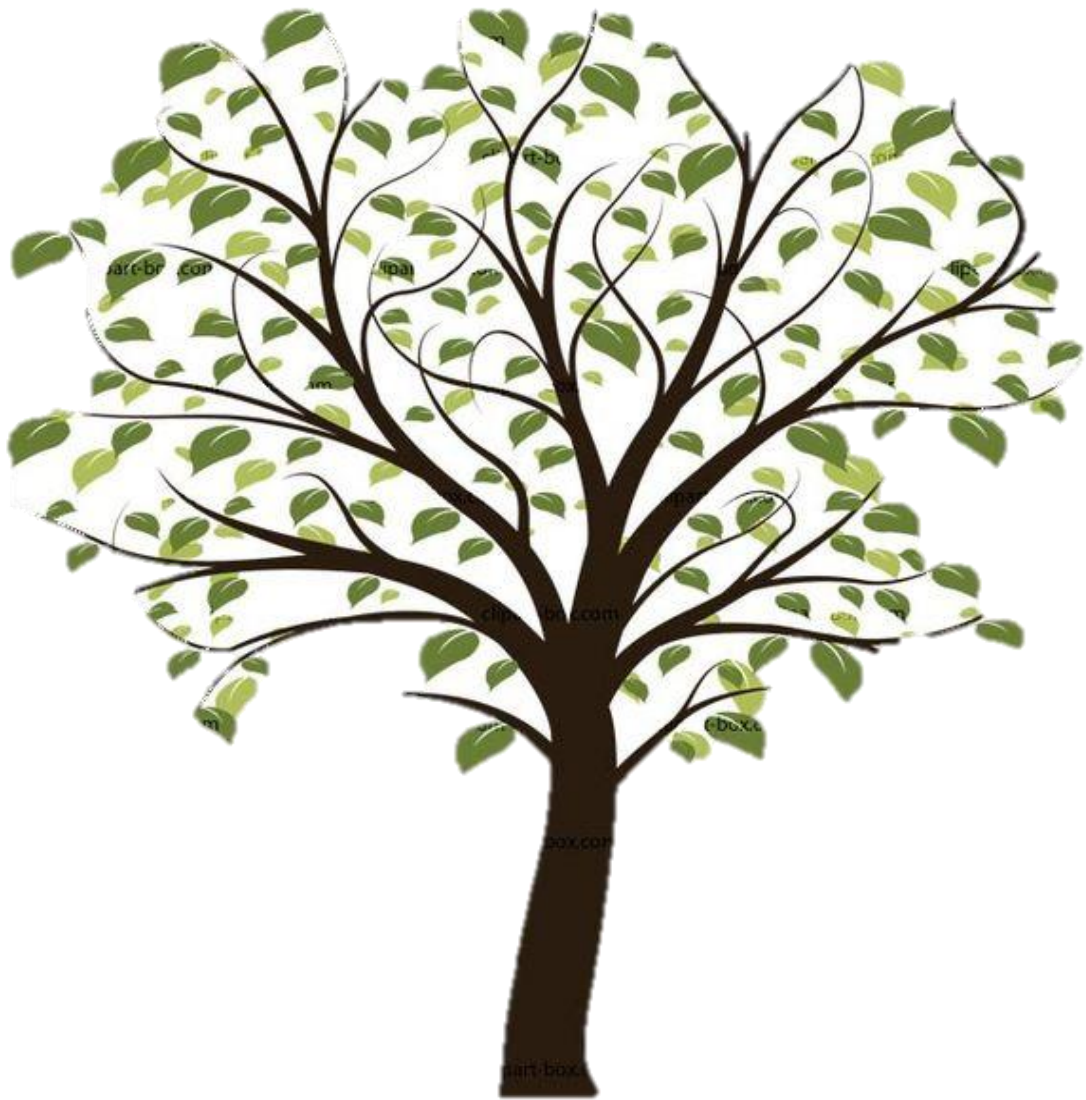
**Specialist Eating Disorders Service**  
*Aneurin Bevan University Health Board*

# CONTENTS

This workbook is designed to help you understand your binge eating behaviours and develop skills and techniques to reduce them. It draws on a number of different strategies and is based on the *Overcoming Binge Eating Book* by Christopher Fairburn. It is divided into the following sections:

- What is binge eating?
- Why do people binge?
- Why do I binge?
- Consequences of binge eating.
- How to stop binge eating behaviours.
- Useful websites and reading.

# What is Binge Eating?



The term binge eating is used to describe consuming an excessive amount of food. For many people this is harmless, happens occasionally and has no impact on their life. For others it means a loss of control and is a serious problem with recurring episodes, feeling out of control and feelings of guilt and shame following a binge. What feels like a binge to some, may not to others; it is a very personal experience but there is a shared view that an episode of binge eating is defined by:

- 1- Eating in a discrete period of time (e.g. within any two-hour period) an amount of food that is definitely larger than most people would eat during a similar period of time and under similar circumstances.
- 2- A sense of a lack of control over eating during the episode (e.g. a feeling that one cannot stop eating or control what or how much one is eating).

Even though experiences of binge eating may differ from person to person, research has found that there are some common features. If you engage in binge eating you may recognise the following experiences:

- **Feelings** - The start of a binge can be enjoyable, the taste and texture of the food may be extremely pleasing. However, these feelings rarely last. They are quickly replaced by feelings of disgust as more and more food is consumed. Some people feel revulsion but are unable to stop what they are doing.
- **Speed of Eating** - Usually people eat very rapidly when they binge. Many put food into their mouth almost mechanically, barely chewing it. Some will also drink large amounts to help wash the food down which contributes to feeling full and bloated.
- **Agitation** - Some people are unable to sit down during a binge and may pace up and down. They may have a feeling of desperation; the craving for food is a very powerful force driving them to eat. Accessing food becomes extremely important; people may take food belonging to others, steal from shops or eat discarded food. Most experience this behaviour as disgusting, degrading and shameful.
- **A Feeling of Altered Consciousness** - People regularly describe feeling as if they are in a trance during a binge. If this is something you experience, you know that it seems almost automatic, as if it is not really you who is eating. Some people report they will use a form of distraction such as watching television to avoid having to think about what they are doing.

- **Secretiveness** - A typical characteristic of a binge is that it happens in secret. Some people are so ashamed of their binge eating they go to great deals to hide it. This may involve eating normally with others and later returning to eat all the leftovers, or taking food to another room to eat. Some people may buy food from several different shops and eat in the car to ensure those they know are not aware of what they are eating.
- **Loss of Control** – As mentioned earlier, this is a core characteristic of binge eating. The feeling of a loss of control may start before eating, it can build gradually while eating or it can come on suddenly when someone realises they have eaten too much. Some people who have been binge eating for many years report that the feeling of loss of control has reduced over time. They no longer try to resist binges as they see them as inevitable. In these cases someone might plan a binge to maintain a sense of control over when and where the binge will occur. Whilst they feel they have more control this is not really the case as they are still unable to prevent the binge from happening and are unable to stop once they have started.

Spend some time thinking about your experiences when you binge? Can you identify with those listed above? Write down your thoughts in the space on the next page.

Are these experiences you can relate to? If so, how do these impact on you?

If these experiences are something you can relate to it is likely that binge eating has a significant impact on your quality of life. The following sections of this workbook will help you develop a better understanding of why binge eating occurs and provide you with some strategies to reduce these behaviours.

## Myths of Binge Eating:

**Myth:** Binge eating is the same as overeating.

**Fact:** Binge eating and overeating are not the same.

Most people will occasionally overindulge in their favorite foods and suffer the consequences of feeling uncomfortable until the meal has digested. People who struggle with binge eating disorder also overeat, but it is as a result of a compulsivity rather than an occasional choice to overindulge.

When looking at binge eating vs overeating, another difference is in the amount of food that is likely consumed during the span of time in which the overindulgence takes place. The amounts of food that someone who binge eats is far beyond what one would consume in a typical period of overeating; binging is driven by compulsion and loss of control, which results in the mass consumption of food.

The length of time that the overeating takes place is also likely to be a longer duration in binge eaters than someone who simply overeats at a particular meal. Binge eating episodes can last up to two hours.

**Myth:** Binge eating only affects overweight individuals.

**Fact:** People with binge eating disorder are commonly overweight, but this is not true for all people with the condition.

Binge eating disorder is not exclusive to people who are overweight. In fact, sometimes one of the contributing factors to the disorder is excessive restriction of calories during the day, which results in a rebound effect and binge eating later in the evening. Someone of normal weight can still have a binge eating disorder. Binge eating and weight gain is common, but it is not a deciding factor to determine whether someone has this disorder.

Metabolism rates and genetic influences can impact one's body size and the amount of food that causes weight gain for a specific individual. Because of the nuances of these varying factors, a person can have binge eating disorder but not be overweight. Someone who binge eats and has a fast metabolism and genetic predisposition to lean body size may not carry excessive weight, which makes the condition difficult to detect.

Not all people who have binge eating disorders are overweight; similarly, not all people who are overweight binge eat. This is an important distinction to make in order to better understand eating disorders and to avoid mislabeling people or increasing stigma and isolation.

Myth: Weight loss or dieting cures binge eating disorder.

Fact: Dieting can actually trigger binge eating disorder.

Contrary to what some may think, dieting is not the binge eating cure. The desire to lose weight that initiates the dieting process can result in deprivation or restrictive eating habits. This deprivation can trigger people prone to binge eating disorder, as it creates additional stress and hyper-focus on food. Resorting to a diet to stop binge eating is likely to actually reinforce the behavior due to that deprivation/binge cycle. Even if one succeeds in weight loss, this doesn't mean that the binge disorder is cured.

Binge eating, like any eating disorder, is about one's relationship with food and its impact on one's life, health and functioning. Regardless of a person's weight, this relationship is the deciding factor about whether an eating disorder is active or in remission. Someone who wants to find out how to stop binge eating should look into treatment options that address this underlying relationship with food along with any other co-occurring conditions.

The myth of weight loss or dieting as a cure for binge eating disorder is a dangerous one, as it perpetuates an activity that can actually worsen the condition by default. The shame and guilt that people with binge eating disorder experience is also perpetuated by the cycles of restriction and binge behaviors.

Myth: Binge eating disorder is rare.

Fact: Binge eating disorder is more common than anorexia, bulimia, HIV and breast cancer.

Binge eating disorder statistics show that it is the most common eating disorder, with a prevalence of more than three times the rates of anorexia and bulimia combined. Binge eating disorder is likely to be even more common than we realize, considering that many people with the condition remain untreated and do not tell others about it due to shame or embarrassment about the disorder.

Binge eating disorder was differentiated from other types of eating disorders in 2013 when the fifth edition of the DSM was published. A distinction was made between binge eating and bulimia as a result of the recognition that not everyone who binges engages in behaviors to rid themselves of the food consumed (purging). In fact, it has been discovered that it is far more common for people to have binge eating disorder without purging. This was an important distinction for the increased awareness of both disorders and legitimized the two conditions as distinct and separate.

Myth: Binge eating can be controlled by willpower.

Fact: It may seem like a simple matter of willpower, but the reality of binge eating is far different and more complex.

Binge eating is similar to an addictive process in terms of the compulsivity that takes over during a binge episode. Suggesting that someone with binge eating disorder just “use willpower” is similar to saying it to a person who is substance-dependent. If it were as simple as using willpower, no one would have any sort of compulsive, damaging behaviors, whether it be bingeing on food or misusing drugs or alcohol.

In these types of disorders, a process occurs in dopamine receptors in the brain and this turns the binge process into a compelling and compulsive behavior that is difficult to reign in. In short, this process hijacks the brain and turns binge eating into an addiction for those who experience this disorder. Using willpower with binge eating seems like a logical suggestion, but when one considers the underlying factors, it is a far too simplistic suggestion and implies a judgment that the person with the condition is somehow weak or lazy.

Binge eating disorder treatment can include different types of psychotherapy, medications or a combination of both. Professional help for binge eating disorder is available and can be a key part of recovery.

Myth: Binge eating doesn't have any long-term consequences.

Fact: Binge eating disorder can lead to long-term physical, emotional and social consequences.

The health consequences of binge eating disorder can include obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. Additional effects of binge eating disorder include social isolation, low self-esteem and depression. For the 1 in 4 people who have a co-occurring diagnosis of PTSD and binge eating disorder, the likelihood of social isolation is even greater.

Feelings of shame and embarrassment over the condition may result in self-esteem challenges and a refusal to eat in front of other people. Because so many of our cultural norms revolve around food consumption, people with binge eating and other eating disorders may avoid social gatherings for fear of judgment.

There is more social awareness and healthy conversations about body shaming than there has been in the past, however, for people with eating disorders, these challenges are deeply ingrained. As our culture expands awareness of binge eating disorder and myths are dispelled, it is more likely that people with the condition will seek the treatment they need to live healthier, happier lives

Myth: Binge eating disorder only affects adults.

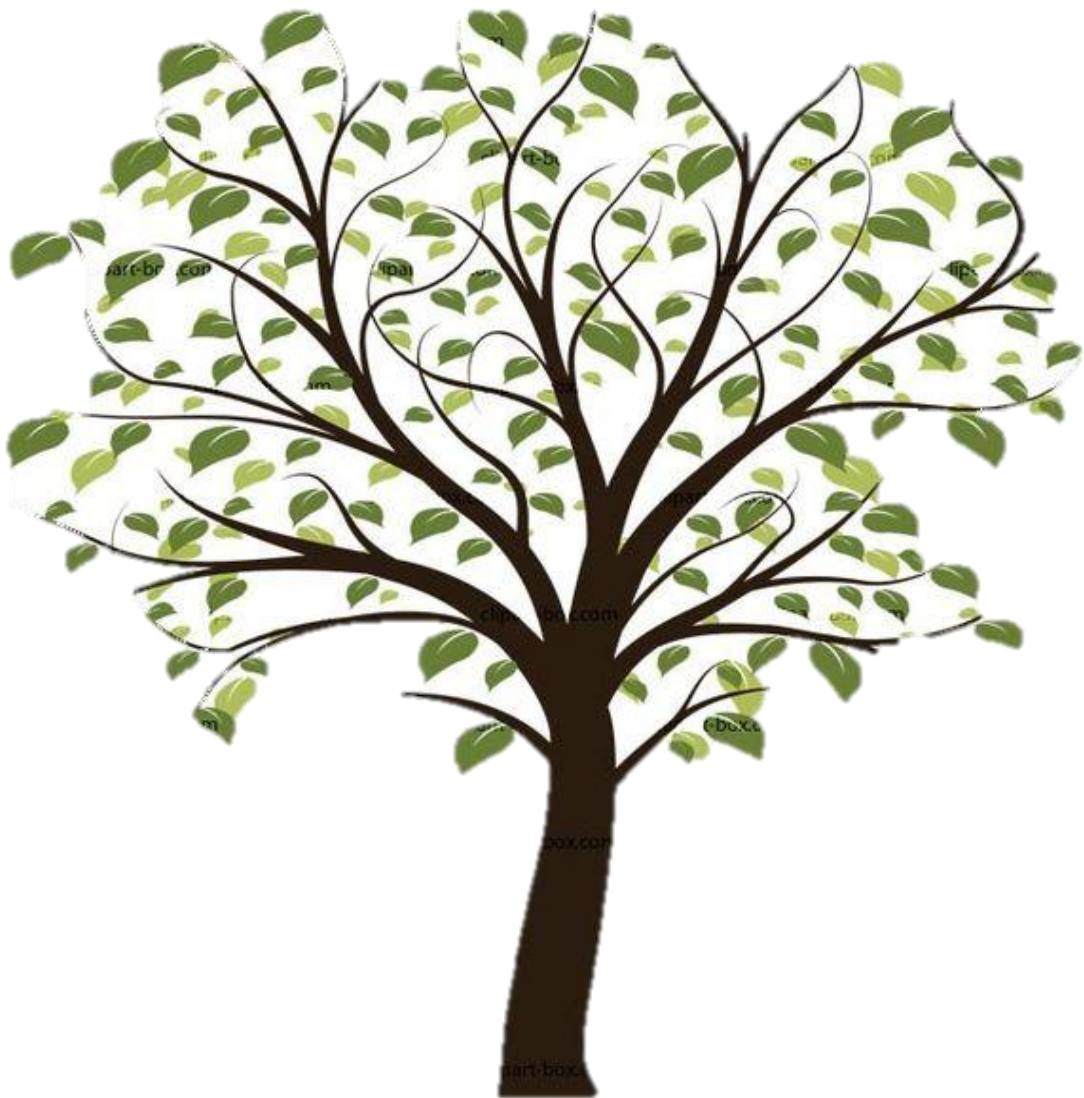
Fact: Binge eating disorders can occur in adults, teens and children.

While binge eating disorder most often begins in late teens or early adulthood, it can be diagnosed in younger children and older adults. Binge eating disorder can be exacerbated by stress, as binge eating becomes a method of self-soothing. There is also a connection between neglect and abuse in children who have binge eating disorders, but this certainly isn't the case in every situation. Children and teens who struggle with binge eating disorder as a result of abuse or neglect have likely found comfort in the use of food when emotional comfort wasn't readily available or consistent.

A striking 1 in 4 people with binge eating disorder have a co-occurring diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The fact that such a high proportion of people with this condition have experienced trauma significant enough for a PTSD diagnosis reinforces the idea that binge eating disorder is based in stress and self-soothing.

Binge eating disorders in children can be tricky to diagnose, as children commonly experience growth spurts and need additional nutrients for growth. Sometimes parents can detect binge eating disorder in their children after noticing large amounts of food missing or food wrappers hidden in a child's room.

# Why do People Binge?



As we have already discussed, binge eating is a very personal experience. It is difficult to pinpoint a specific reason why someone starts and continues bingeing. It is more than likely a combination of reasons. Social, psychological and physical factors all appear to have a role. In this section we will discuss the theories relating to both the development and maintenance of binge eating behaviours.

Research suggests there are 4 common pathways to binge eating developing.

### Pathway 1

Dieting → Anorexia Nervosa → Binge eating

In this pathway a person starts dieting and losing weight during the teenage years, they may not have been overweight in the first place. If the weight loss is extreme, it leads to the development of anorexia nervosa. In time, their control over eating reduces and he or she starts to binge eat.

### Pathway 2

Obesity → Dieting → Binge eating

Pathway 2 is commonly described by many people with binge eating disorder. In these cases, they have experienced weight problems as a child and dieting seems to be a response to obesity of varying degrees.

### Pathway 3

Overeating in childhood → Dieting → Binge eating

In this pathway, weight problems may or may not be present and the extent of any seem to vary from person to person. Dieting as a response to overeating seems to make matters worse; overeating continues and a sense of a loss of control develops at the same time creating a vicious cycle.

### Pathway 4

Unpleasant emotion → Binge Eating

Dieting does not appear to have a significant role in this pathway, it is linked to impulse control problems. Using impulsive behaviours to release tension seems to be a key feature in the development of binge eating.

Whilst these are the most common pathways, others may occur and some people follow a combination of them. Use the space below to reflect on your experiences.

Do any of these pathways sound familiar to you? If so, which one? Is there a different pathway you think you have followed? If yes, what does your pathway look like?

## Psychological Factors

- **Unpleasant Feelings** Depression can be an especially powerful trigger for binge eating behaviours. Other emotions include anger, loneliness, boredom, irritability, tension and hopelessness. These can be longstanding problems for people and bingeing can provide a period of relief from these feelings. However, whilst it can initially feel like eating helps with managing these emotions, as discussed earlier, this is usually short lived and bingeing can reinforce or even worsen these feelings.

Do you think any of these unpleasant feelings contribute to your binge eating? If so, which ones? Do they have any other impact on you and your quality of life?

- **Concerns about Appearance and Weight**- A lot of people who binge eat are concerned about their appearance and weight, most want to lose weight and are fearful of weight gain. These concerns lead to dieting which, as the pathways described earlier demonstrate, tends to result in binge eating. Dieting has been shown to be involved

in both the development and maintenance of binge eating behaviours. We will explore the effects of dieting and how this contributes to binge eating later in this section. Some people may weigh themselves frequently or others may avoid weighing both of which can maintain negative thoughts about their appearance and weight. People may feel shame and disgust which reinforces dieting behaviour and hence a vicious cycle develops.

Do you have concerns about your weight and / or appearance? If so, when did these start? Do these concerns effect you in any other way?

- **Personality Traits** – There are certain characteristics that are common among those that binge eat.
  - **Low self-esteem** Feelings of inadequacy and worthlessness are common amongst those with binge eating problems since childhood. Some people report experiencing these feelings throughout childhood. For some they are often for related to the depression associated with the binge eating they experience.
  - **Perfectionism** This is another common longstanding characteristic in people with binge eating problems. There is a tendency to place overly demanding standards on themselves. This is particularly problematic when related to dietary goals one sets for themselves especially when these standards are unrealistic. Failing to meet these standards can be disheartening, especially if self-esteem is low.

- **All or Nothing Thinking** This thinking style is also often present in those who binge. It is commonly linked to perfectionism and leads people who have concerns about appearance and weight to have strict dietary goals. It encourages binge eating as it leads people to abandon control if they feel they have a lapse in their dietary intake which for them is viewed as a failure.
- **Impulsivity** Some people with binge eating problems have difficulty with impulse control. A small number of people will also have other impulse control behaviours such as gambling or drinking alcohol. Impulsive behaviours are often thought to be used to relieve tension.

Do any of these personality traits describe you? If so, which ones?

## Social and Environmental Factors

- **Emotional Trauma** Difficult life experiences such as abuse, bereavement and bullying are known to increase the risk of binge eating disorder. People who have been subject to critical comments about their bodies or weight may be especially vulnerable.
- **Home Environment** As children we learn our eating habits from those we live with. If growing up, your family members over ate or used food to manage emotions it is possible you also developed these behaviours. Some people may have experienced a lack of access to food or not eating regularly. This does not mean family members are responsible for you binge eating. Ongoing stresses within the home environment can reinforce binge eating behaviours as a coping strategy.

Can you think of any experiences you have had that may influence the way you think and behave now?

- **Media Impact** The media has a significant effect on the way people evaluate their shape and weight. There is a strong held belief that people need to look a certain way. The multi-million pound diet industry helps strengthen these beliefs about the meaning of the perfect body through media messages and advertising. They offer you a 'quick and easy' way of attaining the perfect body. But in many cases their methods are unrealistic. Individuals feel worthless as they are confronted with society's emphasis on thinness and unrealistic ideals of beauty. On the other hand some food industries are heavily promoting foods so both are targeting you as a consumer with their products, they want you to buy into them.

### Industry V's You

The food industry wants you to:	The diet industry wants you to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat sugary foods</li> <li>• Eat a lot</li> <li>• Eat fatty foods</li> <li>• Eat processed foods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feel that 'you are what you weigh'</li> <li>• Feel you need to be thin</li> <li>• Go on a diet</li> <li>• Lose weight</li> <li>• Gain weight</li> <li>• Go on another diet</li> <li>• And another</li> <li>• And another</li> </ul>

Do you feel caught between these messages, what does that feel like?

## Dieting and Irregular Eating

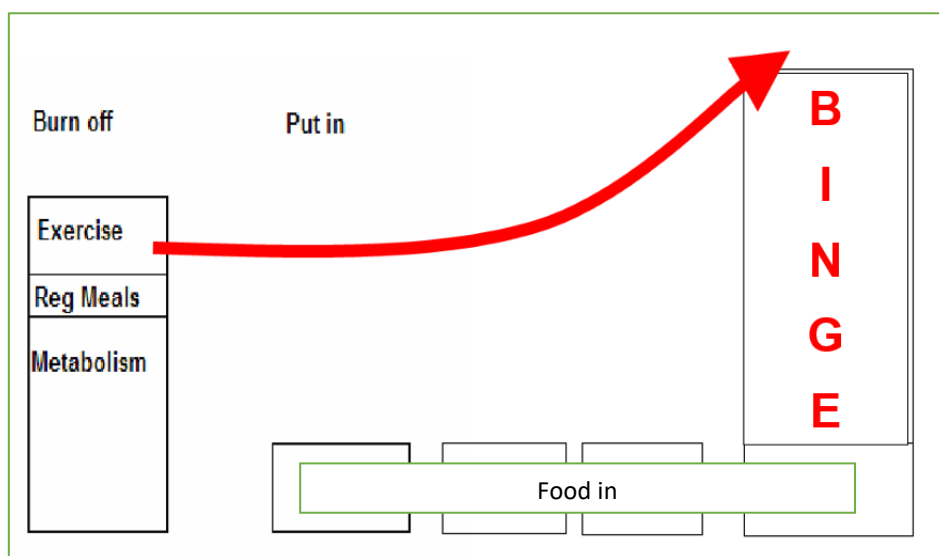
Many people who want to lose weight will often do this through restricting their intake. This could be through restricting calories, skipping meals or avoiding certain food groups. It is not only people who want to lose weight that may have a restrictive or irregular eating pattern. Some people may restrict food to manage their emotions, some may think they are too busy to eat regularly. The problem with this is the body will be aware it is not getting what it needs.

The human body is amazing! It is pre-programmed to look after itself. Generically we are all cavemen/women and the body will respond the same way a caveman/woman would. If a starving caveman walked through the desert and found a load of food, they will eat as much as they can and as quickly as they can. This is a protective feature as the caveman doesn't know when the next meal will be.

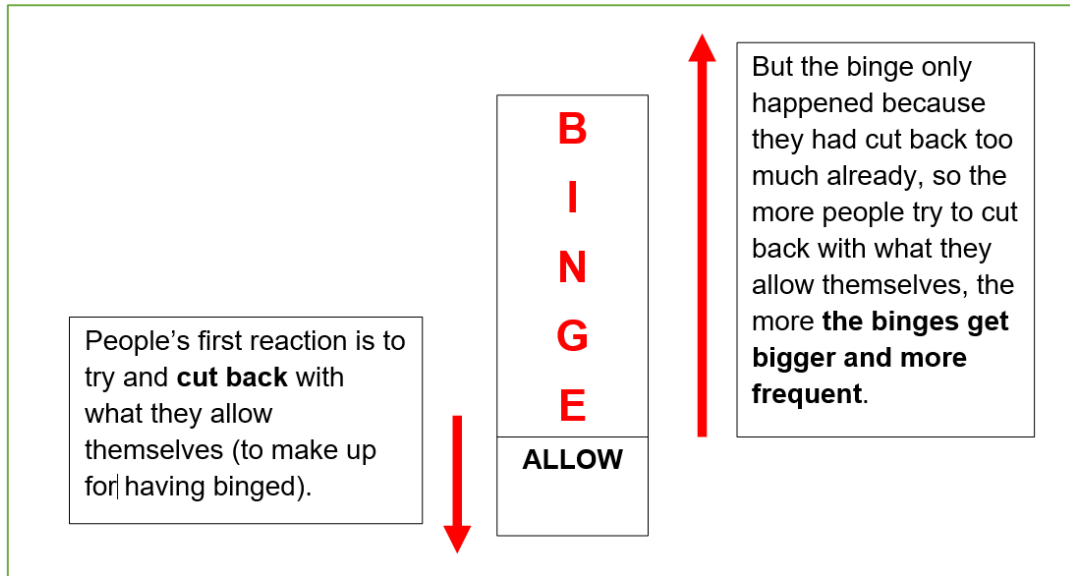
The caveman also doesn't want another starving caveman stealing the food. This is why people become more withdrawn and much less social when they are starving.

Humans have been doing this for thousands of years. 90% of people who cut back too much will end up bingeing.

The diagram below shows the body continuing to do its 'jobs' (every day activity and exercise, digestion of regular meals, and metabolic functions i.e. metabolism) in the left column; along the bottom we see a restricted or limited intake over a period of time; and on the right we see the combination of these two elements resulting in a binge.

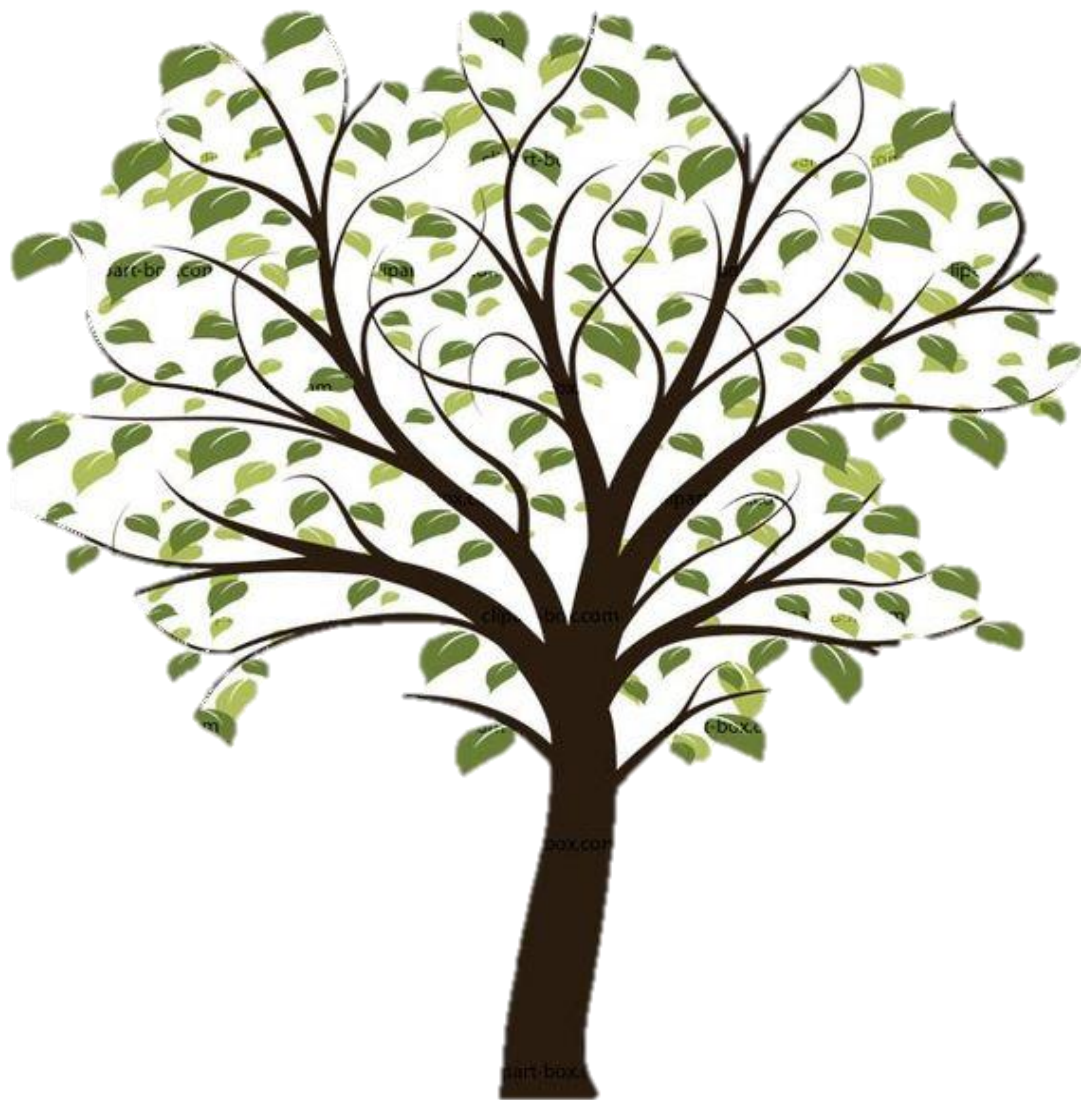


Sometimes after a binge, we are left with feelings of guilt and upset. This can result in us cutting back to compensate for the binge. However, what is often experienced after this period of restriction is another binge.



What is your regular eating pattern like? Do you miss meals? Do you avoid any certain food groups? If so, why? Do you binge on foods that you usually try to avoid?

# Why Do I binge?

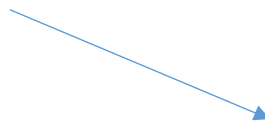


Now we have explored some of the reasons people binge eat, it is important for you to think about your own personal experiences. Hopefully what you have already read has helped you to reflect on this. As we have identified there are a number of factors that can lead to a binge, both longstanding (such as personality traits) and more immediate (emotions, for example feeling angry). One way to identify the more immediate influences is to complete a binge analysis. Completing one of these after every binge will help you identify your personal triggers and start to think about alternative ways for managing these (section 5 will provide you with some ideas for this).

### Example of a Binge Analysis

**Breaking a Dietary Rule**

Had a bar of chocolate



**Being Disinhibited**

Had a few glasses of wine



**Under eating**

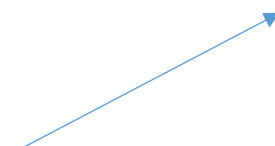
Skipped breakfast and lunch



**Adverse event or mood**

Had a row with boyfriend

Feeling upset and angry



**Lessons to learn**

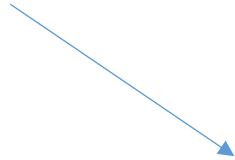
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Think about the last time you binged and completed the binge analysis on the next page.

# Binge Analysis

**Breaking a Dietary Rule**

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**Being Disinhibited**

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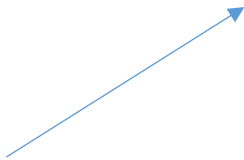
**Under eating**

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**Adverse event or mood**

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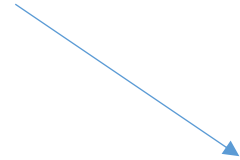
**Binge  
Eating**

Lessons to learn.....

# Binge Analysis

**Breaking a Dietary Rule**

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**Being Disinhibited**

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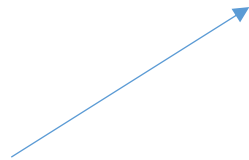
**Under eating**

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**Adverse event or mood**

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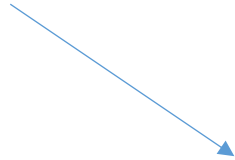
**Binge  
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Lessons to learn.....

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**Breaking a Dietary Rule**

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**Being Disinhibited**

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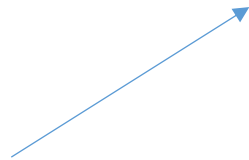
**Under eating**

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**Adverse event or mood**

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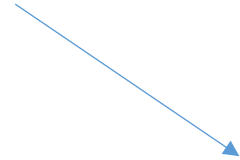
**Binge  
Eating**

Lessons to learn.....

# Binge Analysis

**Breaking a Dietary Rule**

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**Being Disinhibited**

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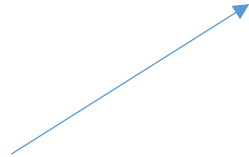
**Under eating**

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**Adverse event or mood**

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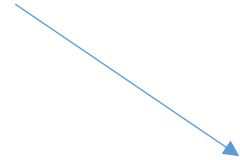
**Binge  
Eating**

Lessons to learn.....

# Binge Analysis

**Breaking a Dietary Rule**

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**Being Disinhibited**

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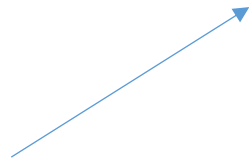
**Under eating**

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**Adverse event or mood**

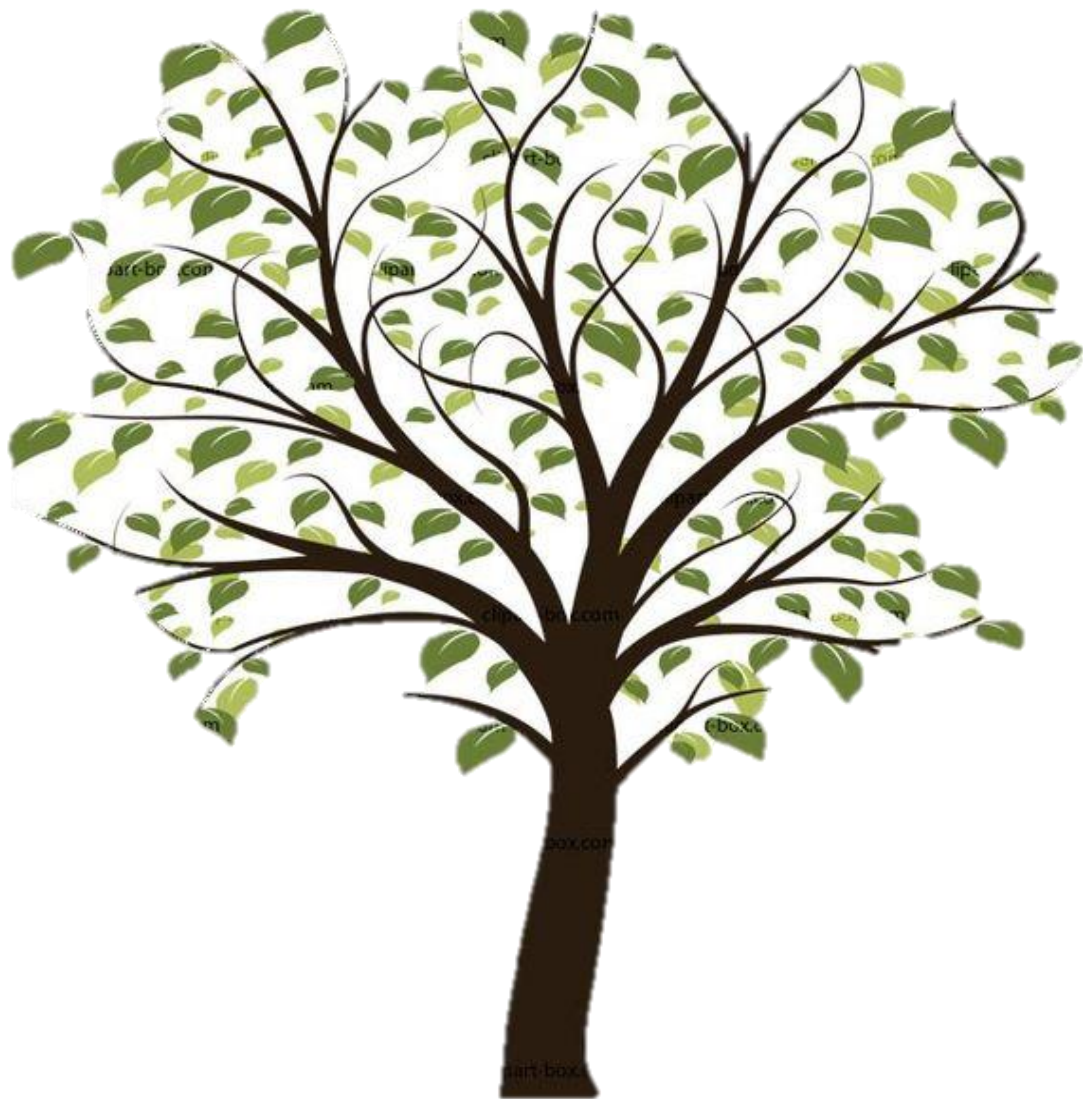
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**Binge  
Eating**

Lessons to learn.....

# Consequences of Binge Eating



Binge eating can lead to a number of consequences relating to physical, psychological and social issues. Listed below are just some of the possible concerns linked to binge eating.

As you make your way through the list perhaps consider which ones you are currently experiencing and which of the consequences would cause some concern to you.

### Physical

	<i>Current issue</i>	<i>Cause for concern</i>
High Blood pressure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overweight/High BMI	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
High Cholesterol	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Type 2 Diabetes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Heart Disease	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sleep disturbances	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bloating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stomach aches/pains	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint pain	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fertility issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Any thoughts or observations following this activity? Are there any other issues that affect you that aren't included on this list?

## Psychological/Emotional

	<i>Current issue</i>	<i>Cause for concern</i>
Pre-occupied thinking	[ ]	[ ]
Poor concentration	[ ]	[ ]
Impaired memory	[ ]	[ ]
Irritability	[ ]	[ ]
Mood swings	[ ]	[ ]
Depression	[ ]	[ ]
Anxiety	[ ]	[ ]
Feel 'out of control'	[ ]	[ ]
Low confidence	[ ]	[ ]
Feelings of shame/guilt	[ ]	[ ]
Low self-esteem	[ ]	[ ]
Low self-worth	[ ]	[ ]
Body dissatisfaction	[ ]	[ ]

Any thoughts or observations following this activity? Are there any other issues that affect you that aren't included on this list?

## Social/Behavioural

	<i>Current issue</i>	<i>Cause for concern</i>
Isolated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feelings of loneliness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hide away from others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Avoidance of social eating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strain on relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Effects on work/education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Any thoughts or observations following this activity? Are there any other issues that affect you that aren't included on this list?

Use the space below to write any final thoughts/reflections around the impact of binge eating and what the list of consequences may have highlighted to you.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their final thoughts and reflections on the impact of binge eating and the consequences listed.

## Motivation

Overcoming difficulties with eating can be incredibly challenging and there will be both highs and lows on your journey to establishing a healthier relationship with food. Motivation to change increase the likelihood of overcoming food related difficulties. Exploring your own motivation levels is perhaps a good place to start your journey.

Consider the following on a scale of 1-10:

How important is it for you to change?										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not at all important					Extremely Important					

How confident are you in your ability to change?										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not at confident					Extremely confident					

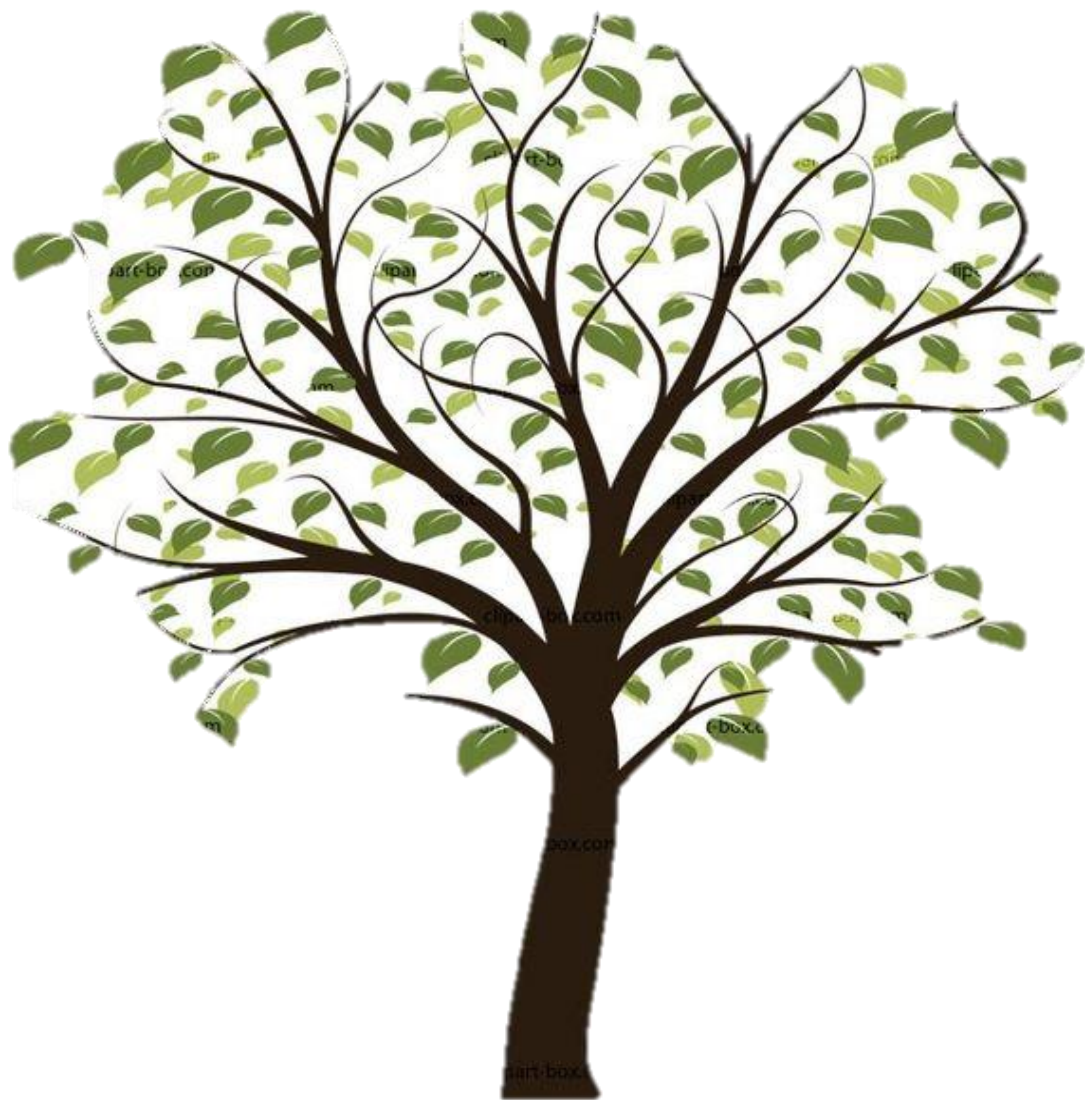
Any thoughts or observations following this activity? How could you make the numbers higher than they are at the moment?
--

Another way to explore motivation is to consider the pros and cons around change. Complete the table below to gain further insight into what changing your eating behaviour will mean to you:

Advantages (Pros) of <u>stopping my binge</u> eating	Disadvantages (Cons) of <u>stopping my binge</u> eating
Advantages (Pros) of <u>not stopping my binge</u> eating	Disadvantages (Cons) of <u>not stopping my binge</u> eating

**If you consider yourself to be motivated for change, then the rest of this section aims to highlight ways in which change could be implemented.**

# How to stop Binge Eating



## Motivation

Overcoming difficulties with eating can be incredibly challenging and there will be both highs and lows on your journey to establishing a healthier relationship with food. Motivation to change increase the likelihood of overcoming food related difficulties. Exploring your own motivation levels is perhaps a good place to start your journey.

Consider the following on a scale of 1-10:

How important is it for you to change?										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not at all important					Extremely Important					

How confident are you in your ability to change?										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not at confident					Extremely confident					

Any thoughts or observations following this activity? How could you make the numbers higher than they are at the moment?
--

Another way to explore motivation is to consider the pros and cons around change. Complete the table below to gain further insight into what changing your eating behaviour will mean to you:

Advantages (Pros) of <u>stopping my binge</u> eating	Disadvantages (Cons) of <u>stopping my binge</u> eating
Advantages (Pros) of <u>not stopping my binge</u> eating	Disadvantages (Cons) of <u>not stopping my binge</u> eating

**If you consider yourself to be motivated for change, then the rest of this section aims to highlight ways in which change could be implemented.**

## 1. Self-monitoring

Paying close attention to your intake will increase your awareness of your thoughts, feelings, judgements and behaviours. Monitoring (ideally in real time) will help you become more aware of food related behaviours that you may have considered to be 'automatic' and out of control. Being more attentive to the what, when and why's of the food eaten will help change the negative behaviours associated with food.

There may be concern that monitoring will increase your preoccupation with food. This is likely to happen initially when paying more attention to what you're eating. However, this monitoring is important and the preoccupation won't last forever.

Binge analysis' can also be explored using the self-monitoring tools and possible triggers or patterns for binge eating behaviours can be identified.

You can find an example of a self-monitoring tool at the back of this workbook.



## Self-Monitoring Tool

Time	Food and drink consumed	Place	Context and comments

## 2. Regular eating

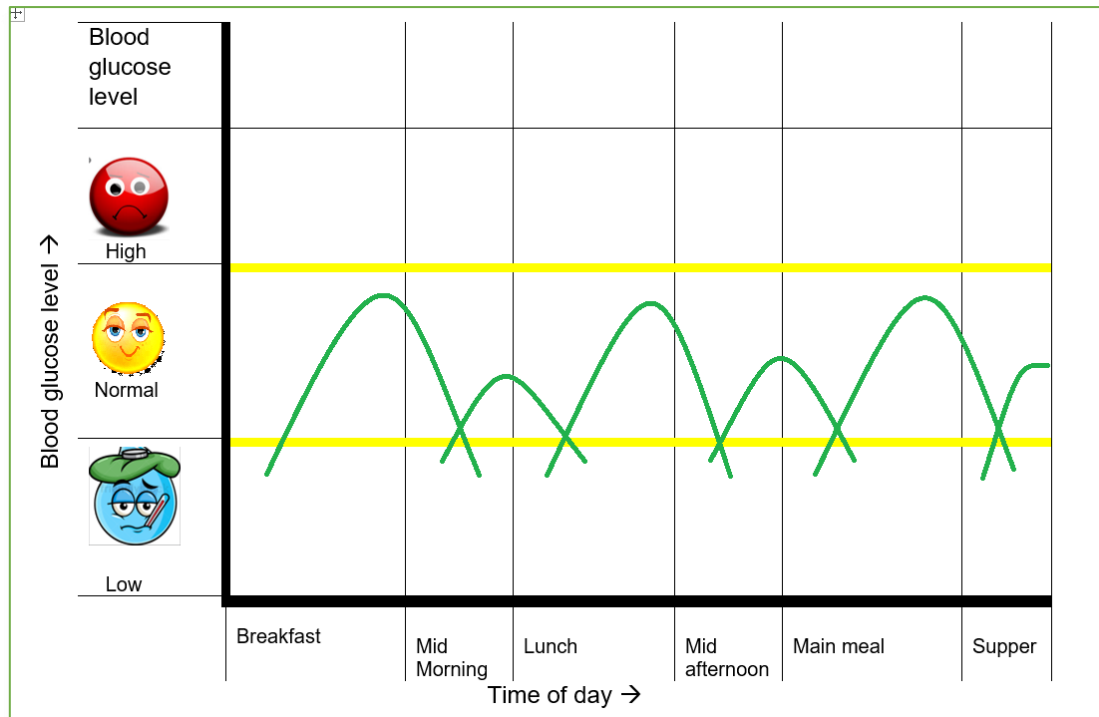
Regular eating is fundamental to overcoming any eating disorders. For those that binge eat, regularity with meals reduces the frequency of episodes of binge eating which in itself, is a reinforcing factor and in turn, tends to have a positive effect on mood and self-confidence.

The benefits of regular eating include:

- It brings structure to your day and food can become a normal part of this day.
- Blood sugars remain steady which in turn helps to prevent tiredness, irritability and food cravings.
- It helps to combat unstructured eat e.g. grazing or picking at foods.
- It improves metabolic functioning.
- It reduces the risk of becoming over hungry – minimizing the likelihood of binge eating and feeling out of control.

Eating food at regular times allows other processes in the body to regulate themselves too e.g. sleep, mood, digestive system, organ and muscle functioning.” This is because the food we eat provides our body with energy. When we eat, food is broken down into a simpler form-this is called sugar or glucose. Sometimes there can be negative associations with these terms- when referred to in this basic scientific way, sugar or glucose is simply the term used to describe the broken down energy that circulates in our blood stream.

The sugar/glucose goes round in the blood stream, until a muscle needs energy and then that muscle absorbs the sugar/glucose. The muscle can then carry out its job. Having a steady amount of sugar/glucose in the blood is important as it means muscles can get the energy they need when they need it to carry out their jobs correctly. Balancing blood sugar levels is essential for both physical and mental wellbeing by giving our cells energy to function normally without excess glucose in the blood, maintaining a positive frame of mind, having the ability to cope well with stress. The graph below show the levels of sugar/glucose in the blood when food is consumed at regular intervals in a day.



**Aim:**

1. To eat 3 planned meals plus 2-3 snacks a day.
2. To stick to these meal times and avoid eating in the gaps.
3. Aim to eat every 3-4 hours.
4. If you miss a meal or snack then get back on track with your plan as soon as possible in the day.




It may be helpful when starting out to plan and prepare your meals and snacks in advance. This won't be something you will need to do forever but initially in the early stages of your journey to overcoming binge eating – this structure and preparation may be beneficial.

# Blood glucose

What is glucose? What kinds of food will affect our blood glucose levels the most? Take a moment to write down some ideas here...

How is the body affected by low blood sugar levels?

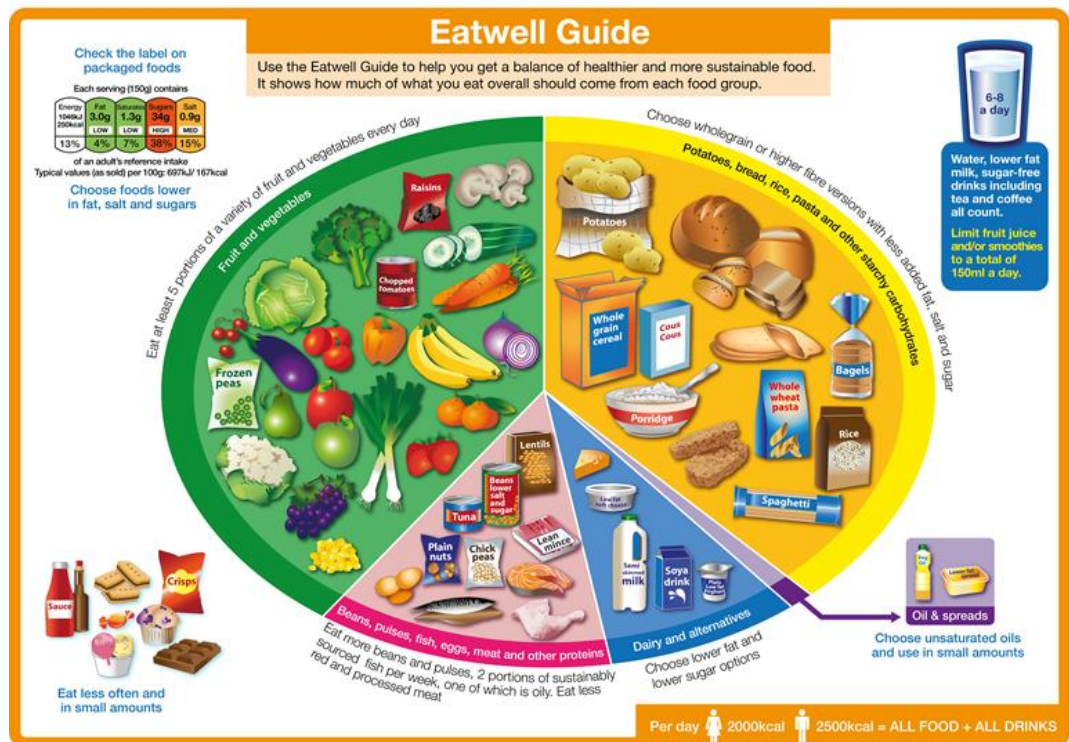
Have a think about your own eating pattern... If you were to draw it out on a graph, what would it look like? Are there times when your blood sugar levels might end up high or low? Give it a go here...

 High						
 Normal						
 Low						
Meal times-	Breakfast.	Mid Morning.	Lunch.	Mid afternoon.	Main meal.	Supper.

There is a lot of conflicting messages about nutrition which can make the topic confusing. This group provides an opportunity to explore nutrition messages people have heard and think about nutrition in an evidence-based, up to date factual way. It is helpful to explore how an eating disorder can influence perceptions of what a healthy diet might look like.

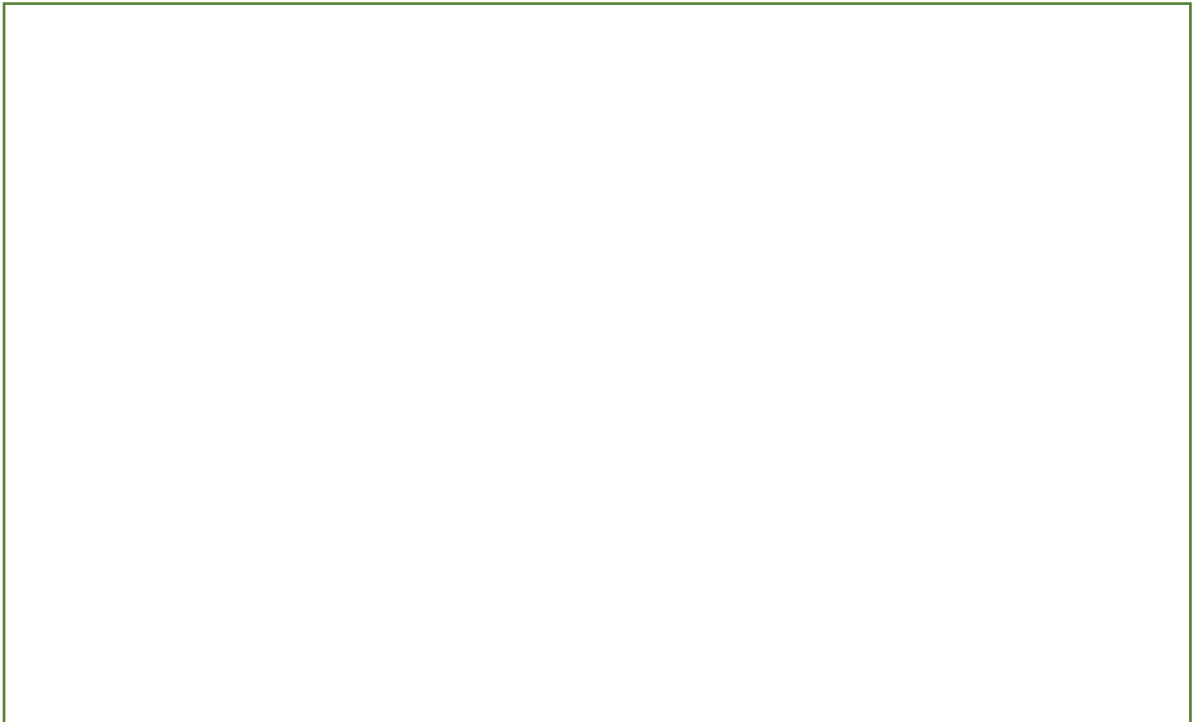
## Eatwell Plate vs. Eatwell Guide

The Eatwell Plate was published by the Food Standards Agency in 2010:

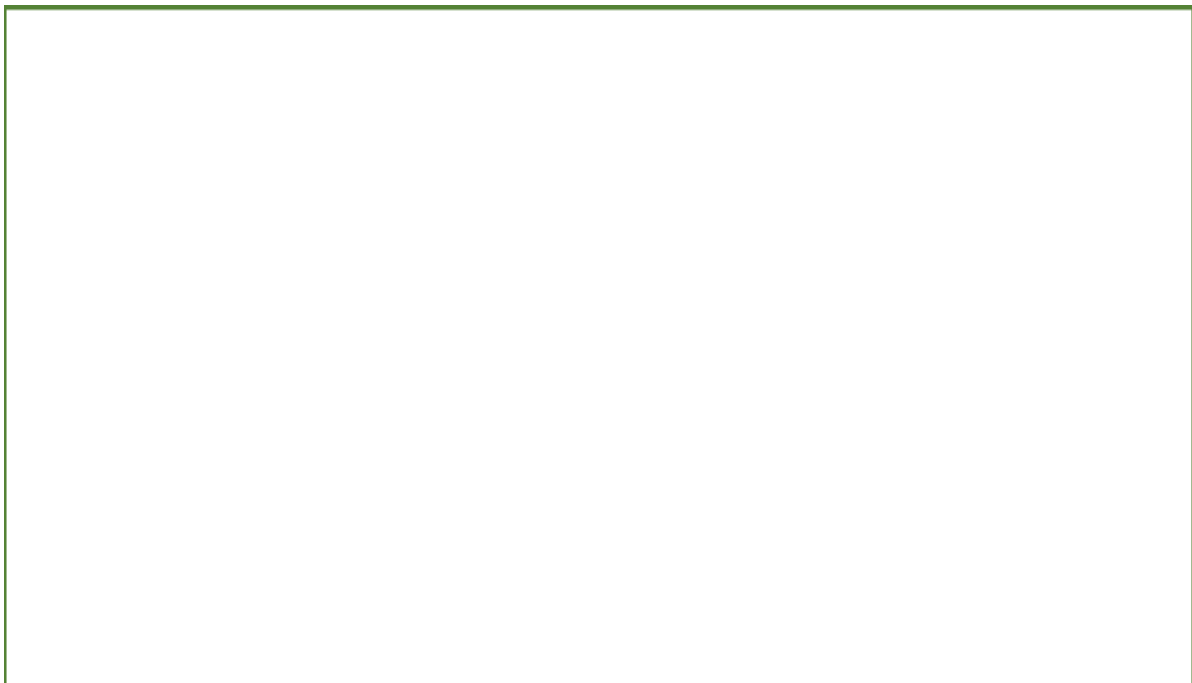


The Eatwell Guide was published by Public Health England in 2016 to replace the previous Eatwell Plate:

What are some differences you notice between the two plate models?

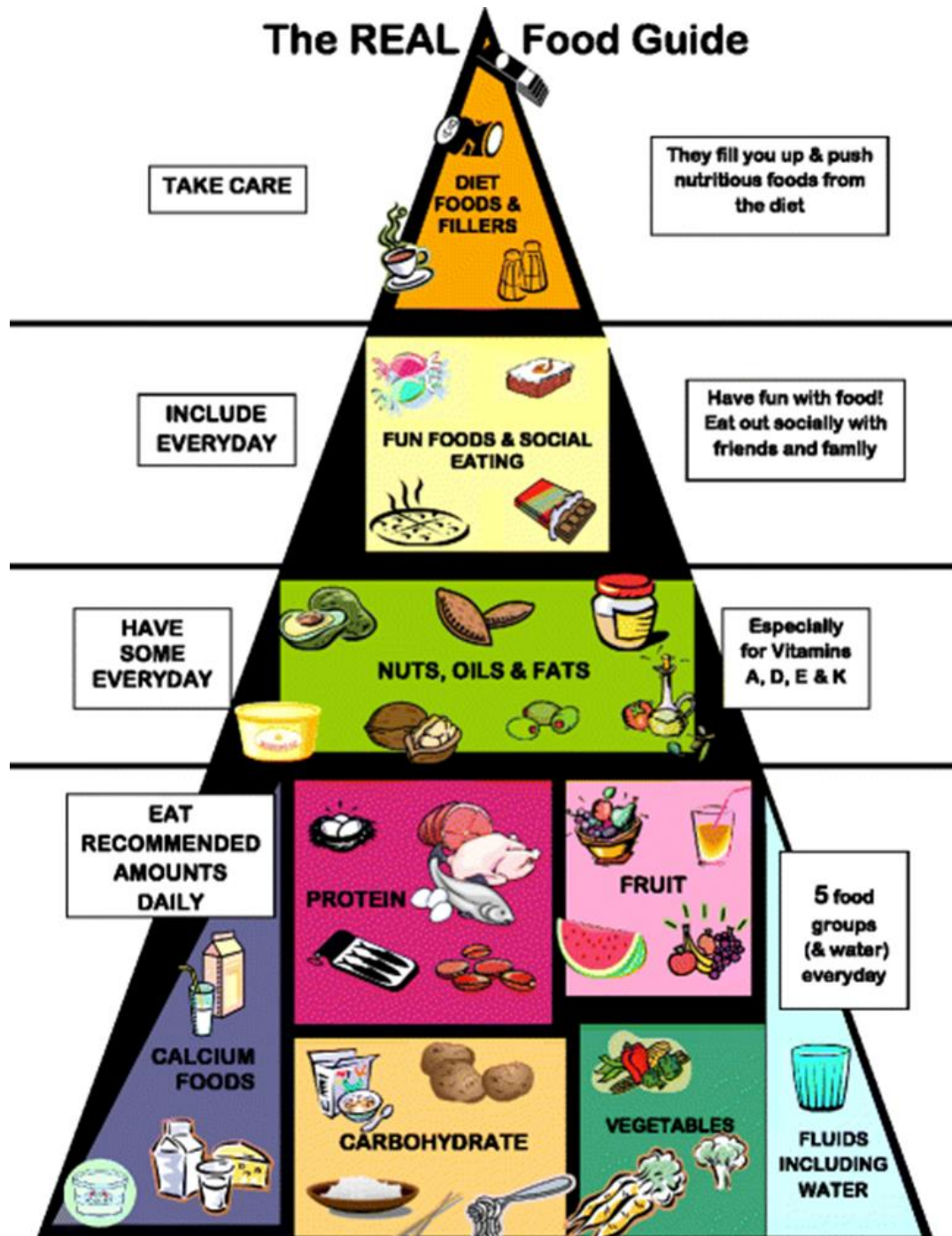


Can you think of any reasons why the changes might have been made?



## The REAL Food Guide

The REAL Food Guide was published in 2018 specifically for use with patients with Eating Disorders. It uses core principles of nutrition, with consideration of the beliefs and misinformation that are frequently endorsed by individuals with eating disorders. This is the guide we will be focusing on...



Do you struggle with any particular foods / food groups? Have a go at writing these down on this traffic light table...

Red	Amber	Green

## Fruit & Vegetables

Take a few minutes to have a think about this food group...

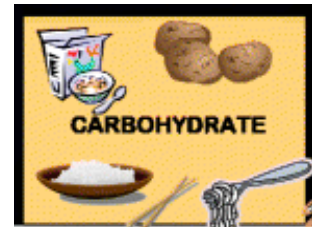
- What do you know about the food group?
- Which nutrients does our body get from this group?
- Any questions about the food group?
- Common myths / things you see hear others talk about re: this food group.



## Carbohydrates

Take a few minutes to have a think about this food group...

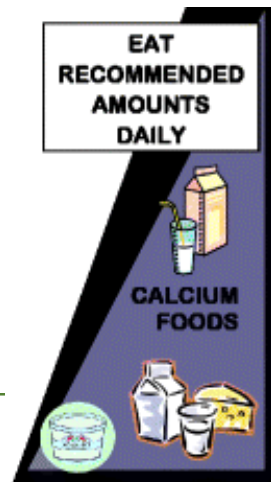
- What do you know about the food group?
- Which nutrients does our body get from this group?
- Any questions about the food group?
- Common myths / things you see hear others talk about re: this food group.



## Calcium foods

Take a few minutes to have a think about this food group...

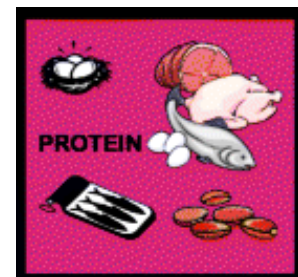
- What do you know about the food group?
- Which nutrients does our body get from this group?
- Any questions about the food group?
- Common myths / things you see hear others talk about re: this food group.



## Protein

Take a few minutes to have a think about this food group...

- What do you know about the food group?
- Which nutrients does our body get from this group?
- Any questions about the food group?
- Common myths / things you see hear others talk about re: this food group.



## Nuts, oils & fats



Take a few minutes to have a think about this food group...

- What do you know about the food group?
- Which nutrients does our body get from this group?
- Any questions about the food group?
- Common myths / things you see hear others talk about re: this food group.

## Fun foods & social eating



Take a few minutes to have a think about this food group...

- What do you know about the food group?
- Which nutrients does our body get from this group?
- Any questions about the food group?
- Common myths / things you see hear others talk about re: this food group.

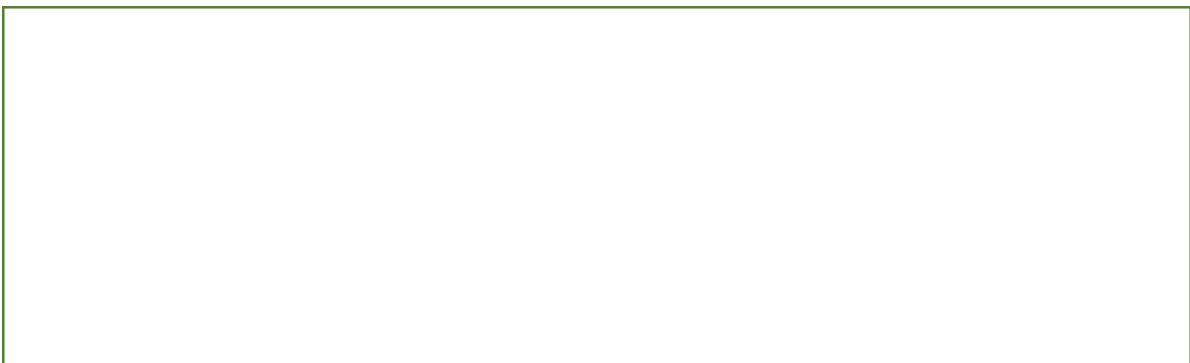


## Diet Foods & Fillers



Take a few minutes to have a think about this food group...

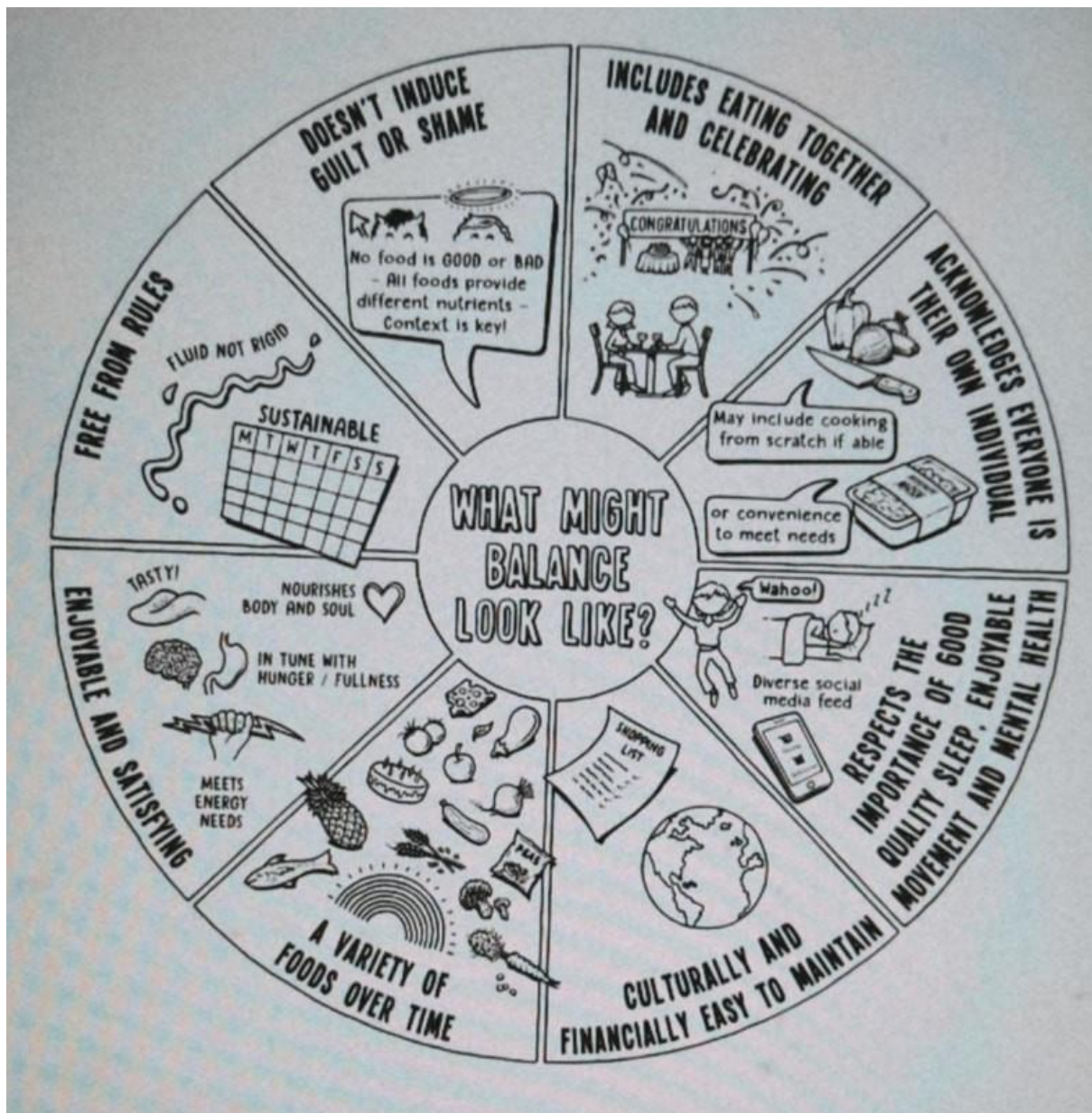
- What do you know about the food group?
- Which nutrients does our body get from this group?
- Any questions about the food group?
- Common myths / things you see hear others talk about re: this food group.



## Balance















A healthy balanced diet includes eating from all food groups. However, there is so much more to balanced eating for overall health.

Please spend some time having a look through this graphic for a healthy diet, taken from the book: *"Is Butter a Carb?"* (2019) by Rosie Saunt (RD) and Helen West (RD)...











## Nutrients - Why do we need them?






### Macronutrients – nutrients we need in larger amounts

	<b>Why do we need it?</b>	<b>Where do we get it from?</b>
<p><i>Carbohydrates</i></p> 	<p>Carbohydrates are broken down into glucose when digested, which is used as the main fuel in our body.</p> <p>Glucose is the only energy fuel that our brains can use. If we don't get enough carbohydrate, it can affect our memory and concentration, making it hard to do well in school.</p> <p>Carbohydrates promote the production of serotonin, a chemical in the brain that makes us feel good.</p>	<p>Starchy foods like bread, pasta, rice, potatoes.</p> <p>Fruits</p> <p>Milk</p> <p>Sugary foods</p>   
<p><i>Fats</i></p>  	<p>Fat is used as a source of energy for growth, development and normal body functioning.</p> <p>Essential fats are dietary fats needed for growth and repair, which our body cannot make from our own stores and so have to come from food.</p> <p>A large portion of our brains are made of these essential fats which insulate nerve cells so that electrical messages can be sent around the body.</p> <p>Certain vitamins (A,D,E and K) need fat to travel through the blood to where they are needed.</p> <p>Some hormones are made of fat and are needed for many body processes to work.</p>	<p>Almost all foods contain some fat.</p> <p>Animal products such as meat, cheese, milk, butter and cream.</p> <p>Oils such as olive oil, vegetable oil, sunflower oil.</p> <p>Nuts</p> <p>Oily fish</p> <p>Fast foods and fried foods</p> <p>Cakes, biscuits and crisps</p>   
<p><i>Protein</i></p> 	<p>Protein is a building block used to make up our muscles, bones, cells and even our DNA.</p> <p>Special proteins called enzymes are needed to help digest food and control movement of vitamins and minerals in and out of our cells.</p> <p>Like fats, some hormones are made of proteins and are needed to regulate body processes and metabolism.</p> <p>Our hair and nails are made from a protein called keratin, which helps keep them strong and flexible. If we don't get enough protein our hair and nails can break easily and fall out.</p>	<p>Meat e.g. beef, pork, chicken, sausages, bacon, mince</p> <p>Fish</p> <p>Eggs</p> <p>Beans</p> <p>Lentils</p> <p>Quorn</p> <p>Soya</p> <p>Milk and dairy products</p>    













**Fat soluble vitamins**-can be stored in the liver and fat cells in our body














Nutrient	Why do we need it?	Where do we get it from?
<p><i>Vitamin A</i></p> 	<p>Vitamin A has a role in the immune system and helps us to fight infections.</p> <p>Keeps skin and mucosal linings (inside nose, eyes and mouth) healthy. It is important for vision especially in dim light.</p>	<p>Cheese, Eggs, Fortified spreads, Yogurts</p>  <p>Liver</p> <p>Red, yellow and orange fruits and vegetables e.g. carrots, sweet potato, mango</p>
 <p><i>Vitamin D</i></p>	<p>Vitamin D helps our bodies absorb calcium and phosphate which are both important for strong bones and teeth. Lack of vitamin D can cause rickets.</p>	<p>Oily fish</p>  <p>Eggs</p> <p>Fortified low-fat spreads and breakfast cereals</p> <p>Sunlight during summer months</p>
 <p><i>Vitamin E</i></p>	<p>Vitamin E is an antioxidant, meaning it maintains the structure of cells and prevents long term tissue damage. Has a role in the immune system.</p>	<p>Nuts and seeds</p>  <p>Oils and spreads</p> <p>Green leafy vegetables</p> <p>Wheat germ</p>
 <p><i>Vitamin K</i></p>	<p>Vitamin K is needed for normal blood clotting and wound healing.</p> <p>It is important for the growth and development of our bones and kidneys.</p>	<p>Green leafy vegetables</p> <p>Dairy products</p> <p>Meat</p>  <p>Cereals</p>



Water soluble vitamins cannot be stored in the body and any excess is lost in urine, so we need to eat some every day

Nutrient	Why do we need it?	Where do we get it from?
<p><i>Vitamin C</i></p> 	<p>Vitamin C helps maintain healthy skin, hair, nails, teeth and gums. It is needed for the production of collagen which is needed for healthy blood vessels, cartilage and joints. Helps with the absorption of iron. It is an antioxidant needed to prevent long term tissue damage.</p>	<p>Fresh fruit and vegetables</p> 
<p><i>B vitamins-thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, pantothenic acid, pyridoxine, folic acid, cobalamin)</i></p> 	<p>B vitamins are important for metabolism, allowing the body to convert the food we eat into energy. They are also important for the nervous system. Lack of thiamine can cause permanent brain damage. Lack of folic acid or cobalamin can cause anaemia as they are important for the production of red blood cells. Folic acid is also important in pregnancy and infancy as it is needed to make new cells.</p>	<p>Green leafy vegetables</p> <p>Wholegrains </p> <p>Fortified breads and cereals</p> <p>Meat fish Liver </p> <p>Potatoes</p> <p>Beans and nuts</p> <p>Milk and eggs</p>

**Minerals** - essential nutrients that the body needs in small amounts

Nutrient	Why do we need it?	Where do we get it from?
<p><i>Sodium</i></p> 	<p>Sodium is needed to maintain blood pressure. It is also needed for nerve signals to travel around the body and for contraction of muscles. Sodium plays a role in bone formation.</p>	<p>Any foods containing salt</p> <p>Ham, bacon</p> <p>Butter </p> <p>Olives</p>
<p><i>Chloride</i></p> 	<p>Chloride is needed to make hydrochloric acid, the acid in our stomach which helps break down food. It is also needed for healthy liver and joints</p>	<p>Any foods containing salt</p> 
<p><i>Potassium</i></p> 	<p>Potassium is needed for similar functions as sodium; blood pressure, nerve signalling and muscle contraction.</p>	<p>Vegetables, especially green leafy vegetables. Fruits, especially bananas and apricots. Nuts, milk, wholegrain cereals.</p> 
<p><i>Magnesium</i></p> 	<p>Magnesium is needed for the maintenance of teeth and bones. It is also needed for nerve signalling and muscle contraction. Magnesium regulates the release of energy from body stores and the food that we eat.</p>	<p>Fish e.g. mackerel and cod </p> <p>Dairy products</p> <p>Fruits</p> <p>Green leafy vegetables</p> <p>Wholemeal bread and flour</p>
<p><i>Calcium</i></p> 	<p>Calcium is important for the formation of teeth and bones. It is also needed for muscle contraction, heart function and blood clotting.</p>	<p>Dairy products </p> <p>Green vegetables</p> <p>Fortified cereals and juices</p> <p>Small-boned fish e.g. sardines</p>
<p><i>Phosphorous</i></p> 	<p>Phosphorous works with calcium to form teeth and bones.</p> <p>It is used to make chemicals involved in the breakdown of carbohydrates, protein and fats.</p>	<p>Dairy products</p> <p>Red meat </p> <p>Seeds, nuts and legumes</p> <p>Wholegrain products</p>

<p><i>Sulphur</i></p> 	<p>Sulphur is needed for the formation of cartilage, tissue, hair and nails. It is also involved in maintaining a healthy nervous system.</p>	<p>Meat and fish Milk Garlic Eggs</p> 
<p><i>Iron</i></p> 	<p>Iron is needed to form haemoglobin, which transports oxygen around the body. It is also needed for a healthy immune system.</p>	<p>Red meat, liver, kidneys Green leafy vegetables Beans</p>  <p>Eggs and oily fish</p>
<p><i>Zinc</i></p> 	<p>Zinc boosts our immune system, is involved in blood clotting, growth and repair of tissues. It also regulates blood cholesterol and sugar levels. Zinc is also required for normal thyroid function.</p>	<p>Red meat, liver, fish Dairy Wholegrains Beans Nuts and seeds</p> 
<p><i>Chromium</i></p> 	<p>Chromium enhances the action of insulin, a hormone that helps our cells absorb glucose from the blood so it can be used as energy.</p>	<p>Meat Wholegrains Nuts</p> 
<p><i>Copper</i></p> 	<p>Copper is an antioxidant. It is also needed for the formation of red blood cells. Copper helps keep immune system, nerves bones and blood vessels healthy.</p>	<p>Shellfish Nuts Wholegrain cereals</p> 
<p><i>Iodine</i></p> 	<p>Iodine is needed to produce the hormones that regulate growth and development. It is needed to maintain healthy skin, nails and hair.</p>	<p>Seafood Milk</p> 
<p><i>Manganese</i></p> 	<p>Manganese is needed for the breakdown of carbohydrate. It is important in the nervous system, bones and muscles.</p>	<p>Wholegrains Nuts, pulses, beans Berries and vegetables</p>

 <p><i>Selenium</i></p>	<p>Selenium is required for healthy heart and immune system.</p> <p>It is also an antioxidant needed to prevent tissue damage.</p> <p>Essential part of many chemical reactions in the body.</p>	<p>Meat, fish, dairy</p> <p>Cereals</p> <p>Eggs</p> <p>Brazil nuts</p> <p>Soy beans, fruit and vegetables</p> 
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**Reference Sources**

Dietary Reference values for Food Energy and Nutrients for the United Kingdom  
 Human Nutrition, Geissler and Powers  
 Human Nutrition: A Health Perspective, Mary E. Barasi  
 UK Food Standards Agency; Human Nutrition: A Health Perspective, Mary E. Barasi  
 US Department of Agriculture and UK Food Standards Agency food databases

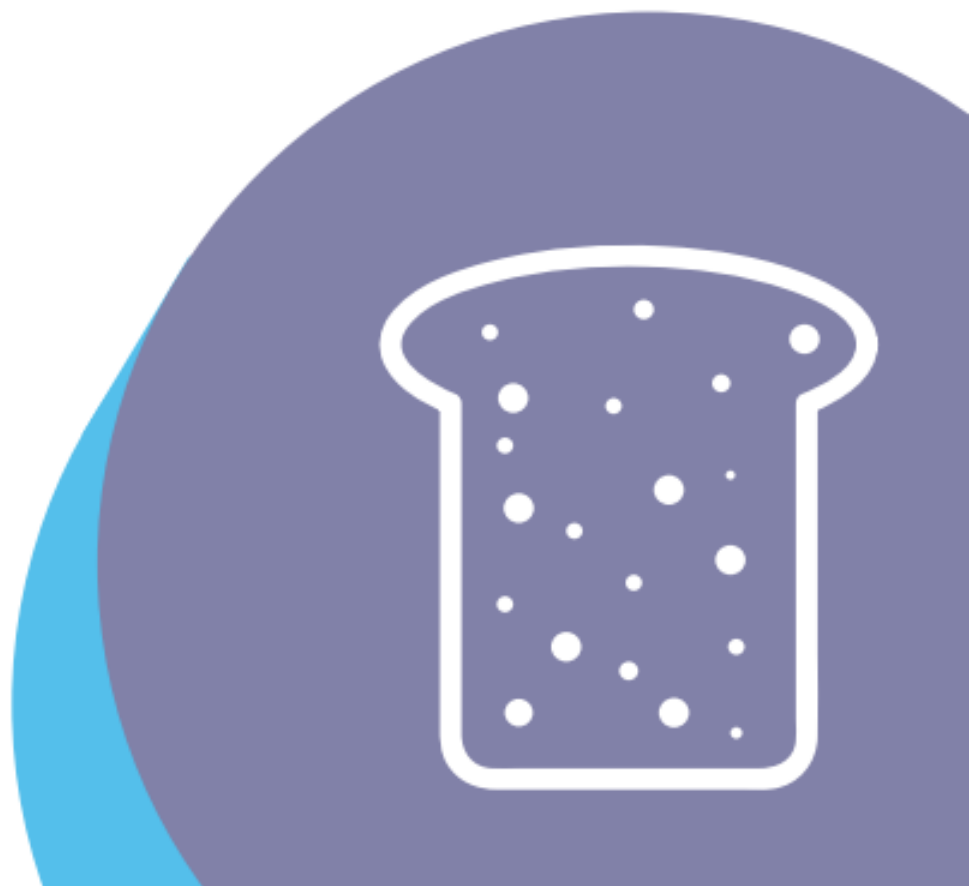
*Dietetic Team - ABUHB Specialist*  
*Eating Disorders Service*  
*Claire McCluskey - Clinical Specialist*  
*Chelsea Jones - Specialist Dietitian*

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# Portion sizes

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Accessible information on portion sizes for  
adults with an eating disorder





It can be useful to think about your own servings and number of servings you have in your day. Some questions you may find useful to ask yourself:

1. **Are my carbohydrates making up the main part of each meal?**
2. **Do I include all the food groups?**
3. **Do I include snacks and puddings?**

If your answer to any of the questions is no you may not be meeting your body's full nutritional needs.

#### Example Meal Plan

##### **Breakfast**

3 servings carbohydrate e.g cereal and toast  
1 serving dairy e.g. Milk  
1 serving fat e.g. butter on toast  
1 serving fruit  
Drink: water or squash

##### **Mid Morning**

1 snack e.g. cereal bar  
Drink: water or squash

##### **Lunch**

2 servings carbohydrate e.g 2 x slices bread  
1 serving fat e.g. butter on bread  
1 serving protein e.g. egg  
2 servings fruit/veg  
1 serving dairy e.g. creamy yoghurt  
Drink: Water or Squash

##### **Mid Afternoon**

1 snack e.g. 2 x biscuits  
Drink: water or squash

##### **Evening meal**

3 servings carbohydrate e.g. potatoes  
2 servings protein e.g. chicken/quorn  
1 serving fat e.g. oil for cooking  
2 servings fruit/veg  
1 pudding e.g. apple pie and custard  
Drink: Water or Squash

##### **Supper**

1 serving dairy e.g. glass of milk  
1 snack e.g. 1 x chocolate bar  
Drink: water or squash



**The most important thing is to be flexible with your eating and enjoy food without the need to feel guilty, count calories or measure out your servings every day. Speak to your Dietitian for further advice**

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## What is a serving?

When we talk about healthy eating what comes to mind? Healthy eating includes foods from five different food groups: Carbohydrate, Protein, Fruit and Vegetables, Dairy and Fats.

The reason we need to include all of the food groups in our diet is so that we get all the beneficial nutrients that each food group provides. The question is **how much** from each of these food groups do we need? Or in other words.....

---

## What servings do we need?

A serving basically means how much of a food group you serve out to yourself at any one meal to make a portion for that meal. How many servings of each food group you have in a day should stay fairly similar day to day but the amount you serve out for yourself at any one meal (the portion) can vary.

For example, your portion size of carbohydrate may be two slices of bread as part of a sandwich for lunch which is 2 servings. At evening meal you may choose to have 3 servings of potatoes which is a portion of carbohydrate for that meal.

It can get a bit confusing if we overthink it! Remember these serving recommendations are to be used as a guide. To help you to understand the size of a serving, overleaf is a list of examples:

### Example portion sizes

Each example represents 1 serving of that particular food group



1 slice bread =  
1 serving  
carbohydrate



2 egg size potatoes  
= 1 serving  
carbohydrate



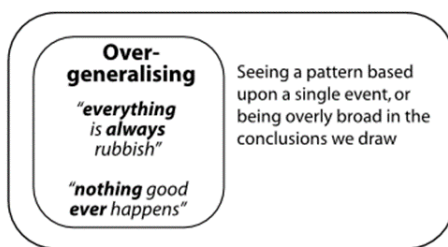
1/3 pint of milk =  
1 serving dairy

<b>Carbohydrates</b> Aim for 8-10 servings/day (each example is 1 serving)	<b>Fruit and Veg</b> Aim for 5 servings/day (each example is 1 serving)	<b>Protein</b> Aim for 2-3 servings/day (each example is 1 serving)
1 x wheat biscuit e.g. Weetabix 3 tablespoons cornflakes/oats/ crispies 1 x medium slice of bread 1x standard bread roll 2 x oatcakes or crispbreads 1 small chapatti 1 crumpet ½ plain muffin/scone 3 small crackers ½ large size jacket potato 2 egg size new potatoes 2 tablespoons cooked rice, pasta or cous cous 2 tablespoons mash potato Approx. 8 thick cut over chips	1 medium sized piece of fruit e.g. apple, banana 2 plums 1 handful of berries ½ handful of dried fruit 1 glass (100ml) of fruit juice 1 small tin of fruit in natural juice or water 1 slice of large melon 1 handful of grapes ½ a small avocado 2 tablespoons of any vegetables 1 cereal bowl of salad	1 chicken breast, chop or steak (approx. size of deck of cards) 2-3 thick slices sandwich meat ½ mug of chilli, bolognaise or curry 2 sausages or 3 fish fingers or equivalent veggie options 1 piece of fish (cheque book size) 1 tin of tuna 1 tin of sardines or pilchards 2 eggs ½ standard tin baked beans, beans, chickpeas, lentils 2 tablespoons nuts, nut butter, pumpkin or sunflower seeds
<b>Dairy</b> Aim for 3-4 servings/day (each example is 1 serving)	<b>Fat</b> Aim for 2-3 servings/day (each example is 1 serving)	<b>Snack examples</b> aim for 2-3 snacks/day
1/3 pint (200ml) of semi skimmed milk or calcium enriched soya milk 1 matchbox size piece of hard cheese 1 pot of standard yoghurt 1 pot of ready to eat custard or rice pudding	1 teaspoon of butter or margarine for each slice of bread 1 dessertspoon of full fat mayonnaise 1 dessertspoon oil: olive, rapeseed, vegetable, sunflower or soya 1 tablespoon double cream or 2 of single cream	Snack examples: aim for 2-3 snacks/day
<b>Trans Fats</b>	Some margarines, some cakes/pastries, takeaway foods (most of those products in the UK have minimal trans fats).	

## Unhelpful thinking styles

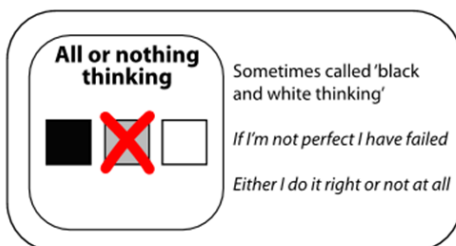
It is common to get 'stuck' using unhelpful thinking styles which in turn, continue a vicious cycle of thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Some of the more common unhelpful thinking styles are listed below. When reading through these take some time to reflect on whether these styles are commonly used by yourself and consider how helpful or unhelpful it is to think in such a way.

**Overgeneralisation:** Making a generalisation/a conclusion based on a single event.



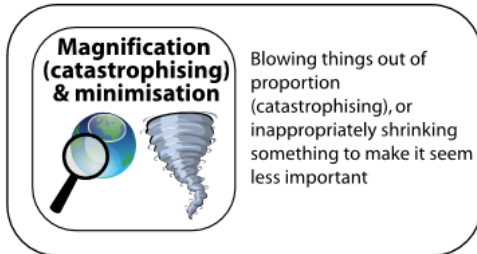
Can you think of an example of your own?

**All or nothing:** Something is either/or and there is no middle/grey area.



Can you think of an example of your own?

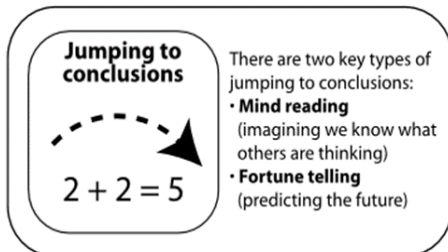
**Magnification and Minimisation:** Catastrophizing so things are blown out of proportion or minimizing so there is less importance placed on things. e.g. If I fail my exam I will never get the grades I want, I will fail school and be a failure in life.'



Can you think of an example of your own?

**Jumping to conclusions:** This can be done through:

1. Mind reading 'I know they don't like me.'
2. Fortune telling 'I won't get the job so there's no point applying.'



Can you think of an example of your own?


**Disqualifying the positives:** Dismissing anything positive that may have happened or you may have done and accrediting this to something else.



Can you think of an example of your own?

**Labelling:** Assigning labels to ourselves or other people. e.g. 'I am stupid.' 'I am a failure'. 'I am a complete idiot and deserve to be alone in life.'

**Labelling**



Assigning labels to ourselves or other people

*I'm a loser  
I'm completely useless  
They're such an idiot*

Can you think of an example of your own?

**Should and Ought:** Using critical and self-pressuring words in relation to ourselves and others e.g. 'I shouldn't feel this way.' 'I must stop acting like this.'

**should  
must**


Using critical words like 'should', 'must', or 'ought' can make us feel guilty, or like we have already failed

If we apply 'shoulds' to other people the result is often frustration

Can you think of an example of your own?

**Emotional reasoning:** Assuming that what we think must be true. e.g. 'I think I'm a failure therefore I must be a failure.' 'I feel embarrassed so I must be an embarrassment.'

**Emotional reasoning**



Assuming that because we feel a certain way what we think must be true.

*I feel embarrassed so I must be an idiot*

Can you think of an example of your own?

**Personalisation:** Blaming yourself for things you are not responsible for.

**Personalisation** Blaming yourself or taking responsibility for something that wasn't completely your fault. Conversely, blaming other people for something that was your fault.

***"this is my fault"***

Can you think of an example of your own?

**Mental filter:** Only concentrating on certain types of evidence, typically that which focuses on the negatives.

**Mental filter** Only paying attention to certain types of evidence.

*Noticing our failures but not seeing our successes*

Can you think of an example of your own?



Being aware of how you think and how unhelpful certain ways of thinking can be will help in the process of challenging and changing thoughts.

Any observations or comments regarding unhelpful thinking styles and your own type of thinking style?

## **Changing your thoughts**

There is a strong link between thoughts, feelings and behaviour. In order to make long-term effective changes to your eating behaviours it is important to challenge the way you think and change your thought process when it comes to yourself and to your behaviours.

Thoughts and feeling influence behaviour. It is not the event itself but often our interpretation of an event that is problematic. Different people can react to the same situation in very different ways.

### **Automatic thoughts:**

*Have you ever driven a car and got to your destination without recalling how you got there?*

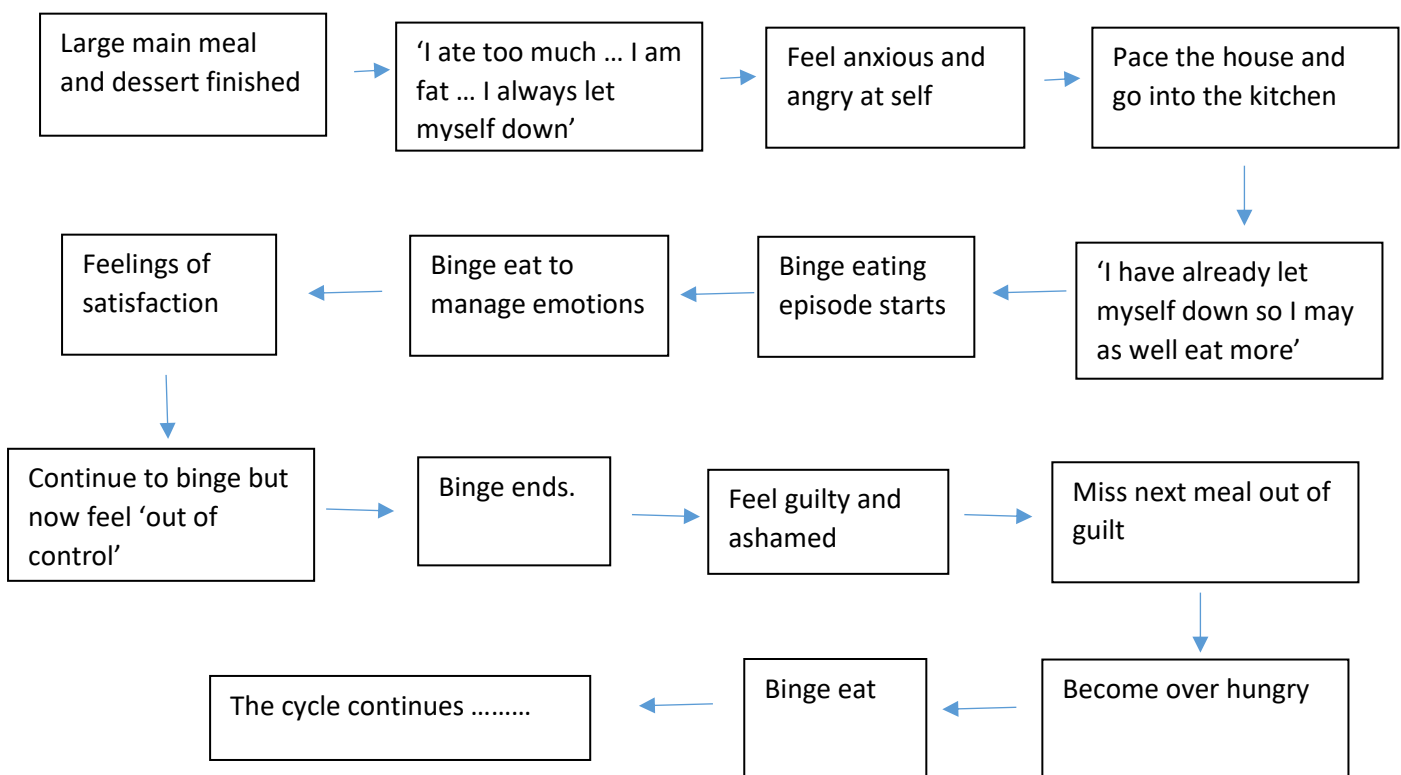
If the answer is 'yes' then this is because we are not always aware of some of our thoughts – some may occur almost automatically for us. Obviously when driving you must have been thinking or you would not have got to your destination. However, you may not have been paying attention to this thinking in the moment.

Similarly, you may experience feelings of upset, anger, sadness etc but you may be unaware of the thoughts that have caused this emotional response. Binge eating can be used as a way of managing these emotions if they aren't wanted. In order to overcoming the binge eating, it is important to become aware of the thoughts that lead to a particular feeling and then work on challenging and changing these thoughts.

## Behavioural analysis

You can record your thoughts on the self-monitoring tool or alternatively you could keep a thought/mood diary. A behavioural/chain analysis could also be used as a means of exploring the link between thoughts, feelings and behaviours. This would also provide opportunities to discover where changes could have been made and binge eating avoided.

An example of a possible chain of events that resulted in binge eating is shown on the next page.



Does this chain of events look familiar to you?

*Exercise:* Think back to a recent episode of binge eating and use the next page to draw your own chain of events:

A large, empty rectangular box with a dashed border, occupying the lower half of the page. It is intended for the user to draw their own chain of events related to binge eating.

Through exploration of the chain of events and uncovering the thought processes, the opportunity then arises to challenge the thoughts and change the thinking.

When challenging your thoughts; consider the following questions:

- Is there any evidence to contradict this thoughts?
- Am I using an unhelpful thinking style?
- What would I say to a friend if they were having the same thoughts?
- What are the costs of thinking in this way?
- What are the benefits of thinking in this way?
- How will I feel about this situation in 6 months' time?
- Is there another way of looking at this situation?

You can find a useful tool to help challenge your thinking at the back of this workbook.


*Exercise:* Using the example you just worked through to do the chain of events, consider (using the questions above) how your thinking could have been changed in that situation.

A large, empty rectangular box with a dashed border, intended for the student to write their response to the exercise.

## Check the Facts

We have discussed how unhelpful thinking styles and difficult emotions can contribute to binge eating behaviours and how these behaviours can lead to feelings of shame and negative judgements which in turn can result in further bingeing. It's important to think about the thoughts and judgements we have in a factual way and examine the evidence we have to support / challenge these.

<i>Thought to challenge</i>	<i>What does the evidence say?</i>

A cartoon character with brown hair, wearing a green shirt with a red question mark, is holding two signs. The sign on the left says 'FACT' and the sign on the right says 'OPINION'. The character is positioned in the center of the header row of the table.

## Alternatives to binge eating:

There are other useful ways in which binge eating could try to be prevented including:

- Writing the binge down instead of eating the food.
- Talk to someone to distract you from the urges e.g. partner, family member, friend, helpline.
- Stay out of the areas in which you know are triggering for a binge e.g. avoid the kitchen when you are having an urge to binge.
- Leave the house if the binge is overwhelming and go for a walk.
- Use your 5 senses to self-soothe.
- Do some light exercise e.g. go for a walk, do some yoga.
- Engage in a hobby e.g. arts, crafts, music, puzzles, films, TV series.
- Mindfulness e.g. mindful colouring, a mindful walk, play a game on your phone or with someone else and fully participate in this.

It may be helpful to have a little box of helpful distraction tools ready for a time when the urges to binge eat become strong but you want to avoid acting on these urges. The following pages will give some examples of activities you can use on a day to day basis to reduce your vulnerability to bingeing and in the moments when urges to binge are strong. They are also helpful strategies for coping with any distress or painful emotions.

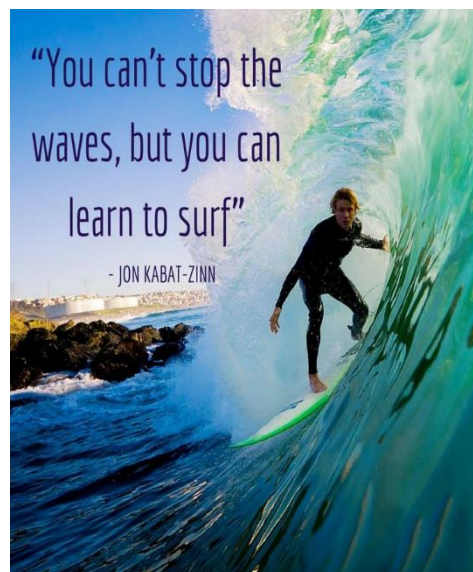


## Mindfulness

Mindfulness can be particularly useful in helping to tolerate urges to binge without acting on them. Using mindfulness when eating; paying attention to taste and textures for example can slow the process down and enable you to feel more in control of what is going on.

'Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally' (Jon Kabat-Zin)

- ❖ Mindfulness means being in the present
- ❖ Mindfulness is being aware of what is happening and what you are doing
- ❖ Mindfulness is observing what is going on both internally and externally
- ❖ Mindfulness is participating fully in what is going on around you
- ❖ Mindfulness is a skill that can be practiced and learned



The practice of mindfulness is the repetitive act of directing attention to only one thing in the moment, without judging it or holding on to it. It can be practiced anytime, anywhere, while doing anything.

Lots of people believe they already do this, but it is a lot harder than we think.

*'The untrained mind is like a puppy. You tell your puppy to sit and stay, but your puppy immediately runs away, rummages in your closet, chews up your new shoes, goes through the garbage and has an accident on the carpet' (Zen Buddhism).*

Examples of simple mindfulness practice may include:

- ✓ Washing up
- ✓ Cleaning your teeth
- ✓ Getting dressed
- ✓ Hoovering the house
- ✓ Driving

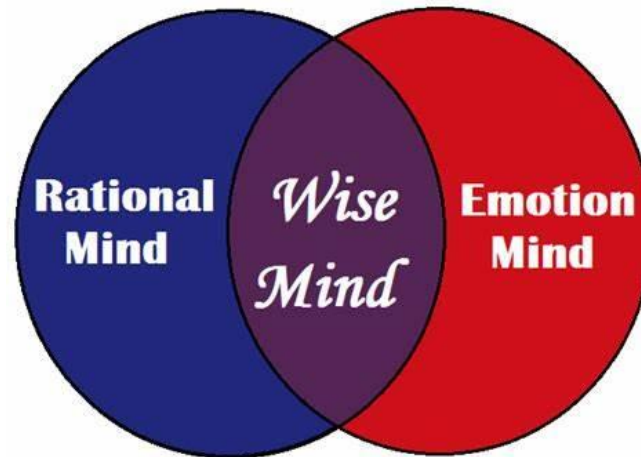


Use this grid to plan two activities per day in the next week.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

## States of Mind

This concept is deriving from Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT). It can be particularly useful to help separate thoughts in situations that feel overwhelming. The theory is we have three mind states...



In any given situation we can separate thoughts into these three circles to help think more clearly about the presenting problem. Here is a little more explanation on each:

A person uses their **reasonable mind** when they approach a situation intellectually. They plan and make decisions based off of fact.

The **emotional mind** is used when feelings control a person's thoughts and behavior. They might act impulsively with little regard for consequences.

The **wise mind** refers to a balance between the reasonable and emotional halves. They are able to recognize and respect their feelings, while responding to them in a rational manner.

Can you think of an example for each mind-state from your own life?

Emotional Mind

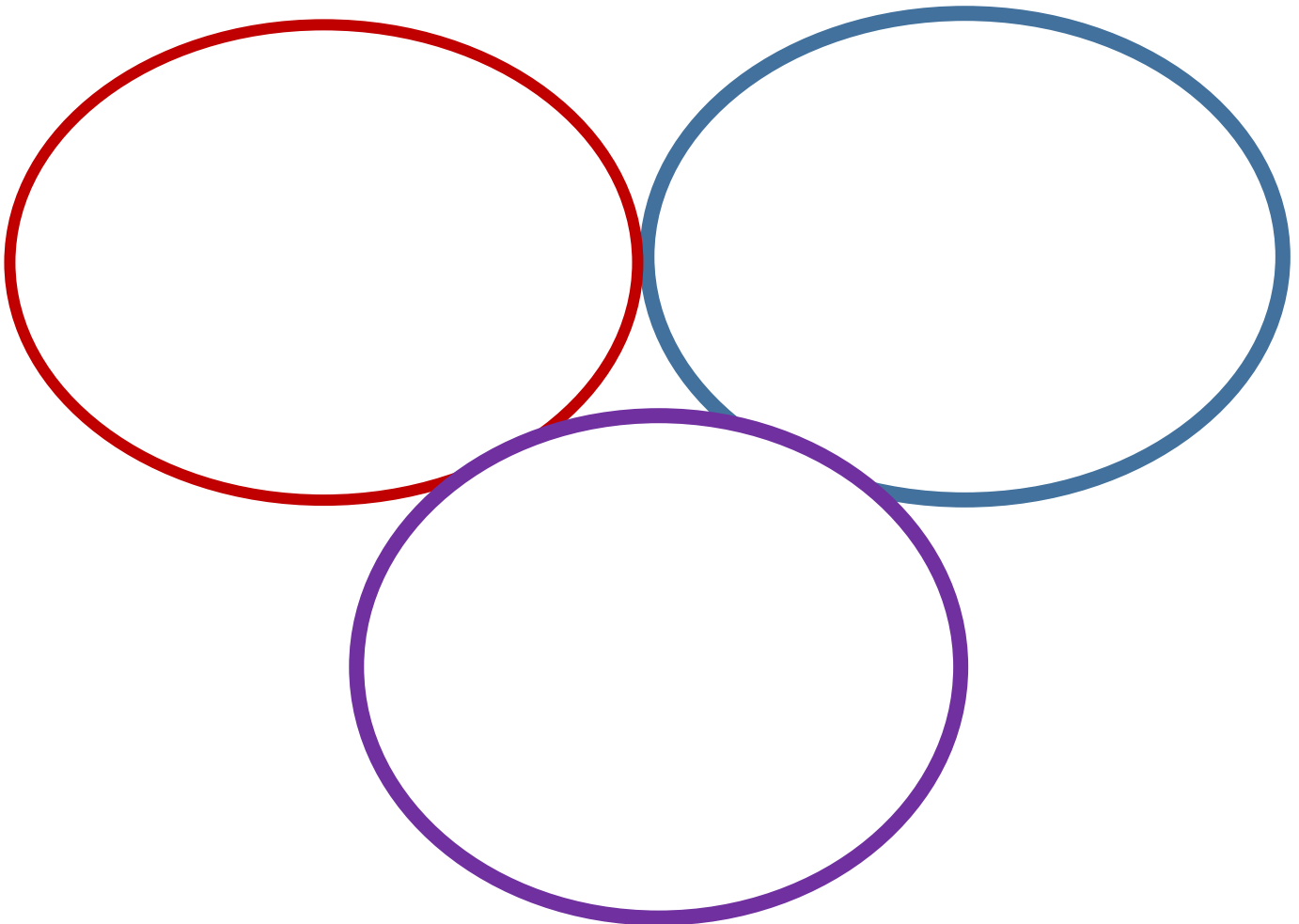
Reasonable Mind

Wise Mind

**A Situation:**

Using the states of mind can be helpful in deciding the effective thing to do in any given situation. Think of a situation that may have caused a dilemma this week. What were your thoughts, feelings, and behaviours in each mind state?

What happened: \_\_\_\_\_



What decision did you make? \_\_\_\_\_

## The STOP skill

This skill can be particularly useful in those moments when the urge to binge is high, when you first have a thought to binge or find yourself about to start.



**S**top

**T**ake a step back

**O**bserve

**P**roceed mindfully

### Things that can help us remember to STOP

- ❖ Print small stop signs out and place them in areas of your house that you struggle with being impulsive
- ❖ Make a mind jar (instructions further in this pack)
- ❖ Making your goals visible
- ❖ Take time to research breathing exercising when you are not distressed
- ❖ Using your hand to prompt mindfulness (example later in this section)

## Preparing for overwhelming emotions



As have discussed overwhelming urges can lead to a binge. Knowing in advance what you need when you are experiencing these emotions can enable you to put a plan in place and communicate with others when you need support. This can help reduce the risk of a binge occurring.

If I am \_\_\_\_\_ then I need \_\_\_\_\_.

If I am \_\_\_\_\_ then I need \_\_\_\_\_.

If I am \_\_\_\_\_ then I need \_\_\_\_\_.

If I am \_\_\_\_\_ then I need \_\_\_\_\_.

If I am \_\_\_\_\_ then I need \_\_\_\_\_.

If I am \_\_\_\_\_ then I need \_\_\_\_\_.

If I am \_\_\_\_\_ then I need \_\_\_\_\_.

If I am \_\_\_\_\_ then I need \_\_\_\_\_.

## Colour Breathing

We can use colour to help influence our emotions and ability to cope, by:

- Wearing colour
- Drinking or eating colour
- Visualising or meditating with colour (e.g. colour breathing)
- Surrounding ourselves with colour (green garden, blue sky etc)

Colour	Promotes	Good for
RED	Energy, strength, motivation, confidence, will-power, courage, initiative, focussing on attention to detail	Depression, negativity, shyness (avoid in anger, irritability)
ORANGE	Stimulates body and mind, self-esteem, optimism, inner strength, creativity, self-expression, happiness, opens mind to new ideas and perspectives, revitalising	Depression, negativity, trauma, stress, bereavement and loss
GOLD	Enthusiasm, balancing thoughts and feelings, wisdom	Depression (especially during menopause), stress, anxiety
YELLOW	Uplifting, cleansing, self-respect, self-confidence, self-control, ability to rationalise and reason, contentment, mentally stimulating	Depression, despair, fatigue, negativity, sensitivity to criticism, lack of confidence (avoid in insomnia, hyperactivity)
GREEN	Balance, harmony, personal development, self-acceptance, compassion for self and others, renewal	Stress, anxiety, self-pity, confusion
TURQUOISE	Calm, cleansing, healing, personal relationships, sharing, friendship, resilience	Stress, anxiety, anger
BLUE	Calm, peace, relaxation, slowing down, steadying, self-expression, intuition, honesty, truth, creativity	Insomnia, stress, anxiety, over-excitement, anger
INDIGO	Wisdom, intuition, understanding, spirituality, peace, calm, inspiration	Anger, obsessions, psychoses, insomnia, anxiety (avoid in depression, loneliness)
VIOLET PURPLE	Inspiration, imagination, empathy, sense of belonging, helping others, self-respect, dignity	Stress, anxiety, obsessions, lack of confidence, low self-esteem, severe depression
MAGENTA	Letting go of the past or anxiety-provoking thoughts, moving on, spiritual understanding	Reduces aggression
PINK	Calm, clarity of thought, affection, compassion, nurturing, kindness, resolving	Difficult relationships, insomnia, anger, aggression, over-sensitivity

Black contains no colour, and white contains all colours.

Brown contains red, blue and yellow.

*(table adapted from Colour Your Life [www.come-alive.co.uk](http://www.come-alive.co.uk))*

## Body Scanning Exercise

A body scan is similar to progressive muscle relaxation except, instead of tensing and relaxing muscles, you simply focus on the sensations in each part of your body.

Practicing body scan meditation

- Get comfortable and uncross your legs and place arms at your side. You may keep eyes open or closed. Begin by Focusing on your breathing, allowing your stomach to rise as you inhale and fall as you exhale.

Breathe deeply for about two minutes, until you start to feel comfortable and relaxed.

- Turn your focus to the toes of your right foot. Notice any sensations you feel while continuing to also focus on your breathing. Imagine each deep breath flowing to your toes. Remain focused on this area for one to two minutes.

- Move your focus to the sole of your right foot. Tune in to any sensations you feel in that part of your body and imagine each breath flowing from the sole of your foot. After one or two minutes, move your focus to your right ankle and repeat. Move to your calf, knee, thigh, hip, and then repeat the sequence for your left leg. From there, move up the torso, through the lower back and abdomen, the upper back and chest, and the shoulders.

Pay close attention to any area of the body that causes you pain or discomfort.

- Move your focus to the fingers on your right hand and then move up to the wrist, forearm, elbow, upper arm, and shoulder. Repeat for your left arm.

Then move through the neck and throat, and finally all the regions of your face, the back of the head, and the top of the head. Pay close attention to your jaw, chin, lips, tongue, nose, cheeks, eyes, forehead, temples and scalp. When you reach the very top of your head, let your breath reach out beyond your body and imagine yourself hovering above yourself.

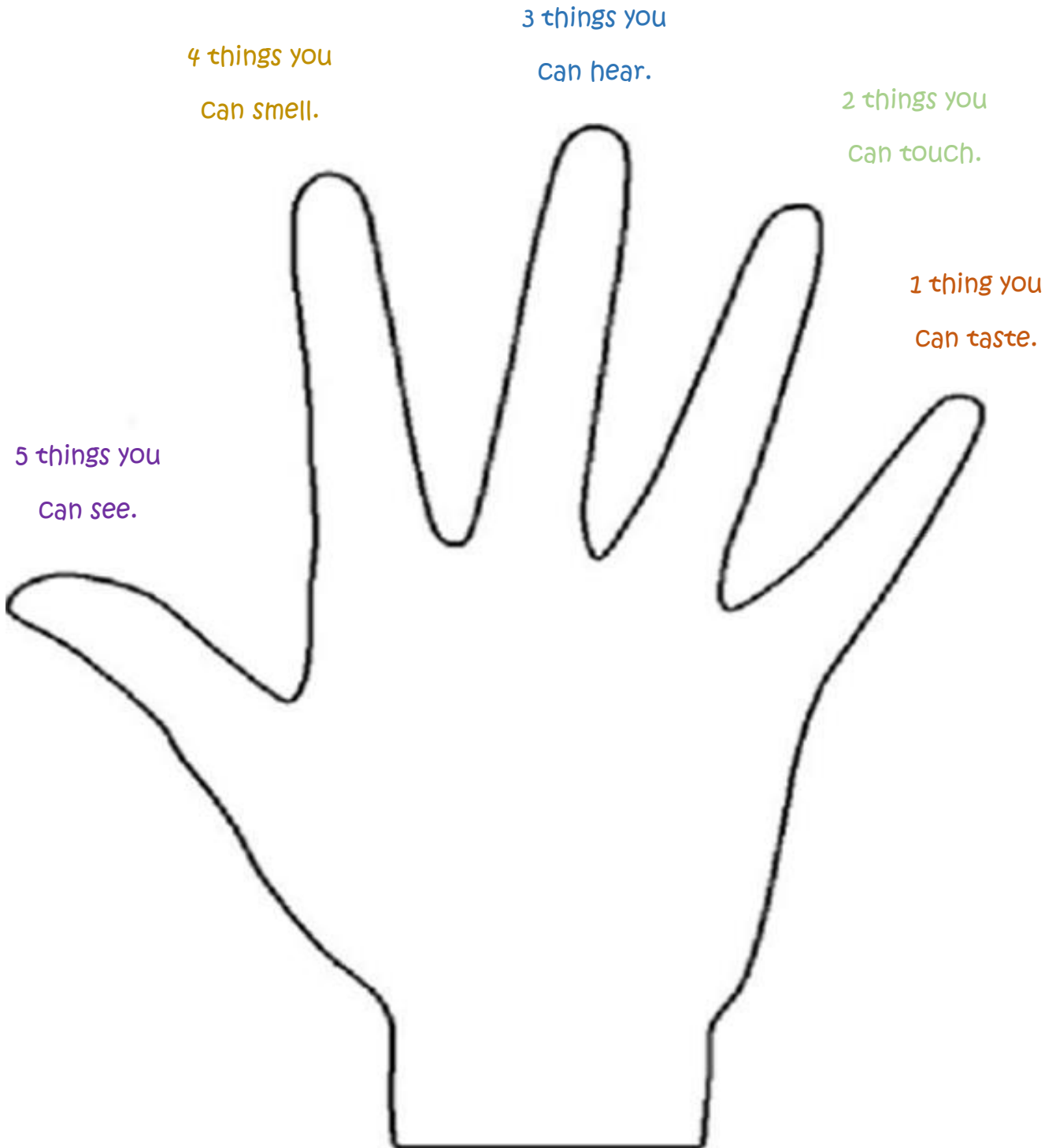
- After completing the body scan, relax for a while in silence and stillness, noting how your body feels. Then open your eyes slowly. Take a moment to stretch, if necessary.

## Self Soothe Ideas

- Hand cream
- Washing hands with soap
- Tell a memory / funny story
- Look at old pictures (either in the box or on your phone)
- Drink a glass of cold water mindfully
- Drink a hot cup of tea / hot chocolate together / hot squash
- Describe 5 things you can see, 4 things you can smell, 1 thing you can hear, 3 things you can touch and 1 thing you can taste.
- Find an item of the week to 'observe' and 'describe. For example, pebbles/leaves/pipe cleaners/ felt fabric to notice the difference.
- Play the ABC game
- Sit in a communal area for 5 minutes and just notice what the sounds are / what the judgments to these sounds are.

Can you think of any others?

## Using Your Hand to Prompt Mindfulness



## Making a Mind Jar

You will need:

- ✓ Glitter Glue
- ✓ Warm water
- ✓ Spoon
- ✓ glitter
- ✓ Empty jar/bottle
- ✓ (optional) food colouring/sequins
- ✓ superglue



Directions:

1. Pour the glitter glue into the bottom of your jar/bottle – about 3 tsp.
2. Add a small amount of hot water (tap water is okay) into the jar and mix into a paste.
3. Fill up your jar/bottle to the top with warm water/
4. Add some glitter.
5. Add a drop or two of food colouring to give it more excitement.
6. When everything is blended, put the lid on and give it a good shake so the glitter is dispersed throughout.
7. Then let it cool without the lid.
8. You can secure the lid with super glue when cooled.

### ABC Game: Think of things beginning with each letter

1. Things around you
2. Boys/ girls name
3. Fruits
4. Flowers
5. Celebrities

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>J</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>L</b>
<b>M</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>O</b>
<b>P</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>R</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>U</b>
<b>V</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Y</b>	<b>Z</b>	

## Challenging Unhelpful Thoughts

Taking a particular unhelpful thought, see if you can test it.  
Ask questions to test whether your belief has any real basis.

Unhelpful Thought



Challenges

Is there any evidence that contradicts this thought?

Can you identify any patterns of unhelpful thinking?

What would you say to a friend who had this thought in a similar situation?

What are the costs and benefits of thinking in this way?

Benefits:

Costs:

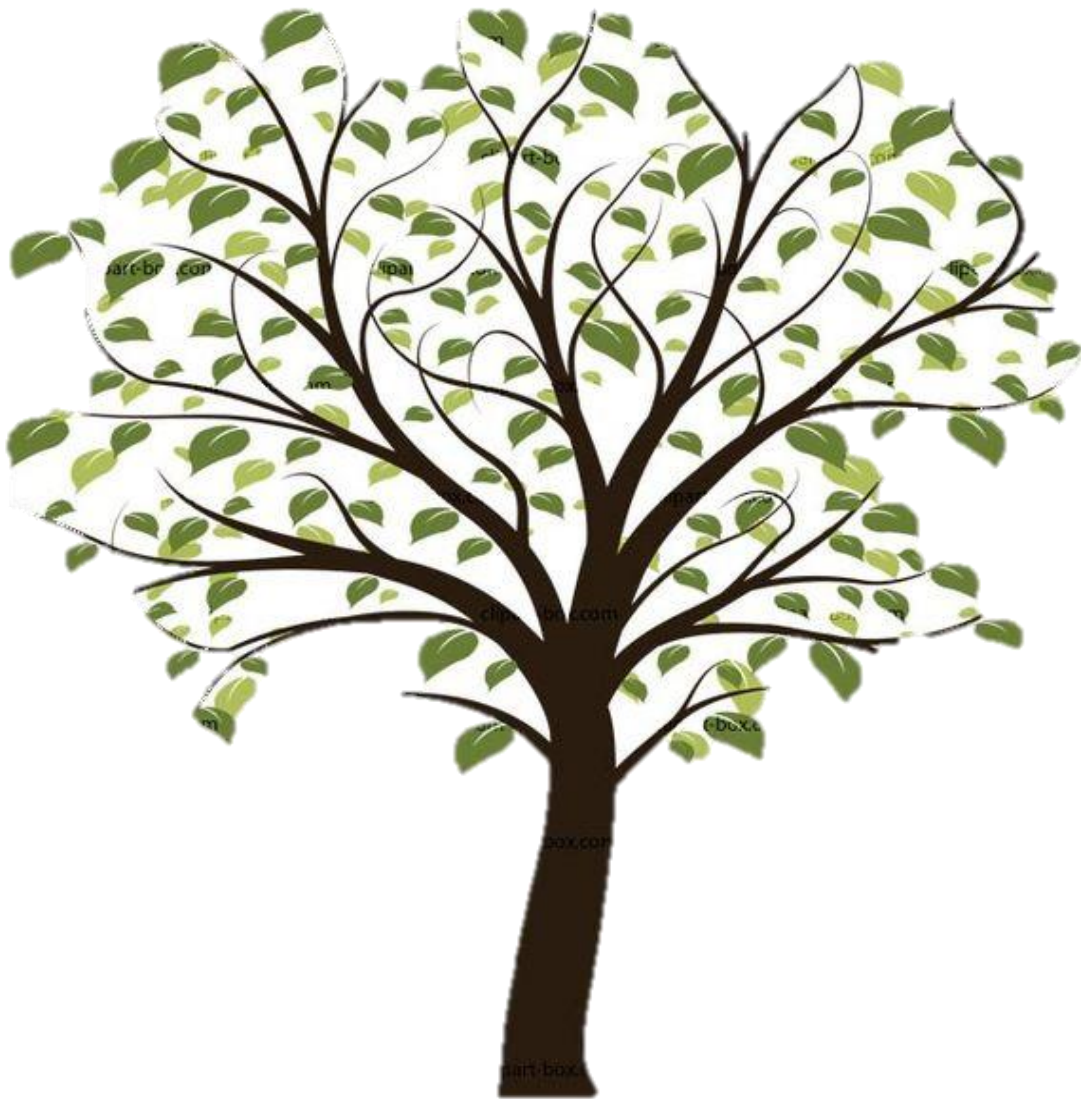
How will you feel about this in 6 months time?

Is there another way of looking at this situation?



Balanced Thought

# Useful Websites and Reading



Overcoming Binge Eating by Chris Fairburn

[www.b-eat.org.uk](http://www.b-eat.org.uk)

[www.nationaleatingdisorders.org](http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org)

[www.getselfhelp.co.uk](http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk)