

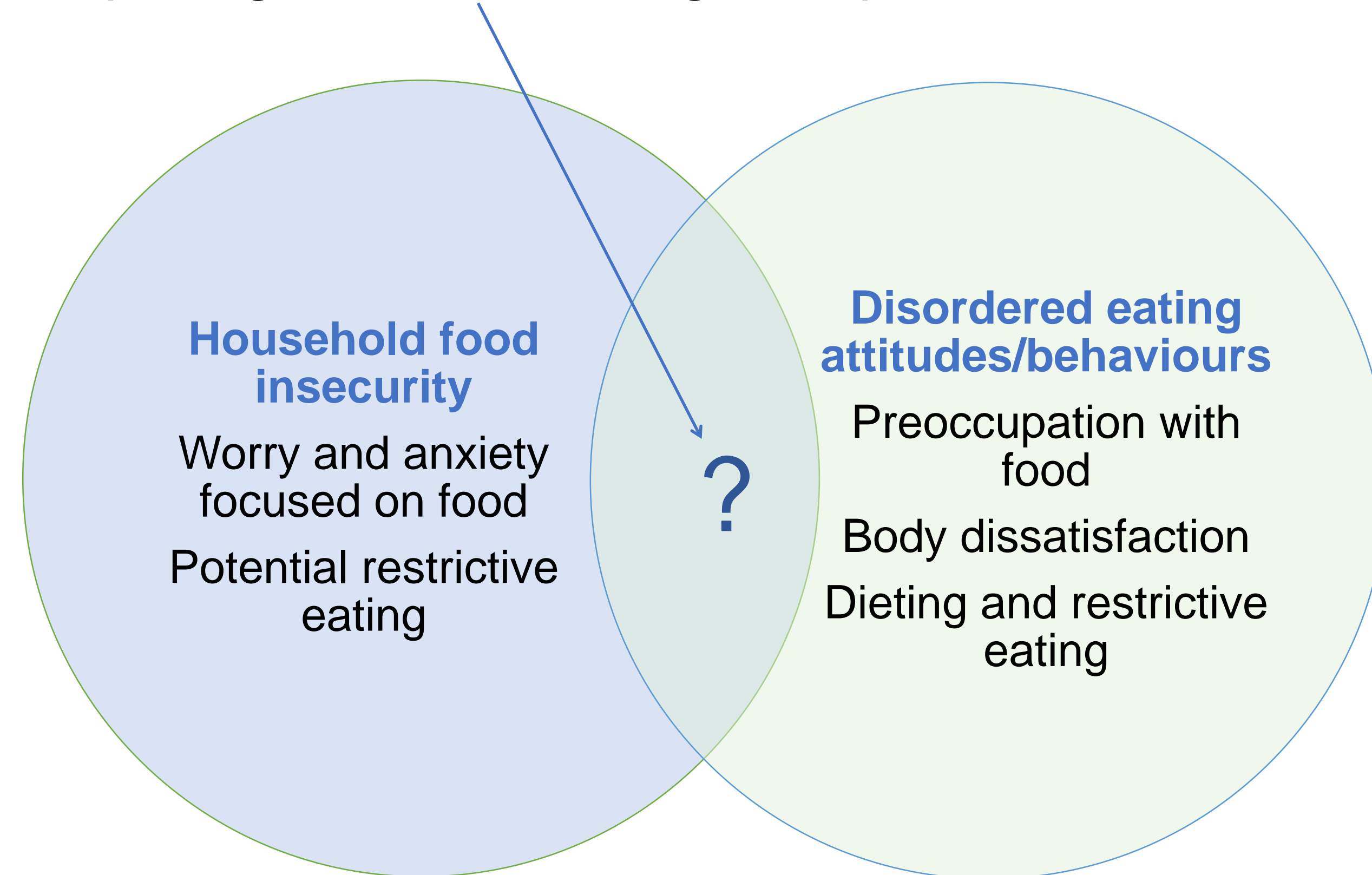
# Examining interrelations between food insecurity and disordered eating behaviours and attitudes among urban dwelling young Canadian adults

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## BACKGROUND

- Food insecurity and disordered eating are each prevalent among young adults
- Both encompass worry or anxiety focused on food and, depending on severity, restrictions in food intake; however, links between the two are under-researched, posing a barrier to integrated prevention efforts



- **Food insecurity:** inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints



- In 2012, 13% of Canadian households experienced food insecurity
- **Young adults may be overrepresented**
  - Almost 1 in 3 young adults aged 16 to 30 years recruited from five urban centres across Canada in 2016 reported indicators of household food insecurity
  - High rates of food insecurity have been reported among post-secondary students

- **Disordered eating:** refers to the regular engagement of unhealthy eating and weight-control behaviours such as dieting, bingeing and purging, as well as unhealthy attitudes about one's body
  - Studies suggest that approximately 25-50% of young adults report indications of disordered eating
  - Among US adults who visited food pantries, those reporting the most severe food insecurity were more likely to report indicators of eating disorders, including binge eating and dietary restraint

## OBJECTIVES

To examine:

- The co-occurrence of food insecurity and disordered eating attitudes and behaviours among young Canadian adults
- Whether experiences of food insecurity predict disordered eating attitudes and behaviours three years later

## METHODS

- We will draw upon the Canada Food Study, which is following young adults (16-30 years) from five urban centres across Canada, 2016-2019
  - Longitudinal sample at year 2, n=~1,000
  - Food insecurity measured using Household Food Security Survey Module, adopted from Canadian Community Health Survey
  - Disordered eating behaviours and attitudes measured include binge eating, emotional eating, body dissatisfaction, and weight preoccupation

## METHODS *continued*

- At baseline, prevalence rates for food insecurity and disordered eating attitudes and behaviours, and their co-occurrence, will be generated
- Longitudinal multilevel models will be used to examine whether food insecurity is associated with changes in eating disorder pathology over a three year period
  - Subgroup analyses will examine differences by socio-demographic factors (e.g., age, sex, income, experiences of weight stigma)

## IMPLICATIONS

- Rates of food insecurity and disordered eating behaviours among young adults are alarming
- Food insecurity has been associated with worrisome mental health outcomes, including depression and suicidal ideation, among adolescents and adults
  - It is not known whether eating disorder pathology might mediate this relationship
- The two public health issues are currently addressed in isolation, but the application of a systems lens may inform integrated strategies to address shared risk factors and reduce the negative outcomes of both

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