

Ultra brief interventions for eating behaviour and weight management

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The background of the slide is a light blue color with a repeating pattern of various fruits and leaves. The fruits include watermelon slices, papaya halves, lemons, and oranges. There are also green leaves and small white flowers scattered throughout. A large white cloud-like shape is in the center, containing the text.

Ultra brief interventions for eating behaviour and weight management

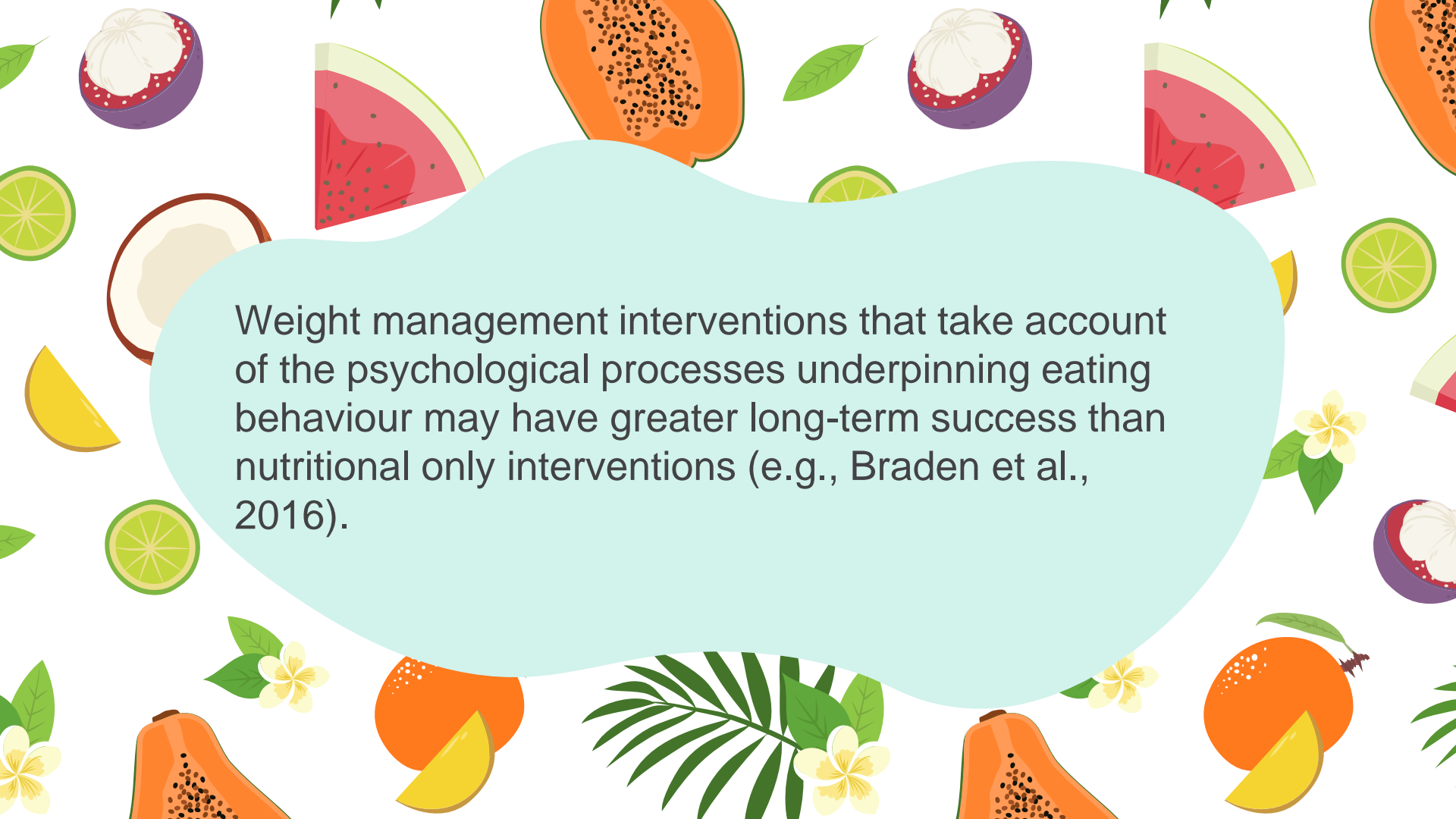
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The craving for the thing is rarely met by the satisfaction of getting it. And so we crave more. And the cycle repeats. We are encouraged to want what will only make us want more. We are, in short, encouraged to be addicts.

(Matt Haig, Notes on a Nervous Planet)

“Sometimes, being told not to do something just makes us want it all the more. Sometimes, a little of what you crave is better than total abstinence.” — Joanne Harris, The Strawberry Thief



Weight management interventions that take account of the psychological processes underpinning eating behaviour may have greater long-term success than nutritional only interventions (e.g., Braden et al., 2016).

Why ultra brief interventions are needed....



NHS strain
Augment traditional WM
Help with waiting list

The background of the slide is a light blue color with a repeating pattern of various tropical fruits and leaves. The fruits include slices of watermelon, papaya, orange, and lime, as well as whole coconuts and passion fruits. There are also green leaves and small white flowers scattered throughout the pattern.

Ultra brief interventions to address chocolate craving

Wendy Nicholls, Nick Hulbert-Williams, Sian Williamson,
Jivone Poonia & Lee Hulbert-Williams

[Close](#) ^

Ultra-brief non-expert-delivered defusion and acceptance exercises for food cravings: A partial replication study

[Lee Hulbert-Williams](#), [Nick J Hulbert-Williams](#), [Wendy Nicholls](#), more...

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Abstract

Food cravings are a common barrier to losing weight. This article presents a randomised comparison of non-expert group-delivered ultra-brief *defusion* and *acceptance* interventions against a distraction control. A total of 63 participants were asked to carry a bag of chocolates for a week while trying to resist the temptation to eat them. A behavioural rebound measure was administered. Each intervention outperformed control in respect of consumption, but not cravings. These techniques may have a place in the clinical management of food cravings. We provide tentative evidence that the mechanism of action is through decreased reactivity to cravings, not through reduced frequency of cravings.

- Aim: To compare interventions for food craving with a placebo control.
- Urge Surfing
- Defusion

Surfing the urge!

Usually, we deal with uncomfortable feelings by trying to control them. For example, we sometimes have a strong desire or craving to eat some chocolate. We might try all sorts of things to get rid of this unpleasant urge to eat chocolate. We might distract ourselves from the thought by going and doing some other activity. We might tell ourselves that we shouldn't or even that we'll have a better diet if we do eat chocolate. Or, we might eat something else hoping that the urge for chocolate will fade if we're no longer as hungry. We might even think of reasons why it's OK to eat chocolate right now so that you can give yourself permission to eat it. We often find that even giving in and eating the chocolate won't get rid of the urge completely. It's why we sometimes binge on chocolate!

All of these approaches share one common feature. They all assume that the best way to deal with the urge is to try to get rid of it or pay less attention to it. This is because we tend to deal with things the same way that we deal with external objects. If there is an annoying dog barking in the room, we can move the dog outside and get rid of the irritation. With thoughts, however, trying to get rid of them often makes them clearer, stronger and more persistent!

An alternative strategy is to 'accept' that the urge is there, that it's not easy to get rid of and that there might be another way to respond to it...

The exercise we did together aimed to help you practice accepting the uncomfortable feelings that come up when you have the urge to eat chocolate. Accepting uncomfortable feelings rather than trying to control them may help with situations in which you are trying to resist temptation.



Illustration of a tsunami designed by W. S. L. 1988

Page 1

Urge Surfing

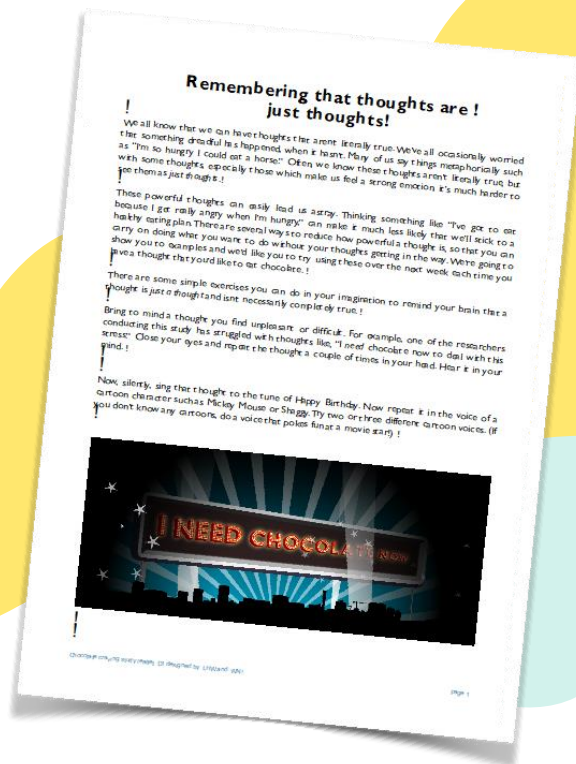
Challenging the idea that the best way to deal with an urge is to get rid of it or pay attention to it.

Mindful eating induction – followed by urge noticing.

Quick Exercise: Say it in a silly voice



"I need chocolate now to deal with this stress."



Procedure



N= 12 male and 51 female (total 63). BMI ranged from 17.2 to 40.7 (M=24.7, SD=5.1) and age from 18 to 47 (M=22.6, SD=6.4).

Initial

30 mins

Informed consent
Demographics & BMI

15 minute non-expert
delivered scripted
intervention

Days 1-7

Test Week

Asked to practice the
intervention (carry
chocolates)

Completed daily
chocolate eating diary

Used 'handout'
reminder of intervention

Study end

Follow up

Rebound test



	Defusion (n=20)		Urge Surfing (n=23)		Relaxation (n=20)	
	Mean	(SD)	Mean	(SD)	Mean	(SD)
BMI	24.19	(4.26)	26.02	(5.06)	23.69	(5.68)
Chocolate consumed (g)	192.58	(220.58)	306.53	(322.51)	212.58	(256.74)
Celebrations consumed	1.15	(2.28)	2	(3.71)	4.85	(5.30)
Post expt 'rebound'	.4	(.59)	.26	(.54)	1.45	(1.29)



	Defusion (n=20)		Urge Surfing (n=23)		Relaxation (n=20)	
	Mean	(SD)	Mean	(SD)	Mean	(SD)
BMI	24.19	(4.26)	26.02	(5.06)	23.69	(5.68)
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Celebrations consumed	1.15	(2.28)	2	(3.71)	4.85	(5.30)
Post expt 'rebound'						

There was a statistically significant contrast with respect to consumption of chocolates from the bag
($t_{60} = 3.06, p=.003$; $F_{2,60}=4.86, p=.01, \eta^2=.139$).



	Defusion (n=20)		Urge Surfing (n=23)		Relaxation (n=20)	
	Mean	(SD)	Mean	(SD)	Mean	(SD)
BMI	24.19	(4.26)	26.02	(5.06)	23.69	(5.68)
Chocolate consumed (g)	19.19	(4.26)	19.19	(5.06)	19.19	(5.68)
Celebrations consumed	1.19	(2.19)	1.19	(3.71)	1.19	(3.30)
Post expt 'rebound'	.4	(.59)	.26	(.54)	1.45	(1.29)

Similarly, the active intervention groups took less chocolate from the bowl at the end of the experiment ($t_{60}=3.45, p=.001$; $F_{2, 60}=6.08, p=.004, \eta^2=.17$).



	Defusion (n=20)		Urge Surfing (n=23)		Relaxation (n=20)	
	Mean	(SD)	Mean	(SD)	Mean	(SD)
BMI	24.19	(4.26)	26.02	(5.06)	23.69	(5.68)
Chocolate consumed (g)	192.5 8	(220.5 8)	306.5 3	(322.5 1)	212.5 8	(256.7 4)
Celebrations consumed	1.15	(2.28)	2.3	(3.71)	4.85	(5.30)
Post expt 'rebound'	.4					

There was not a statistically significant difference in general chocolate consumption during the week between the three groups ($t_{60}=.409$, $p=.684$; $F_{2,60}=.269$, $p=.77$, $\eta^2=.04$).



Conclusion

Brief (15-minute) contextual behavioural interventions taught by an inexperienced facilitator show promise in helping clients eat less chocolate in response to food cravings.

The background of the slide is a grey surface decorated with a repeating pattern of various tropical fruits and flowers. The fruits include slices of watermelon with red flesh and green rinds, halves of papaya showing orange flesh and black seeds, and slices of lime and orange. There are also whole coconuts, small white flowers with yellow centers, and green leaves scattered throughout. A large, white, cloud-like shape is centered on the slide, containing the title and authors' names.

Comparison of components based remote interventions for binge eating behaviour

Claire Cotterill, Manpal Bhogal, Niall Galbraith,
& Wendy Nicholls

To run targeted Acceptance and Commitment Therapy interventions and test whether these interventions reduce eating related difficulties and improve emotion regulation and psychological flexibility



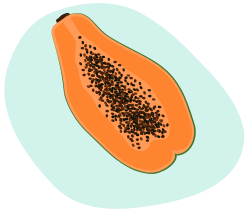
Each session included:

Didactically delivered ACT based therapy with supporting workbook

Individual experiential exercises

Pair work

Whole group discussion



Open up

Acceptance

Defusion



Wake up

Mindfulness

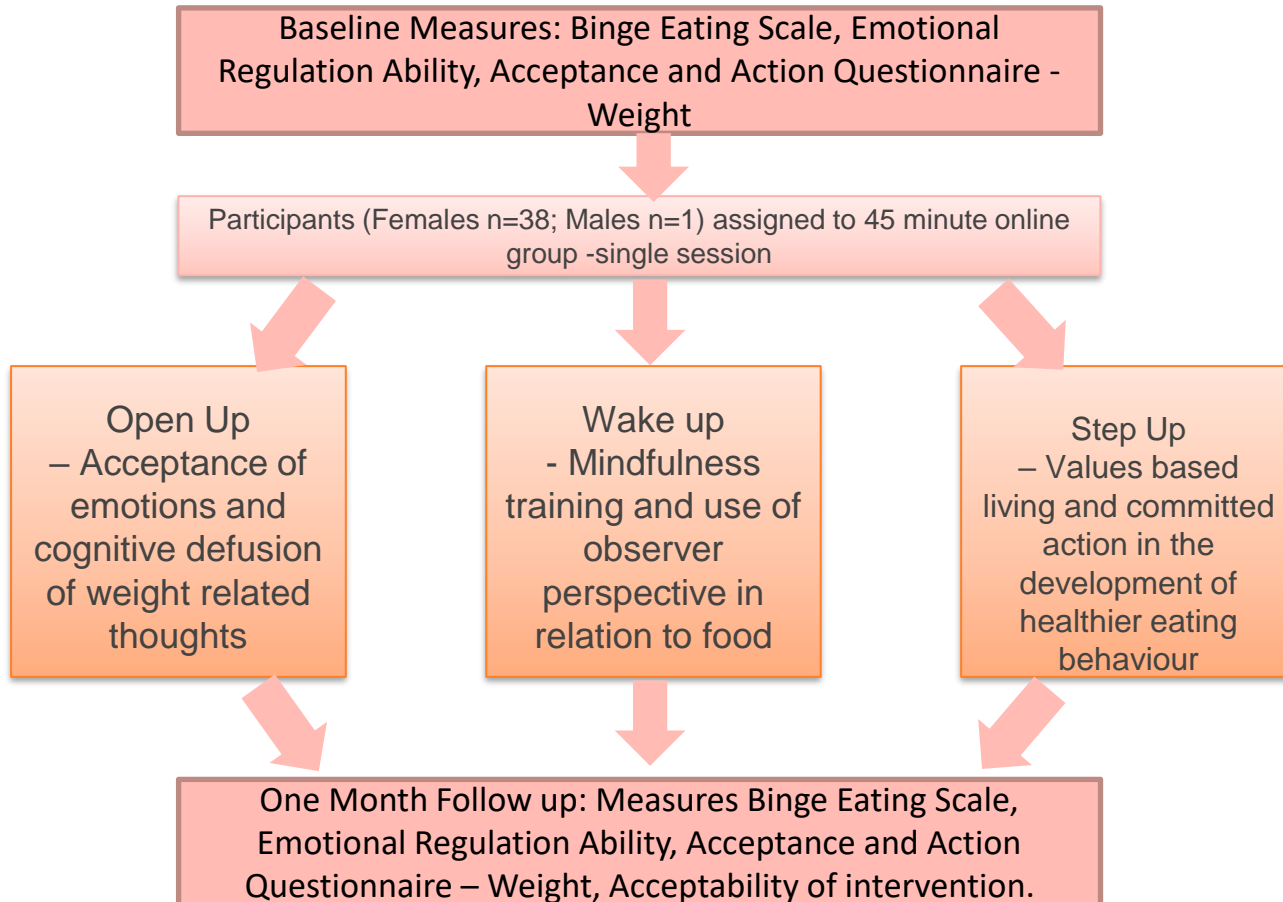
Self as context



Step up

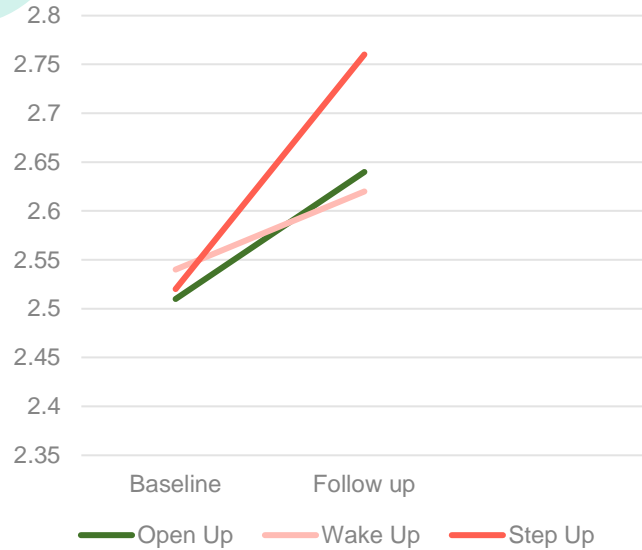
Values

Committed Action

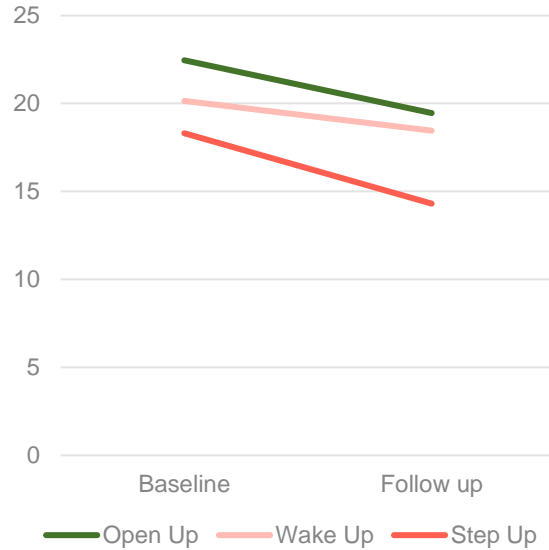


Results

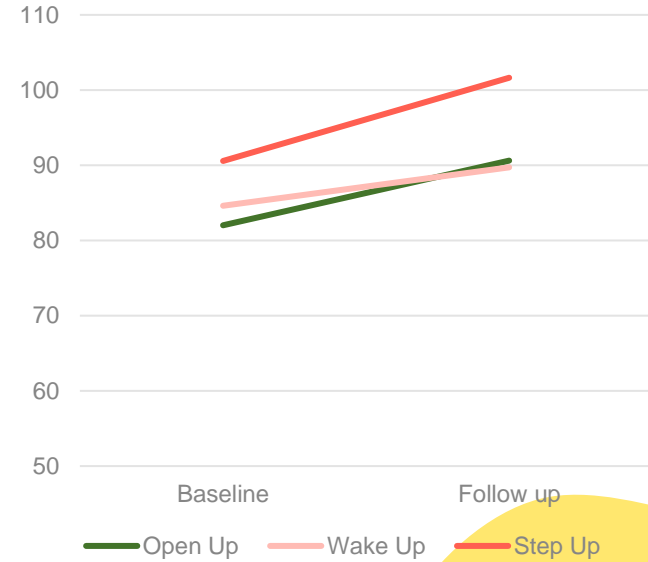
Emotional Regulation




Binge Eating Behaviour



Acceptance and Action





“It was a really precious hour for me, packed with new techniques and attitudes worth implementing in my life.”

“This newly found awareness will now help me work through some of the difficulties related not only to my eating habits, but other self-compassion-related issues”

Conclusions

- A one hour remotely delivered group intervention had significant benefit to this community sample who self identified as binge eating.
- Each component was equally as effective with reducing binge eating behaviour and increasing acceptance and action.
- No significant effect on emotion regulation was observed.

Next steps...

Single session intervention for eating behaviour (Schutt & Nicholls)

Remotely delivered *guided* self help vs pure self help (Pollard, Lloyd, Nicholls)

Remotely delivered & ultra brief targeted food craving interventions (Nicholls & Devonport)

Evaluation of remotely delivered weight management interventions in the NHS (Shepherd, Devonport, Lloyd, & Nicholls)



Thanks!

Thanks to co-authors mentioned above.

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