

## Eating Disorders

# Common Triggers

Triggers are external events or circumstances that may produce very uncomfortable emotional or psychological responses (e.g. anxiety, panic, discouragement, despair, negative self-talk). Triggers might then increase the likelihood of binge eating (or restricting, or engaging in compensatory behaviour) as a way to manage what arises. As such they represent 'high risk times'.

There is often a range of triggers that lead to disordered eating behaviours. Understanding and identify certain events or situations that are triggering can be helpful to identify aspects of your environment or experience that need to be approached in a skilled and prepared manner, rather than experiencing binges as completely 'out of the blue'.

A list of potential triggers:

### Food and eating

- Undereating, or intentionally restricting/dieting
- Feeling hungry or unsatisfied
- Feeling like you can't eat the food you enjoy
- Breaking a diet rule such as eating 'forbidden' foods or eating at the "wrong" time
- Feeling full
- Thinking about food / intrusive thoughts about food
- Food being available - e.g. others offering food, free food in work kitchen, storing a forbidden food in the cupboard, attending a party where food is on display

### Body related

- Feeling upset about body, weight or shape "feeling fat"
- Discovering weight is different than anticipated
- Shopping for new clothes, finding the size to be unacceptable
- Needing to wear revealing clothing, such as shorts or bathers
- Discovering clothes may be too tight or too small
- Seeing a reflection or photo
- Thinking about weight / intrusive thoughts about weight

### Mood/emotions

- Feeling tired or exhausted
- Feeling lonely or isolated
- Feeling depressed
- Feeling angry or irritable
- Feeling tense, anxious or fearful
- Feeling bored
- For some people it may even be feeling happy or excited.

