3.01 Healthy People: promoting health and preventing disease - Obesity

Sarah ages 25 has a BMI of 32 and has come to discuss this.

Provide: When we measured your height and weight we calculated a ratio called the body mass index (BMI). A healthy BMI should be between 18.5 and 25. Yours is higher than it should be to stay healthy – it puts you in the obese category.

Elicit: How do you feel about this?

Sarah: I know I'm heavier than I used to be. It's just piled on gradually over a couple of years. I would like to lose it.

Provide: Weight is a very personal and sensitive issue for most people. There are lots of factors at play that affect a person's weight and this can often include your emotional health, your routine, your lifestyle choices, your work and family habits. Obesity increases the risk of diabetes, joint and back pain, poor fertility, high blood pressure and heart disease. It reduces life expectancy by 7 years.

Elicit: Does any of that resonate with yourself?

Sarah: Yes I suppose it does. I have a really busy life juggling my kids and work and I often just grab things on the go. I think I also comfort eat when I'm stressed. But I hadn't realised it can have so many health risks.

Provide: That's very common for a lot of people. There are several things you can do to help gradually reduce your BMI to the healthy range. Think about portion sizes and low GI foods. I will give you some written information on this to read later. Try to get at least 30 minutes of exercise 5 days a week. Start gradually and build it up slowly. Drink plenty of water through the day. Don't forget about the calories in alcohol and soft drinks. If you feel you're comfort eating, have a think about whether you would like to explore your emotional health further through talking therapy. Mindfulness is a very useful tool to apply here, especially when eating. We can discuss this further in future if you wish.