

Managing Wellbeing & Disordered Eating



What is disordered eating?

Our world is full of dietary and exercise advice, it can be very difficult to know what is “right” and “wrong” when it comes to the types of food we eat, when to eat and how much to eat. This can make it difficult to know what is “normal” and often what is “normal” for one person is not the same for another.

Food is part of our daily lives; it is natural and normal to think about food and change the way you eat from time to time. For example, you may:

- Eat more than usual during social events.
- Lose your appetite at times.
- Crave specific foods.

Disordered eating refers to eating behaviours such as bingeing, or restricting food intake, which cause significant distress and may negatively impact on a person’s functioning and emotional wellbeing.

There are many ways that problems with your eating can affect the way you act and think around food, disordered eating happens when you engage in distressing eating behaviours to the extent that it impacts on your wellbeing and the ability to complete your daily activities and be present in your life.

Disordered eating can present differently for every person, reflect on a recent experience around food and eating, use below activity to list your thoughts, feelings and how you reacted eating:

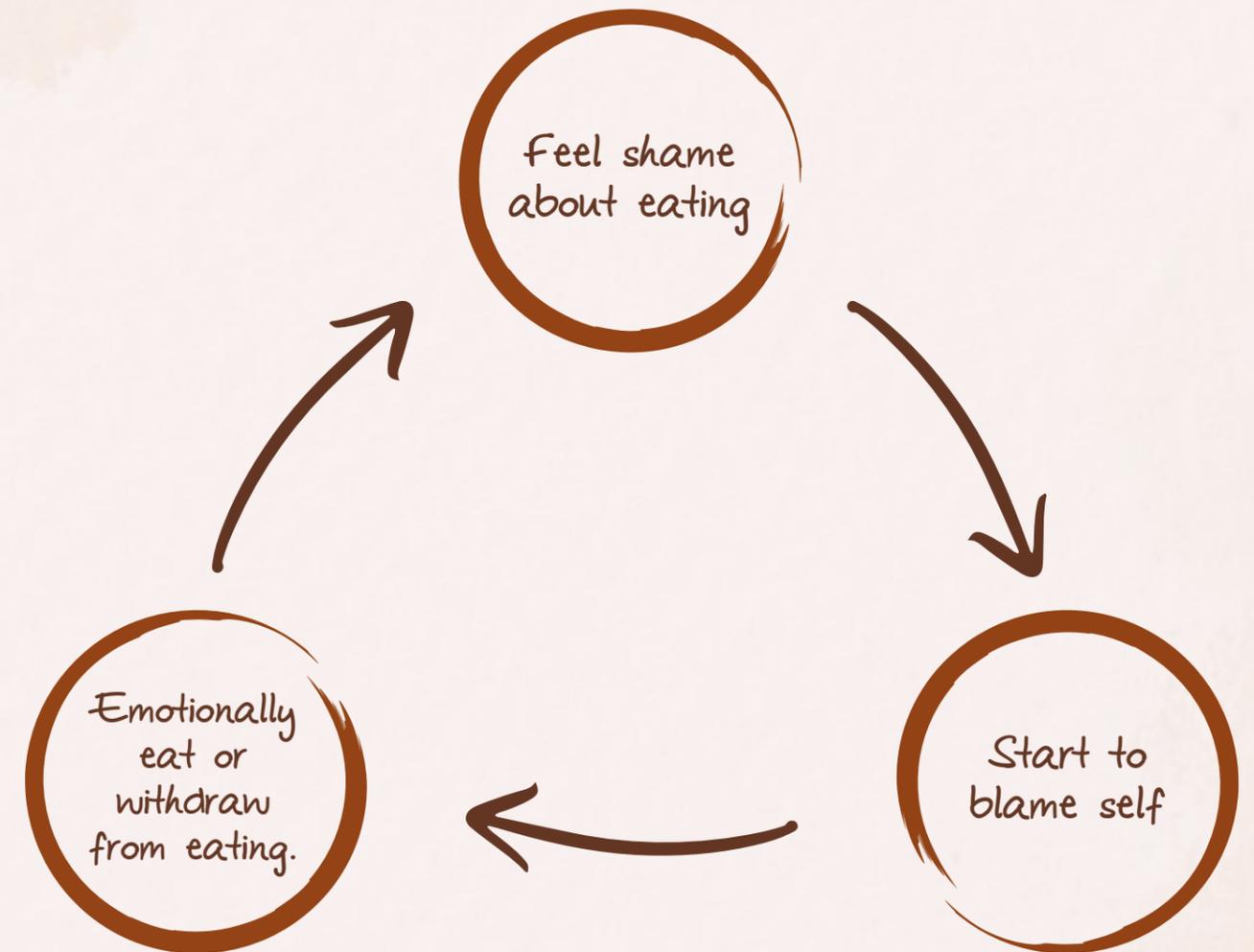
Situation:.....

Thoughts and feelings:.....

Reaction:.....

Blame cycle and disordered eating

It can become easy to blame yourself for not being able to take “control” of your eating, it can lead to you becoming self-critical and lead to you thinking you are weak or undisciplined but often that process can keep a person stuck into a pattern of doing the things they don’t want to be doing over and over again.



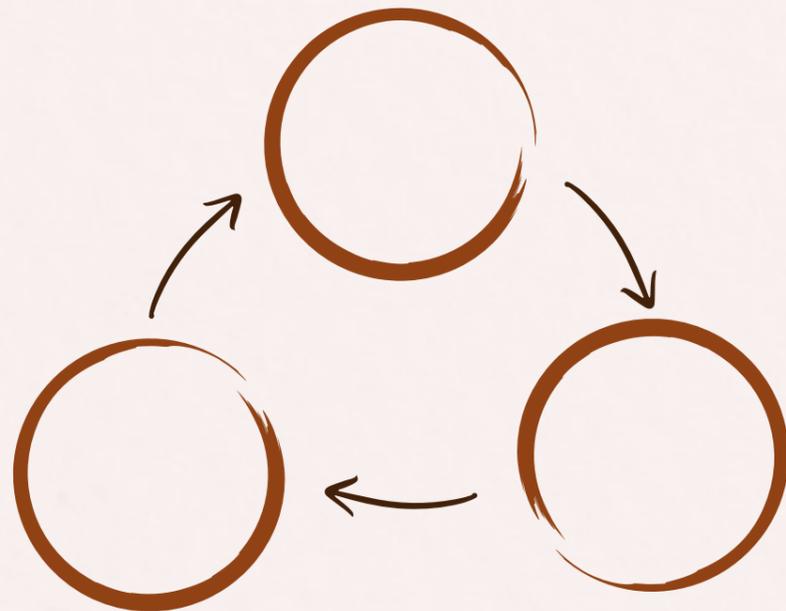
There are lots of reasons why we may engage in disordered eating such as unhelpful beliefs about eating, weight and shape. Often, we are compassionate with others but so much harder and critical of ourselves. This is because our brain has evolved to keep us alive and sometimes that does not produce a healthy or nourishing mindset. We will learn more about our brain, thinking and beliefs in later sessions.

Blame cycle and being kind to yourself.

Being kind to yourself can be difficult, firstly because your brain isn't always accepting of self-compassion, yet often you provide compassion to friends, family and others. Being compassionate to yourself can be a work in progress and it's important to note that sometimes our brains can sabotage our self-compassion due to thought loops and blame cycles.



We aim to work on self-compassion as the sessions go on but firstly it can be helpful just acknowledging what thought loops you might experience and understanding how they can link into our self-blame.



What affects your eating?

Everyone's eating struggles are unique, but it can be helpful to notice what it is that impacts on your eating, sometimes we might not be aware just yet what it is but take a moment to think about challenges you face when it comes to eating.

Understanding unhelpful beliefs about food, weight and body image.

It is common for people to hold strong beliefs about food, weight, and body image. examples of some beliefs may be:

- *Carbohydrates will cause weight gain.*
- *Being thin will make me more likeable.*
- *I must eat perfectly.*
- *Eating will help me feel better.*

Often disordered eating can feel like it aligns to our beliefs and values, for example we may have a value that we want to be "healthy", and this may lead to behaviours like restriction, over exercising and dieting to the point of extreme which ultimately takes you away from your true value.

The vicious cycle of our unhelpful thoughts may lead to us engaging in unhelpful behaviours.

Examples of this may be:

- *Avoiding mirrors or body checking.*
- *Binge eating or emotionally eating.*
- *Following fad diets or over exercising to change body shape.*

List below any strong beliefs or values you have recognised which may impact on your eating:

.....

Do those strong beliefs lead to you engaging in any unhelpful behaviours, if so note them below:

.....

Risk of disordered eating

A poor, irregular or unbalanced nutritional intake means you will likely experience some physical and mental symptoms. Research shows that these symptoms can happen at any weight.

Physical Changes

Feeling cold all the time
Dry skin & hair loss
Pain, bloating, constipation
Extreme hunger & binge eating
Extreme fullness
Dizziness

Emotional Changes

Low mood
Anxiety
Irritability
Losing interest in things you used to enjoy

Social Changes

Withdrawing from friends
Social Anxiety
Loss of sense of humour

Changes in thinking

Thinking about food all the time
Hard to concentrate & make decisions
Thinking in rigid or obsessional ways

It is also important to receive a health screening from your medical practitioner if you have been engaging in starvation, bingeing, purging or any compensating behaviours.

Dieting and weight control

It's important that while attending these sessions that you don't actively attempt to diet to allow you to engage in the recovery process, we ask that you stop attending any slimming clubs, delete any weight loss apps or disengage from anything which actively promotes weight loss during the duration of the program.

This may feel difficult as you may have engaged in weight control behaviours for many years, and it may be tempting to try and control your weight but often this can cause hinder recovery.

Top ten tips to improve your overall wellbeing

- 1. Notice your signs and symptoms of your disordered eating pattern.**
- 2. Be aware of your thoughts and emotional process around food.**
- 3. Make a note of your true values around health.**
- 4. Note down your triggers.**
- 5. Talk to somebody about how you are feeling.**
- 6. Avoid trying to control your weight.**
- 7. Try to work on the things that impact your wellbeing (attend following sessions)**
- 8. Try to maintain a routine of eating regularly.**
- 9. Be aware of your energy levels, get rest and sleep well.**
- 10. Attend the next 12 sessions to learn about how to manage your wellbeing and disordered eating**

Further Support

If you need some more help after this session,
you can contact:

Self-Help:

www.getselfhelp.co.uk

www.cntw.nhs.uk/selfhelp

Helplines and support:

Beat:

0808 801 0677

www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk

Local Support:

Together We

0808 196 1773

MindLine Cumbria

0300 561 0000

Meal Structure & Review

Week Start	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Meal 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meal 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	We discuss meal structure in book 5, for now just check off the meals you have eaten, we are not tracking what has been eaten or calories.					<input type="checkbox"/>
Meal 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Snack 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Snack 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other Eating Episodes

Use this box to track any other eating episodes such as binging or anything that does not fit into above

What went well?

Use these boxes to review what went well and challenges faced in the week

Challenges:

My positive quote:

Use this box to log a positive affirmation about yourself

Goal of the week:

Use this box to set goals for the coming week

Meal Structure & Review

Week Start	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Meal 1							
Meal 2							
Meal 3							
Snack 1							
Snack 2							

Other Eating Episodes

What went well?

Challenges:

My positive quote:

Goal of the week:

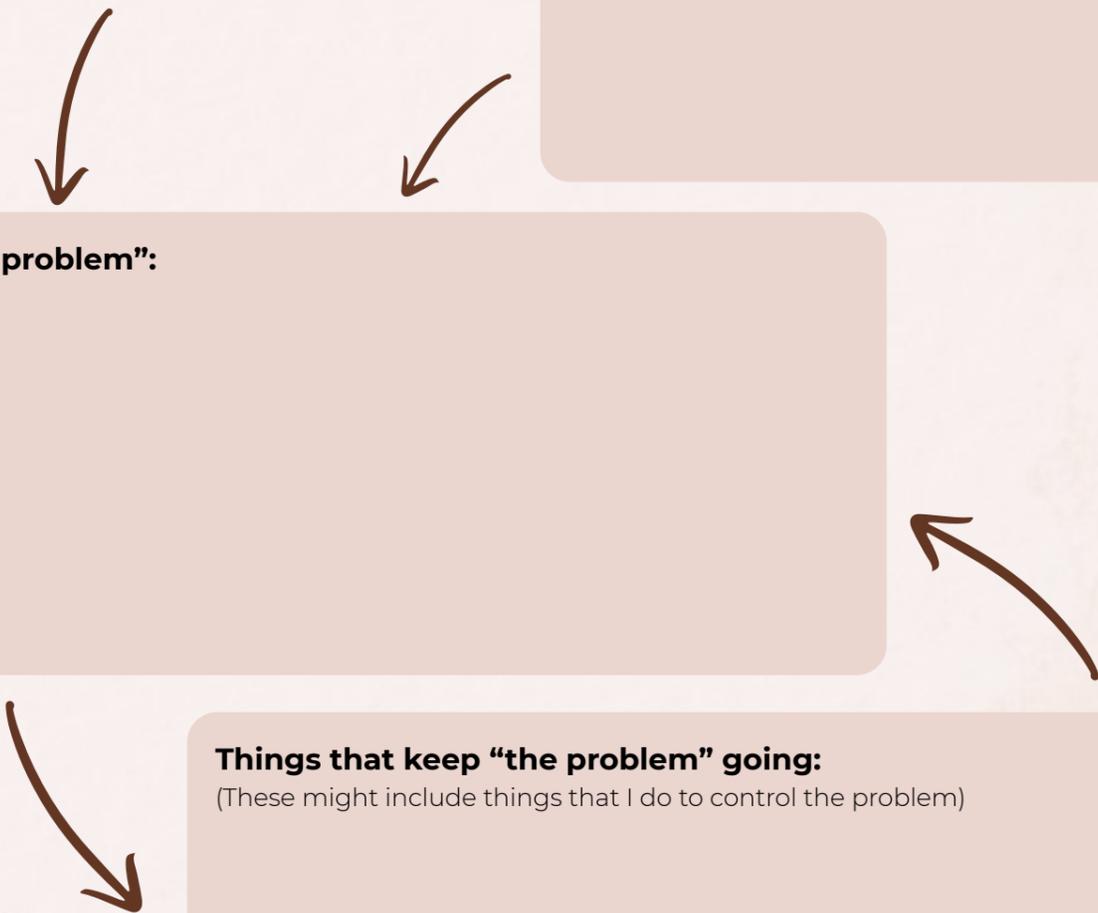
Understanding my eating problem

What made me vulnerable in the first place?

Triggers for the most recent episode:

“The problem”:

Things that keep “the problem” going:
(These might include things that I do to control the problem)





together we

Cumbria

Together We CIC

0808 196 1773

info@togetherwe.uk

www.togetherwe.uk