

**MIND • BODY • FOOD**

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

# **Mental Health Can Change the Way We Eat**

Eating is influenced by far more than hunger alone.

Depression, anxiety, stress and other mental health difficulties can affect appetite, motivation, energy, digestion, food preparation and enjoyment. Appetite may fall or rise, and even shopping or making a meal can become harder when mental resources are low.

**Space to Breathe Therapy**

## Understanding the bigger picture

Depression, anxiety, stress and other mental health difficulties can affect appetite, motivation, energy, digestion, food preparation and enjoyment. Appetite may fall or rise, and even shopping or making a meal can become harder when mental resources are low.

### Points to hold in mind

- Low mood can reduce energy, motivation, pleasure and appetite.
- Anxiety and stress can change hunger, nausea, digestion or food decisions.
- Executive-function demands can make shopping, preparation and clearing away feel impossible.

### A balanced perspective

Food and eating are influenced by biology, psychology, relationships, culture, access and the environment. Useful guidance makes room for the whole person rather than reducing experience to one rule.

## Questions for personal reflection

Use these prompts gently. You do not need to answer them all, and there is no correct response. They can be explored privately or with a trusted professional or supporter.

**How mental health affects my appetite**

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**How it affects shopping or preparation**

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**Foods that remain manageable**

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**The time of day I need most support**

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**One demand I could reduce**

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## Taking the idea forward

### **Notice without judgement**

Observe what happens across more than one occasion before drawing conclusions.

### **Keep needs individual**

Respect allergies, intolerances, sensory preferences, culture, access, health conditions and medical advice.

### **Choose achievable support**

Small changes to availability, preparation, routine or support may be more useful than a complete overhaul.

### **Ask when unsure**

A GP, registered dietitian or suitable specialist can help when symptoms, restriction or health needs are complex.

### **Important context**

Changes in eating deserve support, not blame. Seek appropriate help if intake is very limited, weight changes rapidly or physical symptoms are concerning.