

Common Patterns in Binge Eating

Binge eating rarely happens randomly. It usually follows predictable patterns. Recognising these patterns helps identify exactly where the momentum shifts.

Restriction and Binge Pattern

Binge episodes often follow periods of reduced intake and restriction. It starts with the attempt to be perfect:

- Skipping meals to save calories for later
- Delaying eating despite physical hunger
- Following strict food rules that allow no flexibility
- Labelling common foods as off limits

The End of Day Pattern

This pattern is common when meals are irregular or stress accumulates across the day. Fatigue lowers your decision making capacity:

- Eating is tightly controlled during the day
- Structure decreases as soon as you get home
- Willpower is exhausted by the evening
- Increased eating occurs late at night

The Last Supper Pattern

Future restriction often increases present overeating. You are eating against a clock that hasn't even started yet:

- Eating more because a new rule or diet starts tomorrow
- Increased intake before a planned reset
- Urgency linked to the fear of future restriction
- The belief that this is the last time you will have this food

Stress Linked Pattern

Food becomes a short term regulator for pressure. It is used to reduce emotional intensity when conflict or pressure feels unmanageable:

- Episodes occur immediately after conflict or high pressure
- Eating is used to numb or distract from stress
- Temporary relief during eating followed by intense guilt
- Using food to quiet the mind after a demanding day

Isolation Pattern

Isolation strengthens behavioral cycles. Secrecy creates a space where the usual rules of your life don't seem to apply:

- Choosing to eat alone to avoid judgment
- Avoiding shared meals or social events involving food
- Withdrawing socially to hide the behavior
- Increased secrecy regarding what and when you eat

Pattern awareness allows you to interrupt the cycle at an earlier stage before the momentum becomes too high to stop.

Disclaimer: Life in Person provides peer support services and educational resources.

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Our programs are designed to share lived experience, practical strategies, and community connection, not to replace professional care.

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Personal Reflection

Which patterns do I recognise?

Describe what typically happens before, during, and after:

The most common time of day is:

The most common emotional trigger is:

The most common environmental trigger is:

Early Intervention Points

To change the outcome, you must change the input at an earlier stage. Select the specific adjustment that addresses your primary pattern.

- **Regular meal timing:** Establishing a baseline structure to eliminate physical urgency.
- **Reducing food rules:** Removing the moral labels that turn a single choice into a failure.
- **Addressing stress earlier:** Naming the pressure before you use food to numb it.
- **Increasing social contact:** Breaking the isolation that allows the cycle to remain invisible.
- **Planning evening structure:** Creating a specific transition for when your willpower is exhausted.
- **Preparing an alternative strategy:** Having a pre-decided action for when the thought first appears.

Specific adjustment I will try:

Notes

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