



Food and Mood

**Helping you to understand emotional eating and
build skills to support your weight loss journey**

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Food and Mood

What is this group?

The team recognises that many different factors can have an impact on weight management, including your personal circumstances, environment, biology, genetic make-up, life experiences, sleep, mental health and emotions.

As well as feeling hungry for physical reasons, we can also find ourselves feeling hungry in response to psychological factors (thoughts and feelings):

- After a celebratory meal, do you ever feel quite full but still crave something sweet?
- Do you ever find yourself reaching for foods high in fat or sugar at times of stress, upset or low mood? Do you find yourself eating more of these foods, quicker than usual?

Eating in response to psychological cues can often feel good in the short-term, but it can leave us feeling guilty and frustrated in the long-term. Eating in this way can also make it harder to achieve weight loss goals.

The problem is that we tend to eat in response to psychological cues on “autopilot”, without realising it. Often, before we know it, we’ve eaten and are feeling guilty about it.

If any of this feels familiar to you, this course may help.

How can this group help me?

The sessions will consist of education and discussion, with some opportunities to apply skills, all in a supportive, relaxed environment.

The course aims to help you to stop and notice why you are eating, and gain a better understanding of factors which may trigger your own personal eating behaviours, or keep them going. We aim to help you to build on that understanding to develop more helpful ways of managing food cravings.

We use a person centred approach, recognising that everyone is different, to help you to build on your skills and strengths.

What do sessions look like?

Group sessions run for around 90 minutes (maximum) each week for 5 weeks. There will usually be 5-6 people in each group. There may be some group discussion, and you’re free to contribute as much or as little as you like to this.

Following each session, we set small exercises for you to practise. The aim of this is to consolidate the materials covered already, and help to create a foundation for future sessions.

If you wish to join, we ask you to attend all five sessions please. They are designed to be delivered as a programme, with each week’s contents building on the information covered earlier.

Sessions are currently delivered remotely by videolink using Microsoft Teams. You will need access to a device with a camera, speakers, and microphone (for example, a laptop, smartphone or tablet), a Wi-Fi connection, and a suitably private, quiet space.

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What is covered?

The topics have been carefully considered, to help to support you on your weight management pathway. The content is based on research and evidence, where evidence is available.

Here is an outline of the key topic areas we expect to cover. Please note that we aim to adjust the content flexibly, where practical, to suit the group.

Session 1: How did we get to where we are?

- ◇ Introduction
- ◇ Understanding the complexities of weight management
- ◇ Understanding emotion and how this relates to eating

Session 2: What keeps us trapped?

- ◇ Foundation skills for managing “threat” responses
- ◇ Introducing mindfulness
- ◇ Introducing behaviour chaining

Session 3: How can we do things differently in the future?

- ◇ Practical skills for emotion regulation

Session 4: How can we do things differently - continued

- ◇ Distress tolerance skills
- ◇ Interpersonal skills

Session 5: How can we keep things going?

- ◇ Handling setbacks
- ◇ Planning for the future

Where can I get more information?

If you have any questions about the course, please use the contact details on the first page and ask for Dr Azizah Almaghyuli (Clinical Psychologist)