

# BINGE EATING

## SESSION 1 WORKBOOK



## Introducing CBT and Understanding Binge Eating

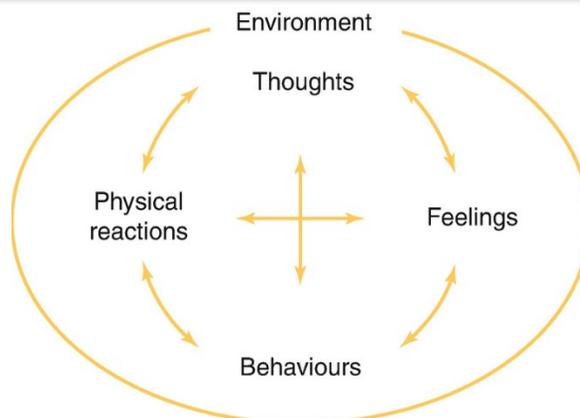
Welcome to the Wellbeing Binge Eating Course. Binge eating disorder involves regularly eating a lot of food over a short period of time until you're uncomfortably full.

Binges are often planned in advance, usually done alone, and may include "special" binge foods. You may feel guilty or ashamed after binge eating. Men and women of any age can get binge eating disorder, but it usually starts in the late teens or early 20s.

The aim of this course is to provide you with an understanding of Binge Eating, to discover whether this is a problem for you and to work through ways that can improve your symptoms to help you reduce the negative impact that Binge Eating has on your life.

### WHAT IS CBT?

- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy is based on the idea that our emotions are governed by our thoughts
- At face value the majority of what CBT teaches is **common sense**
- CBT aims to encourage people to have a more objective view of events by developing more healthy emotions
- *"Men are disturbed not by things, but by the view which they take of them" (Epictetus in The Enchiridion)*



## WHAT IS BINGE EATING?

Binge Eating is very common and involves regularly eating large portions of food all at once until you feel uncomfortably full, and then often upset or guilty.

Binge eating is far from being enjoyable, binges can be very distressing. Sufferers find it difficult to stop during a binge even if they want to, and some people with binge eating disorder have described feeling disconnected from what they're doing during a binge, or even struggling to remember what they've eaten afterwards.

While binge eating disorder can affect anyone, the condition tends to be more common in adults than in younger people. This may develop from or into another eating disorder.

## COMMON FACTORS AND SYMPTOMS

There are many different factors and you may experience various symptoms, however binge eating often occurs with other mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression and there is also a strong link with low self-esteem.

Most people occasionally overeat, especially on holidays or festive celebrations, however this becomes disordered when it occurs regularly, and the person starts to feel shame and a desire for secrecy about their eating habits.

Unlike eating for pleasure, it tends to stem from an unresolved emotional or mental health issue or even sometimes a medical condition. There are many different factors and you may experience various symptoms, however binge eating often occurs with other mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression and there is also a strong link with low self-esteem .

- ✓ Eating larger volumes of food than others would eat in similar circumstances.
- ✓ Eating within a short period.
- ✓ You have to feel out of control while eating, as if you couldn't stop even if you wanted to, or you couldn't resist starting.
- ✓ Eat more quickly than usual during binge episodes.
- ✓ Eat until uncomfortably full /in physical pain.

- ✓ Eat when not hungry.
- ✓ Eat alone because of feeling embarrassed.
- ✓ Feeling disgusted , depressed, or guilty after eating.
- ✓ Feelings of panic ,lack of focus anxiety ,and despair.
- ✓ Weight fluctuations which can lead to obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure and other physical complications.

## HOW DOES BINGE EATING AFFECT US?

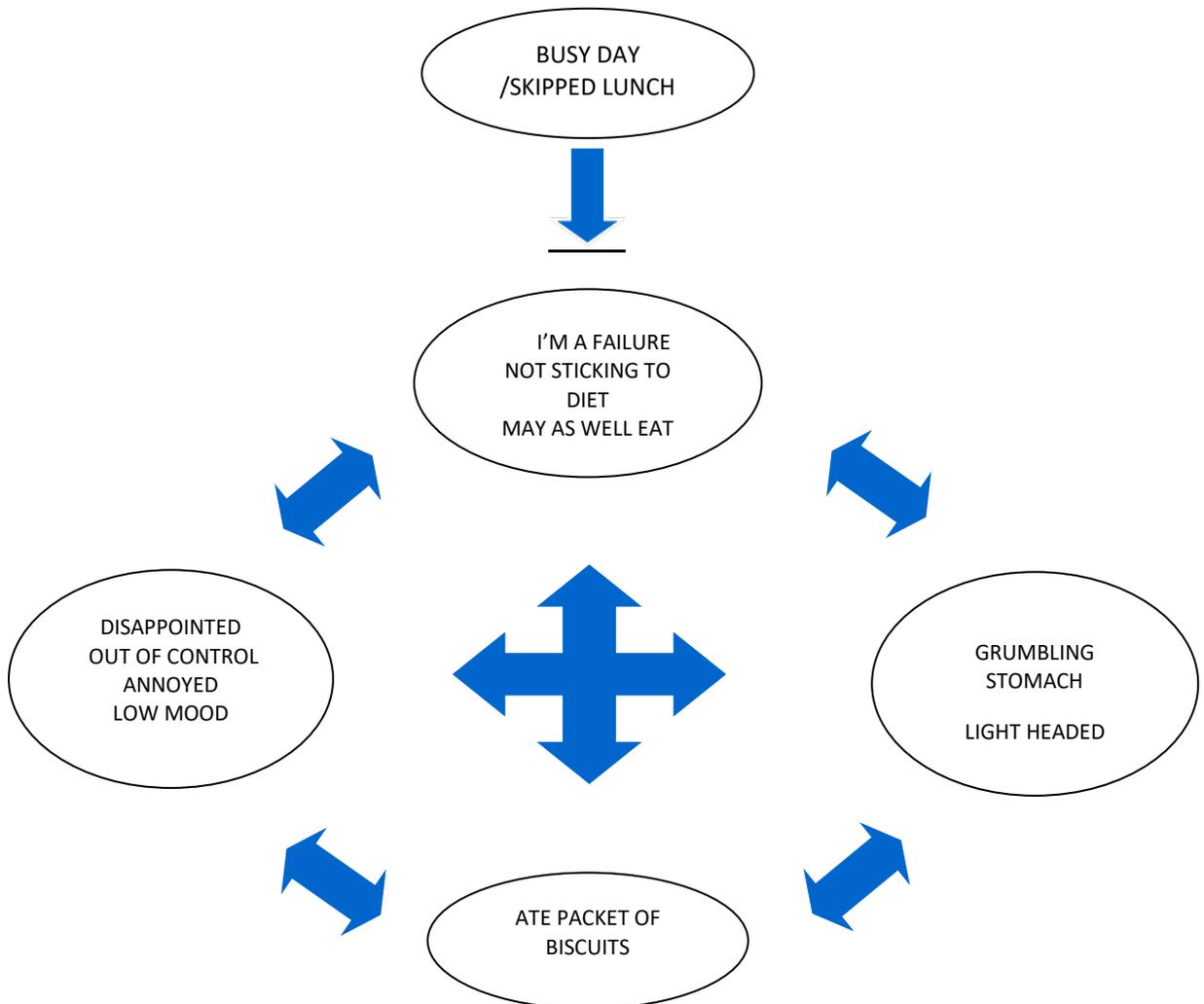
Binge Eating can affect us in 4 main ways. It affects our:

- **Body** – the physical sensations you experience in regards to your Binge Eating difficulty.
- **Thoughts** – what goes through your mind when you experience difficulties with Binge Eating.
- **Feelings** – the emotions that you feel when you engage in Binge Eating.
- **Behaviour** – how you act/what you do/what you avoid when you have Binge Eating difficulties.



These 4 areas (body, thoughts, feelings and behaviours) are all tied to each other and each can affect the other. The following diagram illustrates what we call the **'VICIOUS CIRCLE OF BINGE EATING'**.

### THE VICIOUS CIRCLE OF BINGE EATING



This diagram shows us that what we think about a situation affects how we feel physically and emotionally and changes what we do, (behaviour). If we begin to identify and recognise our unhelpful patterns (what keeps our vicious circle going), we can start to make changes and by doing so hopefully we can begin to weaken the circle.

### **TASK ONE**

What kind of thoughts and behaviours help to keep your vicious cycle of binge eating going? List these below.



### **PROMOTING HEALTHY LIFE STYLE**

#### **GETTING STARTED . . .**

There are some things in our daily lives which increase the chances of us experiencing binge eating and mood related difficulties . Let's start by getting rid of the things that make binge eating and mood related difficulties worse.

### **Caffeine . . .**

Stimulant that affects the brain and central nervous system and can be found in drinks e.g. tea, coffee, fizzy drinks, red bull, pro-plus, and also in pain killers e.g. aspirin, some cold remedies and headache tablets.



Too much caffeine (more than 4 cups per day) can leave us feeling nervous, irritable, restless, agitated, shaky, give us headaches, increase our heart rate, speed up breathing etc. Your body can get so used to caffeine that if you just cut it out suddenly you may experience withdrawal effects such as headaches, tiredness, sickness, anxiety.

If you think you may be taking too much caffeine wean yourself off it slowly, perhaps try switching to decaf tea and coffee, or from fizzy drinks to caffeine free drinks etc.

### **Alcohol . . .**

Many people with depression misuse alcohol to boost their mood or avoid their feelings. If you drink alcohol to cope with depression you may begin to depend on it. Symptoms such as low mood, nausea, sweating, and shaking may be more to do with the withdrawal effects of alcohol than depression. Drinking too much alcohol will disrupt your sleep and make you more prone to depression.



Try to reduce your intake – seek advice from your GP if required.

### **Poor sleep routine . . .**

Low mood often leads to sleep trouble but lack of sleep can leave us feeling even low and fatigued the next day. Try to get into a regular routine of going to bed and getting up at the same time every day – don't spend more than 8 hours in bed. 'Put the day to rest' in the early part of the evening – make a 'to do' list and deal with any problems or worries you have well before bedtime. Relax for at least 90 minutes before bedtime.



### **Lack of exercise . . .**

30 minutes of moderate exercise each day can make a huge difference to our physical and psychological well-being



Physical benefits:

- Releases tension
- Controls weight and improves body shape
- Can reduce blood pressure, as well as the risk of heart disease, cancers and stroke

Bio-psychological benefits:

- Reduces levels of the body's stress hormones – adrenaline and cortisol
- Stimulates the production of serotonin and endorphins – the body's natural mood elevators

Try to increase the amount of exercise you are doing. This does not always mean joining a local gym, it can also include walking, housework, gardening etc.

## **SELF-MONITORING**

**Self-monitoring is central to overcoming your Binge Eating difficulties. Self-monitoring serves two essential purposes . . .**

Firstly it will provide you with important information about your eating difficulties. You may be thinking that you are all **too** aware of the problem and in a sense this is true but accurate monitoring will almost always highlights features that were not obvious beforehand.

Monitoring gives you answers to these questions –

- Exactly what do during my binges ?how does it compare with what I eat at other times? Do my binge consist of food that I am trying to avoid eating?
- Exactly when do my binges occur ?is there a predictable pattern? Are week days different from weekends?

- Are there triggers for my binges? Do these binges tend to occur under certain circumstances? Do they occur when I'm bored ,depressed, lonely or anxious ?
- Do my binges appear to serve any function? Examples of this –do they relieve tension ,are they a way of punishing myself.

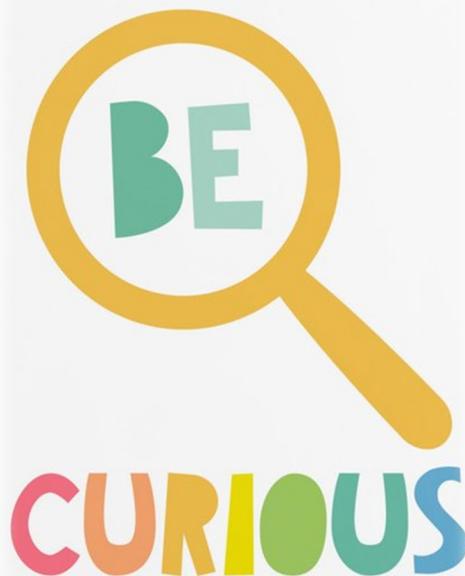
***These answers are all paramount in overcoming your difficulties !!***

**Secondly monitoring is the key to making positive changes to overcoming your difficulties.**

When monitoring is done properly monitoring helps people change. Monitoring eating accurately and at the time you are doing it will gradually reveal the apparently automatic ,out of control behaviour is more habitual .

You do not have to binge when you feel tense or angry ,or you've broken one of your dietary rules. You have just grown used to doing this when everything else seems impossible.

Monitoring will show you have other options .



## EXAMPLE OF COMPLETED SELF MONITORING TOOL

Time	What did you eat or drink? (Behaviour)	Environment or Situation What was happening at the time ?Where were you ? Who were you with?	Thoughts What was going through your mind at the time?	Emotions How did you feel?
7.30	1 slice toast with low-fat margarine Tea with skimmed milk	Kitchen alone	I'm quite hungry but going to be good today	
9.20	Diet coke	Desk in office		
11.00	Apple	Desk in office		
2.00	Cup-a-soup Roll Diet Coke	Work canteen	I'm really hungry and want to eat more but I really want to lose weight	Pleased
7.00	Large pizza Garlic bread (6 slices) Diet coke	Kitchen with husband	I can't believe I've broken my diet again, I meant to eat only a small bit of pizza	Angry Upset
7.45	Packet crisps 2 kit-kats Large slice chocolate cake 3 scoops vanilla ice-cream	Kitchen alone	I can't stop eating. I've got no control. I'm a pig. I'm going to be so strict tomorrow with my eating	Ashamed Guilty Upset

***A BLANK SHEET IS AVAILABLE AT THE END OF WORKBOOK***

### GUIDANCE FOR FILLING IN MONITORING SHEET

1. Column 1 Record the time
2. Column 2 Record what you ate and drank – this is your Behaviour and is often what you will notice first
3. Column 3 Environment or Situation – record what was happening at the time when you overate. Who were you with? What were you doing? Remember, you are trying to find out if your eating is affected by difficult life situations, relationship or practical problems
4. Column 4 Thoughts – make a note of any thoughts that were going through your mind before, during or after eating
5. Column 5 Emotions – record how you felt emotionally at the time e.g. stressed, anxious, sad, angry

## TIPS

- ✓ It is important to not try and change eating habits just yet.
- ✓ Use the self-monitoring sheet each day rather than a notebook .
- ✓ Always keep your daily self-monitoring sheet with you.
- ✓ Record information on a moment to moment 'real time' while this is fresh in your mind ,as leaving this to end of day you'll be unlikely to remember all the important details.
- ✓ It is important that you record honestly as they are no matter how embarrassed or ashamed you may feel .
- ✓ It is important to remember that monitoring will need to become a new habit and you will be doing this for the duration of this course.
- ✓ It is important to start reviewing this after 4/5 days this will allow you to detect changes over time .

## HOMEWORK

For the next week follow recommendations in self-monitoring remember this may be challenging however this initial part is paramount to understanding your difficulties then once we have insight we can then move forward in initiating positive change to longer term have a better relationship with ourselves and food

Introduce 3 x 10 mins walk over the week (thinking of positive benefits exercise has on our overall wellbeing).





## SELF-MONITORING WORKSHEET

<b>TIME</b>	<b>WHAT DID YOU EAT OR DRINK? BEHAVIOUR</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENT OR SITUATION</b> WHAT WAS HAPPENING AT THE TIME? WHERE WERE YOU? WHO WERE YOU WITH?	<b>THOUGHTS</b> WHAT WAS GOING THROUGH YOUR MIND AT THE TIME?	<b>EMOTIONS</b> HOW DID YOU FEEL?



## SELF-MONITORING WORKSHEET

<b>TIME</b>	<b>WHAT DID YOU EAT OR DRINK? BEHAVIOUR</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENT OR SITUATION</b> WHAT WAS HAPPENING AT THE TIME? WHERE WERE YOU? WHO WERE YOU WITH?	<b>THOUGHTS</b> WHAT WAS GOING THROUGH YOUR MIND AT THE TIME?	<b>EMOTIONS</b> HOW DID YOU FEEL?