****

**Identifying the cause of binging**

**Pinpointing your triggers**

It can be difficult to pinpoint the trigger of binges as it is very rarely down to one single factor but rather a multitude of factors. Food is rarely the cause of the binge and often it is something deeper rooted. If you suffer from difficult emotions such as negative self-talk you may look towards food as a soother leading to unwanted snacking or choosing the wrong kinds of foods for your health and weight goals.

There could be possible reasons for this, and I want you to think about potential reasons for this and identify which ones resonate with you the most from the list below. This is why self-monitoring will be extremely helpful, at least in the first week or two to allow us to pinpoint any potential causes but let’s look at a few common ones.

* Undereating throughout the day
* Not eating regular meals
* Unbalanced nutrient intake (protein, carbs and fats)
* Skipping meals which leads to increased hunger and cravings at night
* Difficult emotions (sadness, anger, stress, loneliness)
* Restricting all day then relax and allow yourself whatever you want in the evening
* Seeking comfort with food
* Busy lifestyle and are often very tired at night
* Poor body image
* No flexibility with food
* Emotional needs are not being met e.g., connecting with others

*\*This list in not exhaustive, it is merely a sample of common triggers*

Once you have identified the most common triggers and have completed the table overleaf for a week (sometimes it can take several weeks to fully elucidate your most common triggers) then we can look at where we need to provide a solution and what that solution looks like.

If you find that you’ve used food in a way that you’d rather not, if you’ve been more food focused on a given day or even more critical of yourself try and use the following table to identify the (or a number of) driving “triggers” which have caused this outcome.

When we spend less time ruminating on the outcome and more time trying to identify why it happened and put a solution in place, then we can actually move forward with our journey.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Coping skill |  | Notes (add any additional detail you’d like) |
| Undereating throughout the day |  |  |
| Not eating regular meals |  |  |
| Unbalanced nutrient intake (protein, carbs and fats) |  |  |
| Skipping meals which leads to increased hunger and cravings at night |  |  |
| Difficult emotions (sadness, anger, stress, loneliness) |  |  |
| Restricting all day then relax and allow yourself whatever you want in the evening |  |  |
| Seeking comfort with food |  |  |
| Busy lifestyle and are often very tired at night |  |  |
| Poor body image |  |  |
| No flexibility with food |  |  |
| Emotional needs are not being met e.g., connecting with others |  |  |
| *Add your own* |  |  |