

The effects of stress on healthy eating.

Example research report – Qualitative study on the effects of stress on healthy eating.

Anonymous student.

68%

Comments throughout are in red and italics or added to specific parts at the side of the document. These are not exhaustive but are simply there to indicate where common errors are usually observed within research reports across the board.

Abstract

With the rise in obesity and the associated secondary health conditions, the promotion of healthy eating behaviours could play a vital role in tackling this issue. Therefore, identifying any inhibiting factors that could prevent healthy eating is of import. Stress is one such factor that research has shown has a negative effect (Fodor, et al., 2014; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Contrastingly there is also research that suggest eating healthy can have a positive influence on levels of stress. The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between stress and healthy eating, from the prospective of an individual own lived experience. Using thematic analyse to identify key superordinate themes of Time related stressors, Cost and reward, Circular reinforcement effects and knowledge and beliefs. The results of the analyse are discussed in relation to there effect on both stress and healthy eating along with limitations within this study.

Clear with useful detail and information provided.

Presentation is lovely.

Introduction

With over half the population (England) estimated as being overweight (67% of men and 60% of women) and the increase of developing other health conditions such as diabetes, cancer, heart disease and depression associated with weight gain (The National Health Service, 2020; World Health Organization, 2003) the promotion of a healthy diet is paramount. It is therefore important to understand any factors that may inhibit an individual to eat healthy.

One such factor that research has identified as having a negative relationship with healthy eating is that of stress. Stress can be described as the negative consequence of an individual's resources being exceeded cost/demands of a situation such as work demands outweighing an individual's ability to efficiently plan (Fodor, et al., 2014; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

With previous research also suggesting that higher levels of stress increases the consumption of unhealthy food (Conner, et al., 1999; Mouchacca, et al., 2013) research by Peciña, et al. (2006) found that in rats an increase in Corticotropin-releasing factor (CRF) in nucleus accumbens shell, (a response related to stress) increased the likelihood of binge eating. This is supported by Foster, et al. (2009) who additionally found that consumption of fat rich foods also reduces the response of the central stress response network during periods of stress. However, a study by Finch, et al. (2019) found no significant relationship between type of food in regard to stress reduction and only a correlation between an increase in food consumption with individuals who are external eaters. While there is also evidence healthy eating may reduce stress (Conner, et al., 2017; White, et al., 2013).

Commented [SC1]: Comment would have been made here
- Level 1 headings to be bold and centre justified (this is also the case for Method, Results, and Discussion)

Formatting of this section is good, but indentation of the first line of each new paragraph would have made the section stronger in terms of its formatting

However, the ecological validity of previous studies may could be , with the behaviours demonstrated under lab conditions, may not relating to actual lived behaviours. Therefore, the aim of this study is to ask the question of what effect stress has on healthy eating, from the prospective of an individual's own accounts.

Clear and appropriate literature included, and there is some critique present. Ensure spell check before submission.

Methods

Participants

The transcript of one female participant was used for this study, as only the transcript was provided to the researcher for analysis no other information on demographical or participant selection process is available.

Design

This study used a thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006), to code and identify superordinate themes in order to look at possible effects stress has on healthy eating of the individual lived experience.

Materials

The only material in this study used by the researcher was that of a transcript of the participant interview (see appendix A). However, it is reasonable to speculate that other materials were used during the interview/data collection stage. These at the lest should have included a brief/consent form and debrief form in accordance with British Psychological Society (BPS) code of human research ethics (2014), audio recording such as a dictaphone and a means of secure storage for data collection.

Procedure

Commented [SC2]: NOTE! This is the standard report structure for a method section - be aware that if you are asked to do Participants, Data Collection, and Data Analysis, you need to follow that structure.

Commented [SC3]: Level 2 headings - left justify and bold

Commented [SC4]: Combine Design, Materials and Procedure sections to form a Data Collection section

Commented [SC5]: A picky comment, but themes are not there to be 'found' - interpret would be a better term to use here

The researcher only had access to a transcribed of the interview and took no part in the procedure prior to the analysis. However, is aware that a procedure that comply with all the guidelines set out by the British Psychological Society (BPS 2014; 2018). That included a briefing and debriefing of the study, the acquisition of informed consent from the participant and insuring they understood their rights. While insuring minimal negative effect to their physical or psychological wellbeing and maintaining their dignity as a human being.

Method overall is clearly presented – some minor points to modify.

Results

*Note before you start reading this section – this is **very long!** For a level five report, your word limit is 2000 words, and this includes quotes!*

A thematic analysis was conducted on the interview transcript. In order identifier key superordinate themes (see appendix B for table of themes) relating to the subjects of both stress and healthy eating that became apparent with familiarity of the interview content.

Theme 1: Time related stressors

Looking through the data (*applying thematic analysis to the data...*) within Jennifer's transcript, one of the prominent themes is that of time related stressors. These time related narratives occur a total of 13 times throughout the transcript. This theme can further be divided into the sub-themes of work-related time demands and non-work-related demands.

Sub-theme 1.1: Work related demands

The most prevalent stressor and inhibitor to healthy eating Jennifer discussed was that of the demands her previous working life put on her ability to dedicate time towards successfully engaging with eating healthy

Commented [SC6]: For qualitative reports, a Data Analysis section would go at the end of the method section. In this section, you would explain what analysis has been conducted, and describe the stages of the analysis.

Commented [SC7]: For thematic analysis, we just call them 'themes' (superordinate fits more with IPA)

Commented [SC8]: A table of themes within the results section itself would be beneficial - you will always put your full table within the appendices, but it is good practice to summarise the main themes, sub-themes (and possibly a quote to illustrate the sub-themes) in a table within the results section.

“... working full-time defiantly took its toll on me in terms of, like, eating well and eating a balanced diet...” (pages 3-4, lines 65-66).

Quotes less than 40 words are to be included within the sentence. Excellent use of identifiers here (pages and lines).

With the one course of stress for Jennifer being a feeling that due to the amount pressures put on her from working full time leaving little time plan and implement healthy eating behaviours. Lending to unhealthy eating habits.

“...when I was working full-time I would just what I could when I could ,or wean I fancied. “ (page 3, line 61-62).

In contrast the way Jennifer talks about how her decision to reduce her levels of work to part-time only includes positive changes levels of stress she experiences. This in part can be attributed to an increased ability to plan out what she would eat and a deduction in stress related to time constraints.

“ I don’t stress out as much if I haven’t done something or don’t get time to do stuff because I tend to be able to do it!” (page 6, lines 132-133).

Sub-theme 1.2: Non work-related demands.

Even though work related demands on her time was the most abundantly discussed by Jennifer she also touches on some of the other demands that may also have a negative effect on her ability to maintain a healthy diet. With the opinion that healthy eating may be less of a priority than other demands such as family life.

“ If your stressing out about everything else then going home and cooking for however long is only gonna add to the stress, relay.” (pages 8-9, lines 180-181).

Healthy eating itself also requires a certain amount of time to be dedicated to it. This not only includes the time it take to consume the food, but it also put a demand on scheduling time for its preparation.

“ I think it is hard to be healthy every single day – it takes time to shop, prep, cook, all that.” (page 8, lines 176-177).

A strong section of analysis

Theme 2: Cost and reward

Although time related stressors are discussed the most by Jennifer, there are also other costs that may contribute to increase stress and contribute negatively to healthy eating. While in contrast other more rewarding influences may reduce stress and contribute positively towards eating healthily.

Sub-theme 2.1: Costs

Along with demand on time, Jennifer also discussed other costs that have the potential to increases the amount of stress are a direct consequence of healthy eating. These include an expense in physical energy or just monetary expense “ but if you’re constantly buying stuff to make ‘healthy’ meals then the cost adds up...” page 3, lines 53-54).

Furthermore, Jennifer discussed these in a way that suggests that the cost involved in maintaining a healthy diet, had to be less than the posibule benefits to it. This may be the waste of ingredients and there for money or the time and effort required. One such circumstance where this is not achieved discussed is wean Jenifer has to make health meals solely for herself. With her feeling the effort required is too much for just her own benefit. “... so it I don’t really feel like spending the time and effort on making a full healthy meal just for me.” (page 4, lines 79-80).

Sub-theme 2.2: Social rewards

Contrastingly to this feeling of the reward not justifying the cost for cooking herself a meal, Jennifer describes cooking for her whole family in positive terms. Furthermore, despite the potential increase in workload this may in tale, Jennifer's perception is that it is easier to do. This suggests that the social interaction involved is ether increasing her feeling of reward or decreasing the perceived costs of the workload.

"Cooking healthy meals for a group of people is a lot easier than just for yourself." (page 4, lines 77-78).

Additionally, this social interaction can provide a level of support and encouragement to maintain a healthy diet. Jennifer mentions how she finds both her son (who eats healthy himself) and her daughter company been of benefit in encouraging her to eat healthy. While also describing how it is more likely she would make healthy meal's wean cooking for the family.

"Or if you have to make a meals for the whole family you're more inclined to make a good healthy meal..." (page 4, lines 75-76).

Theme 3: Circular reinforcement effects

An overarching theme that emerged with familiarization of the text, was that of there being both a positive and a negative circular reinforcing effect.

Commented [SC9]: Was interpreted - themes do not emerge.

Sub-theme 3.1: Negative reinforcement

The negative reinforcement (*not the accurate terminology used here*) of not being able to maintain a healthy diet is the easier to identify, with Jenifer even referring to it as a "vicious circle" (page 6, line 112). This results from physiological and psychological feelings, such as feeling physically unhealthy/unattractive and emotions of guilt and remorse over not eating

healthily, lead to increases in stress levels and or lowering of self-esteem. This increase in stress in turn making it harder to maintain a healthy diet.

“you get caught up in life and the stress and woes of life, then let your eating habits slip, feel crap about it and get caught up in more stress!” (Page 6, line 112-114).

Sub-theme 3.2: positive reinforcement

There is also a suggestion that a opposite relationship resulting from positive benefits and a reduction in stress increased the likelihood of further healthy eating behaviours is also true.

“I found that the more I ate more healthy meals, the more I enjoyed it and the better I ended up felling about everything!” (page 7, lines 146-147).

Furthermore, Jennifer refers two some secondary effects from the strategies she adopted for improving her general health, have increased her enjoyment of healthy food.

“I can taste things better now I’m not smoking, too” (page 7, line 153).

Theme 4: knowledge and beliefs.

The last theme to be considered is the role in which Jennifer’s knowledge of healthy eating and her own beliefs play on both her ability to manage stress and healthy eating.

Sub-theme 4.1: Information vs beliefs

Throughout the transcript Jennifer shows an understanding of what may be referred to as the textbook definition. This includes eating five a day and getting right mineral’s, however this is mostly done in a fashion that suggest a desire to provide the correct response rather than being her own belief. This can be further seen on the occasions she talks about her own belief.

“ To me though, eating healthy means eating the things that I like to eat- but, like, in moderation” (page 2, lines 20-21)

This disparity between her own view of moderation and the more socially prescribed standards to healthy eating, has the potential to lead to some guilt over not eating healthy enough. This in turn many add to her stress and thus making it less likely to use more healthy eating behaviours.

“ not exactly a model healthy eater here [laugh]- no wonder my cholesterol crept up.”
(page 3, lines 63-64). – *insightful – good point*

Sub-theme 4.2: information given vs information self-acquired

There is also the consideration of the sources of the information and how it is obtained to consider. Whereas Jennifer talks about receiving professional information in a slightly negative way.

“ I mean the doctors were giving me all the lectures under the sun about calming down and eating right” (page 6, lines 129-130).

According to Jennifer the information she Sought out herself, was the most beneficial to here. This could be due increase of her locus of control over the situation, rather than someone else dictating what she should do.

“ Like being told I had high cholesterol didn’t mean me eating more healthy – it was the searching for information and speaking to other people- real people – about their experiences that helped me more.” (page 8, lines 165-166).

The lack of a table to signpost the section undermines the strength of the section. The conte in the main part, however, is good, and clear themes and sub-themes have been presented with supporting quotes. Your interpretations are good.

A few spelling errors throughout.

Some very good sections of analysis where themes have been introduced appropriately and sub-themes explained nicely.

Headings require accurate formatting ('Results' = centre justify and bold, Themes = Bold and left justify, sub-themes = bold, italics, and left justify).

Discussion

Summarise themes here before going on and discussing specific themes.

The results indicate that the main stressor that impeded adopting a healthier eating style being that of the participants job demands coupled with a preserved inability to plan. This supports Fodor, et al, (2014) who suggest that individuals with higher job demands and lower perceived resources are less likely to maintain healthy eating habits such as fruit consumption. This study also found that there may be a possible positive effect on healthy eating, due to a mediating effect social interaction has on levels of stress

There was also support previous research that showed both stress having a negative effect on healthy eating (Conner, et al, 1999; Mouchacca, et al, 2013) and that healthy eating can reduce stress (Conner, et al., 2017; White, et al., 2013). This suggests that the relationship may be bi-directional and also influenced by other factors

The results also suggest other factors such as the monetary cost of healthy eating may be a source of increased stress. While an individual's perception of control over the situation may have an influence on both stress and healthy eating. Previous research has found that individuals with an external locus of control experience more stress (Bollini, et al. 2004) and

that those with an internal locus of control are more likely to eat healthier (Cobb-Clark, et al. 2014).

However, it is important to note that themes found by this study are the subjective view of a single researcher, based on the transcript of the studies sole participant and other researchers may find differing themes. Further, research may benefit from extending the sample group and the use of thematic analysis from multiple reducers to identify more universally common themes, that may provide a more ecological valid view of the wider population.

To conclude the themes found during this study suggest that the relationship between stress and healthy eating behaviours is bi-directional. With positive eating behaviours helping to reduce stress, leading to the increased likelihood of future healthy eating behaviours being adopted. However, when non-healthy eating behaviours occur, stress levels may increase and with it the likelihood of further unhealthy eating occurring.

There is also the suggestion that the relationship between healthy eating may benefit from a more holistic approach in promoting stress reduction and a general healthy life style, with socialization, exercise and general reduction in unhealthy behaviours, all positively contributing to a reduction in stress and enjoyment in healthy eating.

Finally, a more control over the situation individual perceives also play an important part in their probability reducing stress and successfully increasing and maintaining healthy eating habits.

A strong discussion that relates your own interpretations to literature that has been included in the introduction. There are sources missing in your reference list, though.

References

good attempt – lacking any italicisation of book titles, journal names and volumes, however.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Thematic analysis of Jennifer's interview transcript.

Interview with Jennifer: The effects of stress on healthy eating

Key: Interviewer in bold ; Interviewee (Jennifer) in plain font			
	1	Do you have any questions before we begin?	
	2		
	3	Nope not at the moment.	
	4		
	5	Great. I'd also like to just reiterate that anything that you mention today that	
	6	could be traced back to identify you will be replaced with some	
	7	unidentifiable context - so if you do say the names of any members of your	
	8	family or friends I will just replace those with different names when writing	
	9	up this interview. Is that ok?	
	10		
	11	Yep that's fine.	
	12		
	13	So first of all, can you please describe to me what eating healthily means to	
	14	you?	
	15		Although able to give socio-

Learned Knowledge	16	Umm – the first thing that comes to my mind when I think of health eating is veg	acceptable answer, it seems to
	17	[laughs]. And fruit. I mean... that's not all is it – it's about eating a balanced diet	be more out of desire to provide
	18	and getting the correct amount of nutrients and stuff, isn't it? And minerals that	proper response
	19	your body needs to function properly... I think that's what eating healthy mainly	
	20	means. To me, though, eating healthy means eating the things that I like to eat –	Providing a more honest view of
Own belief	21	but, like, in moderation [laughs]. Not having takeaways every night. Home cooked	own beliefs as being less
	22	food I think is healthy, and you can be more aware of what is healthy and what	stringent and more about
Reward	23	you're eating when you're making it yourself, can't you? And cooking a good	moderation (discrepancy
	24	home cooked meal is always fun!	between the two could lead to
	25		guilt increasing stress)
	26	That's great, thank you. What would motivate you, or already does motivate	Finds cooking rewarding
	27	you, to eat healthily?	
	28		Belief there has to be some other
Own beliefs	29	Umm... I think you have to have a reason to want to eat healthy food all the time,	reason/motivation to wanting to
	30	don't you? Like if I wanted to lose weight... I'd eat healthy. Or at least more	eat healthy
Negative self-view	31	healthy than I do now. I think there has to be a reason – does anyone really just	My be feels guilt that dose not
	32	eat healthy all the time for no reason other than they like healthy food? [laughs]. I	eat as healthy as she could
External source of motivation	33	was diagnosed with high cholesterol a while back and I think that gave me a boot	Only started to think about her
	34	up the bum to sort my eating out. I didn't really think about the stuff I was eating	diet after health got bad.
	35	until I HAD to think about it – if that makes sense...	(External situation prompted the
	36		need to change behavior)
	37	Of course, and thank you for sharing that. Please remember to only share	
	38	information you are comfortable sharing.	

	39		
	40	Oh it's fine.	
	41		
	42	Ok, so what about factors that you feel may affect your ability to eat	
	43	healthily?	
	44		
Time demands (work/other)	45	Oh god, where do I start? I think time is a big thing – not just for me, but for people	The time demands it takes to do
	46	to eat healthily in general. I like cooking, but it takes time and effort. Sometimes	everything associated with
	47	people just don't have that time, do they? Not just to cook, but the shopping for	healthy eating may seem to grate
	48	ingredients and stuff to put in a healthy meal. You work all day and then have to	a challenge
	49	go to, say, Asda for shopping to make yourself some food – it's a pain really! I	It isn't only the time and effort
	50	think healthy food can be quite expensive, too. Like, if I buy a bag of salad – I	that is the only cost monetary
Negative costs	51	don't want to eat a whole bag of salad on a Tuesday evening [laughs] but then it	costs are also a negative factor
	52	tends to go to waste because I won't want it the day after either – the lettuce goes	(this may increase stress over
	53	a bit limp and lifeless! If you've got the stuff readily available then fab! But if you're	financial concerns). The fact that
	54	constantly buying stuff to make 'healthy' meals then the cost adds up, I think.	there may be a lot of waste if
	55		fresh food is not used quickly
	56	So, can you describe to me a specific time in your life that you have felt	enough may also have a negative
	57	unable to maintain eating healthily?	effect on how she feels towards
	58		healthy eating.
Time demands (work)	59	When I was working full-time I definitely found it a bit more difficult. I'm only	Moving from full to part-time
	60	working part-time now and am here in the evenings so I can sort of plan what to	has had beneficial effect with
	61	eat and that – but when I was working full-time I would just grab what I could when	more time to plan (could be due
Convenience			to either less time related
			demands from work or reduction
			in work reducing general stress
			levels.
			More prone to opportunities of
			convenience while time
			demands are high. (may also

Negative self-view	62 63 64	I could, or when I fancied it. I worked in a restaurant for a while, too, so I'd be stuffing myself with chips in my break or at the end of a shift – not exactly a model healthy eater here [laughs] – no wonder my cholesterol crept up. Yeah, that sort of	have increase in snacking do to radially availability of snacks) Possible self-derogatory comment due to guilt about not eating healthy
Time demands (work)	65 66 67	life circumstance of working full-time definitely took its toll on me in terms of, like, eating well and eating a balanced diet, do you get what I mean?	Sees working full time as a having most negative effect
	68 69	Of course, I can completely understand that feeling.	
Positive effect of social interaction (reward)	70 71 72	I think as well that family situations can influence you to eat healthy. My son was a bit of a nut when it came to healthy eating and that, and when he lived here he'd be cooking his chicken and rice [laughs] and I'd think actually that smells nice, or it	Possible that encouragement or just even participation by someone, may offer support and increases the chance of healthy eating.
	73 74 75	looks nice and I'd be quite happy eating that. But I'd never sit there in the afternoon and think – well, tonight I'm going to rustle up a hearty meal of chicken and rice! That just wasn't me [laughs]. Or if you have to make a meal for the whole	The social reward from cooking for cooking may chance perception of cost vs reward even thought amount of work should of increased.
Reward	76 77	family, you're more inclined to make a good healthy meal than chips or something, aren't you? Cooking healthy meals for a group of people is a lot easier than just for yourself. Like my son has moved out now, and my husband tends to work late	Contritely cost in effort and time may seem less rewarding wean alone and more likely to relay on convenience
Cost/ Negative self-view	78 79 80	at night – so I don't really feel like spending the time and effort on making a full healthy meal just for me! So it tends to be 'if-its' for tea for me most nights – if it's there I'll have it! If it's not I won't [laughs]. I'm better at having healthy stuff in the	Time demands make it difficult to find the time nesacery to shop for healthy food all the time
Time demands (other)	81 82 83	house most of the time now, though, than I used to be. It's just difficult to maintain that all the time, I think.	
	84		

	85	That's really informative, thank you. What role do you think, then, that stress	
	86	would have on your ability to eat healthily?	
	87		
Time demands (work)	88	I'd say stress has such a big impact on most things in life! Like I said, I found it	Time demands from working
	89	difficult to maintain a healthy eating pattern when I was working full-time and most	coursed stress that in turn made
	90	of that was probably down to stress, if I'm honest. People have got so much going	eating healthy more difficult.
(other)	91	on these days, haven't they? Kids and husbands and life things that they have to	Time demands from other
Learned Knowledge	92	deal with – on top of work – the last thing I, in particular, wanna do is stress myself	sources also add to the stress
(time demands)	93	out about eating healthy foods or making sure I have my five-a-day as well! When	Dose not think that maintaining
External source of	94	I had that health scare a couple of years ago – cholesterol and what not – that	socially acceptable idea of
motivation	95	scared me a bit into eating healthy foods. But it was more a wake-up call for me in	healthy eating is worth the stress
Time demands (all)	96	terms of, like, I'm stressing myself out with the other rubbish in my life and I'm not	it may course.
	97	making time for myself to be healthy. Do you get what I mean?	Initially scared in to eating
	98		healthy by circumstance
	99	Of course, thank you so much for sharing that. Please only share things that	Does not feel like she is able to
	100	you are comfortable with though.	give herself a acquit amount of
	101		time to look after herself do to
Time demands (work)	102	No it's fine, it really did have an impact. That's why I decided to go part-time, you	demands placed on her.
Reward?	103	know? What's the point in stressing out over work – I can put my unused stress	This lead to decision to reduce
	104	into my kids or something then! [laughs].	the demands and the for the
	105		related stress that working full
	106	Can you explain how you feel in general when you can't eat healthily?	time coursed.
	107		Feels that the reduction in stress
			may also benefit relationship
			with her kids.

Circular effect (negative)/costs	108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115	It makes you feel like crap really. Sluggish and that – if you're constantly guzzling sweets or eating chips then you just feel dumpy and down. And spotty! [laughs]. But then you have, like, that added pressure of thinking oh great, now I look a mess as well as being a stressed out idiot so you have more stress about how to change that then! I think it's a vicious circle, to be honest – you get caught up in life and the stresses and woes of life, then let your eating habits slip, feel crap about it, and get caught up in more stress!	Feels that the more negative outcomes of not eating healthy that there are, the more negative emotions and thoughts occur. This in turn leads to more stress less likelihood of eating healthy in a repetitive pattern of behavior.
Own beliefs (self-motivation)	116 117 118 119 120	So when you get stressed, what strategies, if any, do you attempt to put in place to attempt to manage that stress? I never really used to do anything, but I'm getting on a bit now and I realise that stress just isn't good for me – never mind the bloody healthy eating! I like to walk my dogs if I get stressed – just to get out in the fresh air and have some peace.	
Time demands (self-care)	121 122 123 124 125	you know? Get away from the kids answering me back [laughs] – dogs don't do that! There's something I find really relaxing about a good walk with the dogs, to the park or to the beach or something.	Possibly developed her own reason, justification and/or motivation to look after health. Making time for herself to combat stress
Reward (not healthy eating related)	126 127 128 129 130	Did you attempt any strategies when you had your health scare, specifically? Oh god, yeah, I mean the doctors were giving me all the lectures under the sun about calming down and eating right [laughs]. Making the decision to stop working	Walking the dog not only relaxing but enjoyable (added benefit of exercise to)
Learned Knowledge (locus of control)			Slightly derogatory reference to how doctor imparts knowledge and advice.
Own beliefs (locus of control)			Self-decided to reduce work.

control)	131	full-time was a massive benefit to me personally. I just found it was too much, and	She feels the reduction in work
Time demands (work)	132	I'm much better off now than I was – I don't stress out as much if I haven't done	and there for the demands placed
	133	something or don't have the time to do stuff because I tend to just be able to do it!	by it has greatly reduced her
	134	I started, like, getting involved with support groups as well. Just online looking for	stress and improved her ability
	135	information, really, more than anything – I never went and actually sat in a support	to plan/do other tasks.
Own beliefs (locus of control)	136	group setting thing but I found that being online really helped. All the causes of	More willing to act on the
	137	high cholesterol were things that, like, I never really considered. I used to smoke,	information she has obtained by
	138	and quite a fair amount of fags per day if I'm honest! But I was smoking when I	herself.
Time demands	139	was stressed, and then I found out that smoking can increase your risk then of	
	140	high cholesterol. So I cut my hours in work, switched from fags to a vape pen and	Multiple strategies to generally
Wider beneficial changes	141	that. My stress levels started to go down and I found I didn't really need the vape	reducing stress and increasing
	142	pen anymore – so I just stopped that. I didn't feel like I needed it for any reason – I	all round health. (may be a more
	143	never really felt like that before, I always wanted a fag for some relief! I wasn't	holistic approach to all round
	144	getting worked up about things I would have been annoyed about before, anyway.	health would be more beneficial
Time demands (work)	145	Then it was the diet thing – that came easier as well because I wasn't working	for increasing healthy eating)
	146	such stupid hours and I found that the more I ate more healthy meals, the more I	
Circular effect (Positive)	147	enjoyed it and the better I ended up feeling about everything! So that sort of, in a	She feels reduced work
	148	way I suppose, helped my stress levels too!	improved her diet
	149		Positive results from healthy
	150	So would you say, then, that these strategies have allowed you to eat more	eating increases overall
	151	healthily?	wellbeing and reduces stress in
	152		turn leading to more enjoyment
Rewards	153	I think so, yeah. I can taste things better now I'm not smoking, too [laughs].	out of eating healthy (increase in
			healthy eating habits?)
			Secondary benefits from one of
			the wider health improving

Wider beneficial changes Rewards/ Circular effect (Positive) Rewards Positive effect of social interaction Circular effect (Positive) Learned Knowledge Own beliefs (locus of control) Own beliefs	154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176	Doesn't sound like much but it was a welcome change for me to taste good food and not just be eating for the sake of having a meal! If I went out with the dogs, as well, I'd find that I worked up an appetite and I didn't want crap food then. I wanted to spend some time cooking and making a nice healthy meal – whether that was a nice prawn cocktail or a salad or something. My eldest daughter, Sarah, comes with me sometimes as well. For a walk. And then she will stay and have tea with me and even that is a help because I'm not just cooking for me then – I have to cater to her standards as well! [laughs]. I don't necessarily think it's the things that I've put in place to reduce my stress and all that – I think what's helped me eat better overall is, like, the outcomes of those strategies. Does that make sense? Like being told I had high cholesterol didn't mean me eat more healthy – it was the searching for information and speaking to other people – real people – about their experiences that helped me more. That's lovely, thank you. Now finally just one last question to wrap this all up - if I was to ask you to give one piece of advice to someone who wanted to try and eat more healthily, what would it be? Well, the practical things – think about your own health! That's basically it, isn't it? I don't think people are generally awful at eating or maintaining a healthy diet, it's just other stuff gets in the way sometimes and either forces you to reconsider your eating or makes you think about the reasons why you do eat like that. It was certainly that way for me, anyway. I think it is hard to be healthy every single day –	strategies increasing enjoyment of food. And increased appetite for healthier food. While exercise would increase appetite overall. Believes that there is a encouragement to make healthier food wean daughter joins her She thinks the overall positive out comes rather than just the reduction in stress that enabled her to eat healthier (more of a holistic approach to all round health) Being told to eat healthy did not actually have the desired effect The information she acquired herself had more of an effect in changing her habits Own view of moderation that it may not be possible or the effort to maintain healthy eating is not always possible to the level that is socially considered healthy eating and its not until something happens to propped people in to thinking about it that they spend the time and
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Time demands	177	it takes time to shop, prep, cook, all that... but one takeaway in the week isn't	resources on the subject.
Circular effect	178	going to be a massive deal! And try to manage everything else going on in your	She feels trying to manage other
(negative)	179	life so that you don't have to put so much effort into eating well. If you're stressing	demands decreases the amount
	180	out about everything else then the thought of going home and cooking for	off effort needed to eat healthy
	181	however long is only gonna add to that stress, really.	Were if your stressed by other
	182		things this only increases the
	183	Ok that's great - thank you so much for your time Jennifer... is there	stress related to the effort of
	184	anything else that you would like to ask me or tell me about before we end	eating healthy
	185	the interview?	
	186		
	187	No I don't think so...	
	188		
	189	Ok, great. Thank you again.	

Appendix B: Table of Theme

Themes identified through thematic analysis

Superordinate theme	Description of content of superordinate-theme	Quote
Time related stressors	This theme discuss the topic of time demands that may act as stressors. This is then further divided in to two sub theme that of Work-related demands and Non work-related demands.	“... working full-time defiantly took its toll on me in terms of, like, eating well and eating a balanced diet...” (pages 3-4, lines 65-66). “ I don’t stress out as much if I haven’t done something or don’t get time to do stuff because I tend to be able to do it!” (page 6, lines 132-133). “ If your stressing out about everything else then going home and cooking for however long is only gonna add to the stress, relay.” (pages 8-9, lines 180-181). “ I think it is hard to be healthy every single day – it takes time to shop, prep, cook, all that.” (page 8, lines 176-177).
Cost and reward	The second theme to be discussed concerns potential inhibiting and encouraging factors and the relationship between them. This is look at within the two sub-themes of costs, while the second sub theme looks at the potential positive effect socialization may play	“ but if you’re constantly buying stuff to make ‘healthy’ meals then the cost adds up...” page 3, lines 53-54). “... so it I don’t really feel like spending the time and effort on making a full healthy meal just for me.” (page 4, lines 79-80). “ Cooking healthy meals for a group of people is a lot easier than just for yourself.” (page 4, lines 77-78). "Or if you have to make a meals for the whole family you’re more inclined to make a good healthy meal...” (page 4, lines 75-76).
Circular reinforcement effects	This theme looks at the possibility of a reinforcing effect positive and negative outcomes may play. With the first sub-theme looking at the negative reinforcement unhealthy eating habits and higher stress	“vicious circle” (page 6, line 112). “ you get caught up in life and the stress and woes of life, then let your eating habits slip, feel crap about it and get caught up in more stress!” (Page 6, line 112-114). “I found that the more I ate more healthy meals, the more I enjoyed it and the

	have. While the second sub-theme looks at the possible positive reinforcing effect healthy eating can create.	better I ended up felling about everything!” (page 7, lines 146-147). “I can taste things better now I’m not smoking, too” (page 7, line 153).
Knowledge and beliefs.	The last theme to be discussed is that of how the relationship between knowledge and information imparted by others, compared to with more internal beliefs and motives effect both stress and healthy eating.	“ To me though, eating healthy means eating the things that I like to eat- but, like, in moderation” (page 2, lines 20-21). “ not exactly a model healthy eater here [laugh]- no wonder my cholesterol crept up.” (page 3, lines 63-64). “ I mean the doctors were giving me all the lectures under the sun about calming down and eating right” (page 6, lines 129-130). “ Like being told I had high cholesterol didn’t mean me eating more healthy – it was the searching for information and speaking to other people- real people – about their experiences that helped me more.” (page 8, lines 165-166).
