The Food and Mood Project
Do-It-Yourself Food and Mood Workshop

guide for workshop leaders

Amanda Geary BSC(HONS) PGCE MSC
The Food and Mood Project
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>About this workshop</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop overview</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What you will need</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading the workshop</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breathing exercise</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introducing the workshop</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working together as a group</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What to do</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group exercise: Find someone who...</td>
<td>11–32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection and action planning</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and Mood resources</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About The Food and Mood Project</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photocopiable pages</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group exercise: Find someone who...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic worksheets 1–10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handout: Action planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop feedback sheet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop leader's feedback</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
About this workshop

This workshop has been produced to enable communication between groups of individuals wishing to start to explore the relationship between what they eat and how they feel. Developed from the work of The Food and Mood Project, this successful workshop has been tried and tested around the UK with groups of different sizes and of various ages and abilities.

There is no need to have any specialist knowledge of diet or nutrition to take part in, or lead, this workshop. All that is required is a willingness to explore the idea that food can affect mood.

This workshop can be used as a one-off session or as the start of an on-going ‘Food and Mood’ support and/or study group.

Workshop aim

The aim of this introductory workshop is to introduce the idea that what we eat can affect how we feel, emotionally and mentally as well as physically.

This workshop starts to explore:

• the group’s knowledge of healthy eating guidelines
• the group’s experience of making dietary changes
• the group’s awareness of the food-mood connection.

Workshop approach

This workshop is participative and provides an opportunity for group members to share their knowledge and experiences. The group process can serve to clarify an individual's thinking on a topic as well as provide useful information of benefit to other group members.

This workshop can also function as an effective ‘icebreaker’ for an on-going group because it enables people to circulate and to ask each other questions.
Workshop overview

This workshop takes one to two hours to complete, depending on the needs and interests of the group. It is recommended that a break is scheduled about half way through for workshops that are planned to be more than an hour long.

This workshop starts with a group exercise using the group exercise worksheet provided. This is followed by a facilitated discussion based on the findings from the worksheet exercise. The following pages contain suggested questions aimed at drawing out the knowledge, experience and awareness of the group members.

It may be helpful to record some of the discussion on flipchart paper to map what has been talked about and also to refer if planning changes for the future. Suggested areas to focus on when recording the discussion include:

- tips to help people change
- blocks that prevent people from changing

For example, a ‘tip to help people change’ that could emerge from the discussion about the recommendation to ‘drink 8 glasses of water daily’, may be ‘I always carry a bottle of water with me’. A ‘block’ to changing in this way may be ‘I don’t feel thirsty’.

It can help if the ‘tips’ and the ‘blocks’ are recorded on separate sheets of paper and it may be easier if one person is responsible for each sheet. If flipcharts are used then the group can see the notes evolve and their contributions recorded as discussion progresses.

Back-up information is also provided for each topic and this can be used to check that the discussion has covered this information, or it could be read aloud to the group. The same information is in the topic worksheets which can be photocopied and given to group participants.

The workshop has been structured to link to the Food and Mood Try this postcards and posters. *The Food and Mood Poster* presents a summary of the ten topic areas.
What you will need

**Essential**

- A room that is big enough to contain a circle, or ‘horseshoe’ arrangement of chairs.
- A copy of the group exercise worksheet and a pen for each person.
- Name labels for each person.
- Someone to lead the workshop.

**Optional**

- A set of topic worksheets for each person
- Flipchart paper and pens
- One or two people to make notes on the flipchart paper
- A copy/copies* of *The Food and Mood Handbook* by Amanda Geary
- A copy/copies* of *The Food and Mood Poster* and *Try this* postcards and posters
- A copy/copies* of *The Mind Guide to Food and Mood*

*If you wish to purchase multiple copies for group members then please contact The Food and Mood Project for details of discounts available.*
Leading the workshop

When deciding who should lead the workshop, group facilitation skills or ability are considered more important than a nutritional background.

This is because the workshop is intended to be facilitated in a person-centered, participatory, style. This means that much of the information, experience and expertise will be coming from the group members. So, the workshop leader’s style needs to be geared towards helping group members to listen and learn from each other, and to start thinking for themselves.

The workshop leader can provide an example of how it is possible to learn from the other group members and by referring to other sources of information such as *The Food and Mood Handbook*, *The Food and Mood Poster*, the *Try this* postcards and posters and *The Mind Guide to Food and Mood*.

For on-going groups, each of the topics covered in this workshop can be developed into individual study sessions, perhaps by using the more detailed information and exercises in *The Food and Mood Handbook*. 
Breathing exercise

It can be beneficial to start the workshop with a short breathing exercise, such as the one found on pages 210-211 of *The Food and Mood Handbook*, which should take no more than 10 minutes.

Starting the workshop in this way provides a space for people to settle their bodies and minds into the workshop situation. It also provides time for any latecomers to arrive and sit down.

This breathing exercise is relevant to the exploration of food and mood because eating, breathing and feeling are all intimately connected. Indeed, many symptoms such as anxiety, depression, irritability and fatigue may have as much to do with the way someone is breathing as with what they are eating. Also, if someone is stressed whilst they are eating their body will not be able to digest the food and absorb the nutrients as efficiently. Breathing gently and deeply into the abdomen massages the digestive system and further helps the digestive process.

Further information on this topic can be found on pages 210-211 of *The Food and Mood Handbook*. 
Introducing the workshop

The following are some pointers for the workshop leader on how to introduce the workshop:

• You are recommended to start and finish the workshop as close as possible to the scheduled times.

• Start by welcoming the group and thanking them for coming.

• Briefly introduce yourself.

• Invite the group members to introduce themselves by a quick ‘round’ where each person says their name. (This ‘round’ can be extended so that each person includes information on where they have come from, or why they have come, or their favourite food – but take care that this ‘icebreaker’ doesn’t take more than 5-10 minutes.)

• Explain housekeeping details such as the timing of breaks, location of toilets and kitchen facilities (if appropriate), restrictions on smoking, location of fire exits and fire evacuation procedure.

• Explain the aim of the workshop and give a brief overview of what the participants can expect. (See About this workshop on page 2 and Workshop overview on page 3.)
Working together as a group

The workshop leader is recommended to begin by outlining the following guidelines for working together as a group. Then, she/he will need to check that the group is prepared to agree to them, or if they need to be amended in any way.

Sharing
There is absolutely no obligation for group members to share personal information or to contribute information if they prefer not to. However, the workshop does provide an opportunity for group members to learn from each other so any personal experiences that can be shared, and are relevant to the topics covered, will be very welcome.

Confidentiality
Any personal information shared within the group is strictly not for sharing outside of this group.

Valuing
Group members are asked to express a non-judgemental attitude towards other group members, respecting each other’s different beliefs, traditions, values, experiences and personal circumstances.
What to do

1. Before handing out the group exercise worksheet, read aloud the instructions that are on the worksheet. (If you read this out while the worksheets are being handed out people may not be able to give you their full attention).

2. Explain: ‘when people find someone who can answer ‘yes’ to one of the questions, you may like to ask them briefly about their experience – if they want to talk about it.’

3. Explain that you are going to allow (about) 10 mins for this exercise and then you’ll ask everyone to reform into one big group again.

4. Make sure everyone has a pen.

5. Hand out the group exercise worksheets.

6. Ask if everyone has understood what they need to do or if there are any questions.

7. Ask everyone to stand up together, and then ask them to start the exercise.

8. [OPTIONAL] Prepare to record the later discussion by setting up the flipchart paper and pens.

9. If you listen to the group talking it will be easy to judge when most people have had enough time on this exercise. Then, one or two minutes before calling ‘time up’ call out a ‘one/two minute warning’ that the exercise is nearly finished. Then, when the time is up, call for everyone to sit down again as one group.

10. [OPTIONAL] Give each person a set of topic worksheets. Explain that these will provide a summary of the discussion for them to read at home. Explain that each worksheet has an optional action planning section which may be completed at the end of the discussion or at home.

11. [OPTIONAL] Before going through the ‘answers’, ask for two volunteers: one to record any tips to help people change, and the other to record any blocks that prevent people from changing that may come up in the discussion. Each of these people need to have a sheet of flipchart paper and flipchart pen.

12. Taking each question on the worksheet in turn, ask who in the group had been able to answer ‘yes’. Ask these people if they’d like to say anything more about their experience on this topic. If they are willing to share further, then the questions on the following pages can be used to draw out their knowledge and experience. (If no-one has answered yes then you can skip to asking the whole group the questions listed for the ‘rest of the group’.)

13. Open out the discussion using the questions listed for the ‘rest of the group’.

14. If you are using the flipcharts to record the discussion, ask the group for suggestions to help the people who are recording the ‘tips’ and ‘blocks’ for each topic.
GROUP EXERCISE

FIND SOMEONE WHO...
TOPIC 1: WATER
FIND SOMEONE WHO REALLY DOES DRINK SOME WATER EVERY DAY

80% of people using dietary self-help said ‘drinking more water’ was beneficial to their mental and emotional health. Source: The Food and Mood Survey

---

Do you drink some water every day?

Questions to ask group members who answered ‘yes’
1. What helps you to do this?
2. How does this make you feel?
3. What advice would you give to people who find it difficult to drink more water?

[Collect/record tips for drinking more water]

Questions to ask the rest of the group
1. What stops you from drinking more water?

[Collect/record blocks to drinking more water]

‘The easiest change for me was drinking more water in the morning – it costs nothing, takes no time to prepare and helps me start the day off well.’
Food and Mood Survey participant

---

WHY TRY THIS?

The problem
Dehydration affects your ability to think clearly and to concentrate.

The clues
A sign of dehydration is urine that is dark-coloured and smelly. The thirst sensation may not be triggered until dehydration is well established, and the feeling of thirst can become desensitised if habitually ignored.

TRY THIS
Drink 1.5-2 litres of fluids daily. The simplest fluid for the body to process is water. Try drinking 6-8 glasses of refreshing water (warm or cool) daily to stay hydrated.

Why?
Water is essential for the transport and elimination of toxins, and for the absorption of nutrients throughout the body and brain.
**What to look out for**

How much of a difference does this make to your ability to think clearly and to concentrate?

**MORE INFORMATION** adapted from *The Food and Mood Handbook*, page 179.

**Water drinking tips**

- Warm water can be more pleasant to drink than cold – especially in winter – and is less of a ‘shock’ to the stomach. On occasions try drinking just warm water from the kettle instead of your usual cup of tea or coffee.

- Plain water can be livened up with a slice of lemon – but not if you have a sensitivity to citrus fruit!

- Starting the day with a drink of water supports your body in flushing out the toxins that have been building up during your overnight fast. This healthy habit can also be used to encourage the regular bowel motions that help with healthy brain functioning.

- If you dislike the taste of tap water, try bottled water or water that has been filtered through a filter jug or under-sink unit. This can also benefit those who are sensitive to the chemicals in tap water that are not found in the bottled or filtered alternatives.

- Aim to have the majority of your water intake away from meals. Large quantities of water drunk at mealtimes can dilute digestive juices making them less effective.

- Decide on a daily water-drinking target and schedule water-stops throughout the day to ensure you reach your goal. You could draw a chart to record each time you drink some water. Or you could fill a bottle with water each morning and then watch how the level goes down as you drink its contents during the day.

**ACTION PLAN** I will:

(What)

(When)

How confident are you that you will achieve your action plan?

NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10: TOTALLY CONFIDENT

**Sample action plans**

1. To carry a small bottle of water around with me and to drink it throughout the day.
2. To start the day with a mug of warm water from the kettle, every morning.
3. To keep a chart of how many glasses/mugs of water I drink at work each day.
TOPIC 2: CAFFEINE
FIND SOMEONE WHO HAS EXPERIENCED CAFFEINE WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS

79% of people using dietary self-help said ‘cutting down on caffeine’ was beneficial to their mental and emotional health. Source: The Food and Mood Survey

Have you experienced caffeine withdrawal symptoms?

Questions to ask group members who answered ‘yes’
1. What was it like?
2. How long did it last?
3. Do you still avoid or reduce the amount of caffeine you have?
4. Why/why not?

[Collect/record tips for getting on top of caffeine]

Questions to ask the rest of the group
1. Have you thought about reducing or avoiding caffeine?
2. What prevents you from reducing or avoiding caffeine?

[Collect/record blocks for getting on top of caffeine]

‘This change was easy because I experienced a very obvious rise in anxiety when I drank it, which was unpleasant’ Food and Mood Survey participant

WHY TRY THIS?

The problem
Caffeine blocks the uptake of a natural sedative in the brain called adenosine, causing an increase in levels of dopamine and adrenalin that stimulate drive and alertness. By overriding the natural chemical balance, the body-mind is fooled into staying awake for longer, and the long-term consequence can be adrenal exhaustion and dependency on caffeine.

The clues
If you feel worse for not having a regular cup of tea, coffee, cola or chocolate this can be due to caffeine withdrawal symptoms. Even decaffeinated drinks aren’t necessarily completely stimulant-free.

TRY THIS
Find out your main sources of caffeine (coffee, tea, cola, chocolate and some medication) and then try cutting down (or cutting out) the amount you have.
Why?
You will find out how much of an effect too much caffeine (which is a different amount for each of us) is having on your mental and emotional health. You will then have the information you need to take control and use caffeine wisely.

What to look out for
Withdrawal symptoms (typically a headache) that can last 1-3 days (if in doubt about the symptoms you experience please consult a medical practitioner). You may then find that symptoms such as anxiety, cravings, nervousness, irritability, depression or fatigue have improved.

MORE INFORMATION adapted from The Food and Mood Handbook, p122

Approx levels of caffeine in some common drinks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drink Description</th>
<th>Caffeine Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cup of filter coffee</td>
<td>100mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can of Red Bull</td>
<td>80mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cup of instant coffee</td>
<td>66mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cup of tea made with loose leaf tea</td>
<td>41mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cup of tea made with a tea bag</td>
<td>40mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can of cola</td>
<td>23mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50g bar of plain chocolate</td>
<td>20mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50g bar of milk chocolate</td>
<td>7mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cup of ‘hot chocolate’ drink</td>
<td>5mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cup of ‘green’ tea</td>
<td>4mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cup of ‘decaff’</td>
<td>3mg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Caffeine is also present in some over-the-counter medication such as pain-killers (analgesics) or cold and ‘flu remedies, diuretics (which urine production), ‘alertness’ supplements, tonics, and appetite suppressants bought from the pharmacist. It can also be hidden in cola drinks and other food products listed as ‘flavourings’.

ACTION PLAN I will:
(What)

(When)

How confident are you that you will achieve your action plan?
NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 : TOTALLY CONFIDENT

Sample action plans
- I will replace one cup of tea with herbal tea every day.
- I will keep a record of the number of cups of tea and coffee I drink each day for a week.
- I will go shopping for caffeine-free alternative drinks on Wednesday.
TOPIC 3: CARBOHYDRATES
FIND SOMEONE WHO GETS FOOD CRAVINGS

80% of people using dietary self-help said ‘cutting down on sugar’, and 50% said ‘having more wholegrain foods’, was beneficial to their mental and emotional health. Source: The Food and Mood Survey

Do you get food cravings?

Questions to ask group members who answered ‘yes’

1. For which food(s) do you get cravings?
2. What do you think triggers the craving(s)?
3. How difficult is it for you to control your cravings?

[Collect/record blocks to controlling cravings]

Questions to ask the rest of the group

1. How do you manage to avoid, or control, food cravings?

[Collect/record tips for controlling cravings]

‘Try it! It is such a simple and harmless way to explore, and it beats taking drugs as a first choice from the doctor.’ Food and Mood Survey participant

WHY TRY THIS?

The problem
Cravings for ‘white’, refined, starchy or sugary snacks, chocolate and other stimulants.

The clues
Mid-morning or mid-afternoon dips in mood and energy associated with feeling irritable, anxious, unable to concentrate, tired and depressed.

TRY THIS
Eat slow energy-releasing foods such as wholegrain cereals, brown rice, oats, nuts and seeds.

Why?
Some mental and emotional symptoms can be a sign of dipping blood sugar levels. Slow-burn foods release their energy more slowly and steadily into the blood-stream. These foods also help prevent weight gain by making the body less likely to produce fat and more efficient at burning stored fat.
What to look out for
See how much this reduces symptoms of irritability, anxiety, poor concentration, fatigue or depression that are being triggered by low blood sugar.

MORE INFORMATION adapted from The Food and Mood Handbook, pages 150-160.

Ten ways to improve sugar sensitivity
1 Cut down on the sugar you add to food
2 Cut down on ‘free’ sugars unlocked from food such as in fruit juice.
3 Change from ‘white’ refined foods to ‘brown’ wholefoods
4 Always include some protein with every meal.
5 Always eat breakfast
6 Plan ahead what you are going to eat
7 Eat at regular intervals and eat three main meals a day
8 Eat snacks between meals (and before bed) if needed
9 Be prepared and carry healthy snacks when out and about
10 Cut down on stimulants

ACTION PLAN I will:
(What)
(When)

How confident are you that you will achieve your action plan?
NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 : TOTALLY CONFIDENT

Sample action plans
• I will have one less teaspoon of sugar in my tea, every cup I drink today.
• I will have wholemeal bread instead of a white loaf for my sandwiches this week at work.
• I will dilute my breakfast orange juice half-and-half with water.
TOPIC 4: PROTEIN
FIND SOMEONE WHO IS (OR HAS BEEN) VEGETARIAN OR VEGAN

41% of people using dietary self-help said ‘having more protein’ was beneficial to their mental and emotional health. Source: The Food and Mood Survey

Have you ever been vegetarian or vegan?

Questions to ask group members who answered ‘yes’

1. Which protein foods do/did you have instead of meat and fish (if a ‘proper’ vegetarian) or instead of meat and fish, eggs and dairy (if a ‘proper’ vegan)?
[Collect/record tips for vegetarian/vegan protein sources]

Questions to ask the rest of the group

1. What protein foods do you eat?
[Collect/record blocks to eating protein]

‘What helped me was eating more protein and reducing high glycaemic index (GI) carbohydrates because I felt so much better and the flabby bits on my body reduced, especially my tummy’. Food and Mood Survey participant

WHY TRY THIS?

The problem
Depression, anxiety, irritability, poor concentration or fatigue may be linked to insufficient protein in the diet.

The clues
A diet that is low in protein from lean meat, meat substitutes (such as soya, tofu or tempeh), fish, eggs, cheese, legumes (peas, beans, lentils), nuts and seeds.

TRY THIS
Notice the effect of including some protein with every meal or snack.

Why?
Protein foods contain the building blocks for brain chemicals that influence how you think and feel eg tryptophan is a protein fragment (or amino acid) that is essential for making serotonin, the neurotransmitter that is often low in people experiencing depression. Protein foods also help control fluctuating blood sugar levels.
What to look out for
Improvement to symptoms of depression, anxiety, irritability, poor concentration or fatigue and a reduction in sudden mood and energy dips.

MORE INFORMATION  adapted from The Food and Mood Handbook, pages 38-39

Brain chemicals and food

**Neurotransmitter:** serotonin
important for: appetite control, mood and sleep
made from: tryptophan, an amino acid found in protein foods which is carried into the brain in the presence of carbohydrates
some food sources: poultry, oil-rich fish, beans, baked potatoes, oats, nuts and seeds.

**Neurotransmitters:** dopamine and noradrenaline (norepinephrine) - catecholamine neurotransmitters
important for: staying awake, being alert and active
made from: tyrosine and phenylalanine, amino acids found in protein
some food sources: meat, fish, beans, nuts, seeds, soya and cheese

**Neurotransmitter:** acetylcholine
important for: memory and learning
made from: choline (a fat-like, vitamin-like substance) and lecithin (a phospholipid or type of fat).
some food sources: higher levels of choline and lecithin are found in eggs, liver, wheatgerm, brewer’s yeast, fish, soybeans, corn and peanuts

Production of these neurotransmitters depends on vital co-factors (helping substances) that include vitamins and minerals. It is therefore important to eat a varied diet that contains plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables in order to obtain the nutrients your brain needs.

**ACTION PLAN** I will:
(What)
(When)

How confident are you that you will achieve your action plan?
NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 : TOTALLY CONFIDENT

**Sample action plans**
- I will sprinkle some nuts and seeds onto my breakfast cereal every morning.
- I will go to the health food shop and buy some tofu chunks for a stir-fry on Friday.
- I will keep a food diary of all the protein foods I eat for a week.
TOPIC 5: ESSENTIAL FATS
FIND SOMEONE WHO EATS OMEGA-3 RICH FOODS

52% of people using dietary self-help said ‘having more oily fish’, and 51% said ‘having more nuts and seeds’, was beneficial to their mental and emotional health. Source: The Food and Mood Survey

Do you eat omega-3-rich foods?

Questions to ask group members who answered ‘yes’
1 Which foods do you eat?
2 How do you eat them?
3 What advice would you give to others who need to eat more omega-3 rich foods?

[Collect/record tips for eating omega-3 rich foods]

Questions to ask the rest of the group
1 What stops you from eating (more) omega-3 rich foods?

[Collect/record blocks to eating omega-3 rich foods]

What helped me was adding nuts and seeds to my diet – I keep a jar in the kitchen next to the kettle so it’s easy to remember’. Food and Mood Survey participant

WHY TRY THIS?

The problem
Depression, anxiety, fatigue, poor concentration.

The clues
Low levels of essential fats can also contribute to poor skin condition and painful joints.

TRY THIS
Eat oil-rich fish such was mackerel, sardines, herring, salmon, trout, pilchards, two or three times each week. A daily fish oil (or linseed or hemp oil) food supplement will also boost levels of brain-enhancing omega-3 oils.

Why?
Brain cells need ‘oiling’ with essential unsaturated fats if they are to communicate properly with each other.

What to look out for
Improvements to symptoms after a few weeks.
Essential fats in food

The omega-3 essential fats are particularly important for the structure and functioning of the brain. These oils are plentiful in oil rich fish such as mackerel, herring, pilchards, sardines, tuna and salmon. Contrary to popular belief, tinned tuna (but not other oily fish) is not a good source of oil as the oil is removed in the tuna tinning process.

EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) and DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) are two beneficial omega-3 fats found in fish oils. For those who are allergic to fish or who are vegetarian or vegan and don’t eat fish, the omega-3 essential fatty acids can also be obtained from linseed (flax) oil, pumpkin and hemp seeds and walnuts. The alpha-linolenic (omega-3) fatty acid in these sources can be converted by the body into the ‘active’ fatty acid EPA.

Omega-6 fatty acids are found in vegetable oils such as sunflower and rapeseed oils often used in margarines. They are then converted by the body into a substance called GLA (gamma linolenic acid). Hemp oil contains a small amount of ready-made GLA as does Evening Primrose oil.

Essential fats need to be eaten regularly so that the body and brain receive a steady supply of these important nutrients. It is recommended that these good mood fats are eaten at least three times a week or taken daily as a nutritional supplement. Many people are put off eating fish by the thought of having to deal with fish heads and bones. Fresh fish can be filleted by the fishmonger or buy pre-packed fillets or fish steaks. Concerns about the environmental pollution in fish can be counterbalanced by the definite improvements to health that can be experienced within weeks of regularly including fish in the diet.

ACTION PLAN

I will:

(What)

(When)

How confident are you that you will achieve your action plan?

NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10: TOTALLY CONFIDENT

Sample action plans

• I will buy an omega-3 oil supplement this week and start taking it next Monday.
• I will try having sardines on toast for breakfast at the weekend.
• I will sprinkle sunflower and pumpkin seeds onto my salad at lunchtimes.
TOPIC 6: ADDITIVES
FIND SOMEONE WHO NOTICES THEY’RE AFFECTED BY ARTIFICIAL ADDITIVES

47% of people using dietary self-help said ‘cutting down on additives’ was beneficial to their mental and emotional health. Source: The Food and Mood Survey

Are you affected by artificial additives?

Questions to ask group members who answered ‘yes’
1 Which additives or additive-containing foods affect you?
2 What affect do they have?
3 How did you find this out?
[Collect/record tips for reducing or avoiding additives]

Questions to ask the rest of the group
1 Do you suspect any foods or drinks are affecting you because of the additives they contain? Why?
[Collect/record blocks to reducing or avoiding additives]

‘I recommend you go slowly, change one thing at a time and monitor the effects. Tell yourself ‘if this does work I’ll know quickly – if it doesn’t I’ll try something else’
Food and Mood Survey participant

WHY TRY THIS?

The problem
A rapid change in emotion or behaviour within minutes or hours after eating additive-containing foods or drinks. Physical signs of an effect can include itching, eczema or asthma.

The clues
Check labels for artificial additives. Be suspicious of brightly coloured foods or drinks and highly processed foods with flavour enhancers and preservatives. Additives may be listed by their full chemical name or by a number, which in the UK is known as the ‘E number’.

TRY THIS
Do you feel better if you avoid colourings such as tartrazine (E102), flavour enhancers such as monosodium glutamate (MSG or E621), artificial sweeteners such as aspartame (E951), and preservatives such as sulphur dioxide (E220) and BHT (E321)?
Why?
Although additives do not affect everyone, certain artificial additives may be toxic to the body-mind and/or cause nutritional deficiencies. Certain additives have been associated with a range of mental and physical in some people. The combined effect of a mixture of additives is unknown but is potentially more harmful than the effect of individual additives. Children are more vulnerable to the effects of additives.

What to look out for
If symptoms disappear when you avoid additive-containing foods or drinks and return only if the additive-containing food or drink is consumed, then it is reasonable to conclude that the additive(s) is/are the problem.

MORE INFORMATION adapted from The Food and Mood Handbook, page 87

Additives to avoid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLOURINGS</th>
<th>PRESERVATIVES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allura Red AC E129</td>
<td>Benzoic acid E210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amaranth E123</td>
<td>Butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA) E320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brilliant Black BN E151</td>
<td>Butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT) E321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponceau 4R, Conchineal Red A E124</td>
<td>Calcium benzoate E213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunset Yellow, FCF, Orange Yellow S E110</td>
<td>Calcium sulphite E226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tartrazine (FD&amp;C Yellow No. 5) E102</td>
<td>Potassium benzoate E212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLAVOURINGS</td>
<td>Potassium nitrate E249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspartame E951</td>
<td>Propyl p-hydroxy-benzoate, propyl-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monosodium glutamate (MSG) E621</td>
<td>paraben, paraben E216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saccharin, saccharin Na, K, Ca salts E954</td>
<td>Sodium metabisulphite E223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sodium sulphite E221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stannous chloride (tin) E512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sulphur dioxide E220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ACTION PLAN I will:

(What)

(When)

How confident are you that you will achieve your action plan?

NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10: TOTALLY CONFIDENT

Sample action plans
• I will have fruit juices and sparkling water instead of colas at work.
• I will buy plain crisps that don’t have any additives for one week.
• I will avoid any food or drink that has artificial colourings in today.
TOPIC 7: BREAKFAST
FIND SOMEONE WHO ATE SOME BREAKFAST TODAY

55% of people using dietary self-help said ‘eating breakfast’ and ‘eating regular meals and snacks’ (67%) was beneficial to their mental and emotional health
Source: The Food and Mood Survey

Have you had some breakfast today?

Questions to ask group members who answered ‘yes’
1. Do you usually eat breakfast?
2. What do you eat for breakfast?
3. How do you feel if you skip breakfast?

[Collect/record tips for an easy and enjoyable breakfast]

Questions to ask the rest of the group
1. Do you usually skip breakfast?
2. How do you feel as a result?
3. How do you feel if you do have breakfast?

[Collect/record blocks to eating breakfast]

‘What also helped me was to replace my mid-afternoon cake or biscuit with apple and nuts, and this was easy because the effect was immediate.’
Food and Mood Survey participant

WHY TRY THIS?

The problem
Not everyone always feels like eating breakfast, and it can be an easy meal to skip when time is short, or if you are concerned about weight gain due to over-eating. However, eating breakfast is an important meal for establishing an even blood-sugar ride through the rest of the day, for obtaining important nutrients, and also for weight control. Eating breakfast has a direct impact on performance at work, school or college, and on behaviour.

The clues
Mid-morning or mid-afternoon dips in mood and energy associated with feeling irritable, anxious, unable to concentrate, tired and depressed, and cravings for quick-fix sugary snacks or caffeine-containing drinks.
TRY THIS
Eat breakfast every day for a week and see how you feel and function. Quick and easy good mood breakfast suggestions include: porridge, wholegrain cereals or ‘live’ yogurt, with fresh or dried fruit, nuts and seeds, or wholemeal bread plus nut or seed butters and sugar free jam.

Why?
Some mental and emotional symptoms can be a sign of dipping blood sugar levels. Slow-burn foods release their energy more slowly and steadily into the blood-stream. These foods also help prevent weight gain by making the body less likely to produce fat and more efficient at burning stored fat.

What to look out for
See how much this eating strategy reduces symptoms of irritability, anxiety, poor concentration, fatigue or depression that are being triggered by low blood sugar. How has this affected your performance at work, school or college?

MORE INFORMATION  adapted from The Food and Mood Handbook, page 199

Seven low-allergy breakfast ideas
• Buckwheat porridge with almond nut butter and sugar-free blackberry jam
• Puffed corn/corn flakes with fresh fruit, sunflower seeds and almond milk
• Pumpernickel bread, toasted with tahini (sesame seed paste) and fruit spread
• Oat porridge with dried dates and oat milk
• Toasted corn bread with cashew nut butter and sugar-free cherry jam
• Wheat-free muesli (make your own from oat, millet, buckwheat and rice flakes, dried fruit and nuts or buy ready-made) with an alternative milk of your choice
• Millet porridge, dried apricots and rice milk

ACTION PLAN  I will:

(WHAT)

(WHEN)

How confident are you that you will achieve your action plan?

NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT:  0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10 : TOTALLY CONFIDENT

Sample action plans
• I will get up 15 mins early on three days this week and have some breakfast before I leave for work.
• I will buy the ingredients today so I can have a smoothie for breakfast tomorrow.
• I will try porridge for breakfast on Thursday.
TOPIC 8: GUT HEALTH

FIND SOMEONE WHO REGULARLY EATS EXTRA FIBRE OR ‘LIVE’ YOGURT (OR SIMILAR) TO IMPROVE THEIR DIGESTION

48% of people using dietary self-help said ‘having more fibre’ was beneficial to their mental and emotional health. Source: The Food and Mood Survey

Do you eat extra fibre or ‘live’ yogurt (or similar) to improve your digestion?

Questions to ask group members who answered ‘yes’
1. Do you feel that eating fibre-containing foods or ‘live’ yogurt (or similar food products) helps your digestion?
2. How long have you been doing this?
3. What prompted you to start?

[Collect/record tips for better digestive health]

Questions to ask the rest of the group
1. Do you have other ways to maintain or improve your digestion?
2. How does stress affect your digestion?

[Collect/record blocks to better digestive health]

‘Follow your instincts or gut feelings on what may be the problem no matter what others think, and try a change. Keep trying but don’t make it a struggle and be kind to yourself. Do it gradually, in your own time.’ Food and Mood Survey participant

WHY TRY THIS?

The problem
Gut health is central to the well-being of body and mind. An unhealthy digestive system can be linked to mental and physical distress and produce a range of symptoms from mild temporary physical discomfort that can make someone tired and irritable, to chronic serious illnesses such as coeliac disease that has been associated with schizophrenia.

The clues
Abdominal discomfort, bloating, indigestion, acid reflux, constipation and diarrhoea are all symptoms of digestive ill-health. If blood or mucous are present in the stools you should consult a medical practitioner.

TRY THIS
Notice if your mood is linked to how well you’re digesting your food. Mental and physical constipation can be improved by eating wholegrain foods, legumes (beans, peas, lentils),

© The Food and Mood Project 2006
fruit and vegetables. Also, try live yogurt and functional food products containing probiotics or ‘friendly’ bacteria.

**Why?**
The state of your mind is closely connected to the health of your digestive system. Special ‘receptors’ that join up with particular brain chemicals are also found in the gut, which can therefore be seen as an extension of the brain. Chronic constipation can lead to increased levels of toxins circulating in the blood that can also impact on brain functioning.

**What to look out for**
Improvements in physical symptoms directly associated with the gut, as well as symptoms such as skin complaints and headaches. Also, improvements in emotional and mental well-being within days or weeks of making a change.

**MORE INFORMATION** adapted from *The Food and Mood Handbook*, pages 47-48

**Top tips for a healthy digestive system**
- Eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables to ‘keep you regular’ (see worksheet no. 9).
- Drink plenty of water every day (see worksheet no. 1).
- Include fibre-containing foods in your daily diet (see above). Oat and rice bran are less likely to irritate the gut lining of sensitive people.
- Sprinkle linseeds onto foods or add to porridge or soups. They swell to increase the size of stools and help with constipation.
- Cut down on concentrated sugars (see worksheet no. 3) and yeast-containing foods (see worksheet no. 10) and alcohol and reduce the risk of gut dysbiosis or ‘candida overgrowth’.
- Avoid any foods to which you are sensitive and which may be irritating to the gut lining
- Learn to cope with stress through, for example, breathing and relaxation techniques.

**ACTION PLAN** I will:

(What)  
(When)  

How confident are you that you will achieve your action plan?  
NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10: TOTALLY CONFIDENT

**Sample action plans**
- I will buy some linseeds and add them to my soup at lunchtime tomorrow.
- I will have live yogurt and fruit for dessert every other day this week.
- I will eat an apple for my mid-morning snack at work today.
TOPIC 9: FRUIT AND VEGETABLES
FIND SOMEONE WHO EATS THE MINIMUM RECOMMENDED ‘5 A DAY’ (FIVE PORTIONS OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES)

78% of people using dietary self-help said ‘having more vegetables’ and 72% said ‘having more fruit’ was beneficial to their mental and emotional health.
Source: The Food and Mood Survey

Do you eat the minimum recommended ‘5 a day’ (five portions of fruit and vegetables)?

Questions to ask group members who answered ‘yes’
1. What helps you to do this?
2. How do you think it affects how you feel?
3. What advice would you give to others who find it difficult to do this?

[Collect/record for reaching 5 (or more) a day]

Questions to ask the rest of the group
1. What stops you from having ‘5 a day’?

[Collect/record blocks to eating 5 a day]

‘An easy change for me was to eat more fruit – it’s convenient to carry around and tastes delicious.’ Food and Mood Survey participant

WHY TRY THIS?

The problem
Specific micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) are being found to be essential for mental as well as physical health eg antioxidants including vitamins A, C, E and the mineral selenium protect the brain from free-radical damage and B-vitamins and Folic Acid are important for nerve and brain health and to avoid the build-up of a digestive by-product called homocysteine that is associated with dementia and heart disease.

The clues
The nutritional content of fruit and vegetables is fundamental to mental and physical health. Poor skin, hair and nail quality and a tendency to catch colds and flu are reliable signs of various nutritional deficiencies.

TRY THIS
Eat at least five portions (about a handful each time) of fruit and vegetables daily, and notice how you feel in your body-mind. Aim to eat a rainbow of colours every day for a balanced diet of essential phytonutrients (plant nutrients).
Why?
The different colours in fruits and vegetables relate to different essential phytonutrients (plant nutrients) that are needed to nourish and protect the body-mind. Five is the very minimum number of portions of fruit and vegetables you need each day. A portion is about a handful.

What to look out for
A general improvement in physical and mental health together that is reflected in the appearance of skin, hair and nails and resilience against infections.

MORE INFORMATION  adapted from The Food and Mood Handbook, page 170-177

Good mood nutrients and where to find them

**Antioxidant vitamins**  dried apricot, almonds, avocado, beans, berries, blackcurrants, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cashew nuts, cauliflower, citrus fruit, eggs, hazelnuts, kiwifruit, liver (and fish liver oil), mango, melon, oranges, papaya, tangerines, organ meats, pumpkin, red and green sweet peppers, seeds, sweet potato, spinach, sweet potato, tomatoes, vegetable oils, walnuts, watercress.

**B-vitamins**  avocados, bananas, beans, carrots, eggs, fish (e.g. salmon, tuna), meat, milk, molasses, nuts (e.g. almonds, cashew nuts), seeds (e.g. sunflower seeds), wholegrains (e.g. brown rice), lentils, yeast.

**Magnesium**  leafy green vegetables, nuts (such as brazil nuts, almonds, hazelnuts and peanuts) and whole grains (particularly millet and oats).

**Manganese**  beetroot, blackberries, celery, grapes, lettuce, lima (butter) beans, oats, pineapple, raspberries, strawberries, watercress.

**Potassium**  avocado, apricots, almonds, bananas, beans, cabbage, cashew nuts, cauliflower, celery, courgettes, melon, molasses, mushrooms, parsley, pumpkin, radishes, sunflower seeds, watercress.

**Selenium**  brazil nuts, cabbage, courgettes, chicken, tuna, herring, seafood, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, wholegrains.

**Zinc**  brazil nuts, herring, meats, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, walnuts, wholegrains, lamb, oysters.

**ACTION PLAN**  I will:

(What)

(When)

How confident are you that you will achieve your action plan?

NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT:  0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 : TOTALLY CONFIDENT

Sample action plans

- I will eat a green vegetable every day for a month.
- I will order a side salad with my lunch today.
- I will try eating a different fruit for a mid-afternoon snack for 5 days this week.
TOPIC 10: FOOD INTOLERANCE
FIND SOMEONE WHO HAS A FOOD INTOLERANCE OR ALLERGY

48% of people using dietary self-help said ‘cutting down on wheat’ and 44% said ‘cutting down on dairy’ (and having wheat/dairy-free alternatives instead) was beneficial to their mental and emotional health. Source: The Food and Mood Survey

---

Do you have a food intolerance or allergy?

**Questions to ask group members who answered ‘yes’**
1. What food(s) affect you and how?
2. How did you find out?
3. What do you eat instead?

[Collect/record tips for escaping the shadow of food intolerance]

**Questions to ask the rest of the group**
1. Do you suspect any foods or drinks might be affecting you?

[Collect/record blocks to finding out about food intolerance]

‘Be organised and careful in your trials ... enjoy the knowledge you gain about your personal reactions to food.’ Food and Mood Survey participant

---

**WHY TRY THIS?**

*The problem*
Food intolerance may remain undetected until the culprit food (or foods) are eaten less often, or (preferably with support from a health professional) avoided altogether. Food allergy is different because the reaction is usually immediate, severe and never changes.

*The clues*
Food intolerance can contribute to a wide variety of unpleasant or uncomfortable physical and mental symptoms and is often considered only when all other treatments or self-help approaches have been unsuccessful.

**TRY THIS**
Keep a food and mood diary, become a food detective: find out how much of the common culprit foods for intolerance you are eating eg wheat (bread, pasta, pizza, cakes, biscuits), dairy (milk, cheese, yoghurt, butter) and yeast (in bread, cheese, yeast extract, wine and beer). Discover the alternatives you can have instead. Consider making small changes which are easier to manage. Try one food at a time and note any symptoms.
Why?
Food intolerance reactions can change over the course of a lifetime. You may not always need to reduce or avoid a food in order to avoid symptoms. A rotation diet can be used to successfully manage intolerances and to maintain a balanced diet.

What to look out for
If you have a food intolerance you may initially feel worse if you reduce the amount you have of a problem food. This withdrawal period should be brief (a few days only) and then be followed by a marked improvement in health. If the food is eaten again it may provoke an exaggerated response that confirms the link between food and symptom.

MORE INFORMATION adapted from The Food and Mood Handbook, page 170-177

The top ten culprit foods: wheat

Main food sources Most batters, biscuits, breads, cakes, chapattis, nan bread, pasta, pastry, pitta bread, pizza base, some poppadoms.

Main drink sources Ale, beer, gin, lager, malt, malted milk drinks, spirits, whisky.

Watch out for Bakery products, baking powder, breadcrumbs, breakfast cereals, burgers, confectionery, crackers, croutons, dumplings, flour, gravy, noodles, pancakes, puddings, pretzels, rye bread may contain wheatflour, sauces, sausages, stuffing mix, snackfoods, soups, waffles, and many packaged and processed foods.

Close relatives Bulgar wheat, cous-cous, durum wheat, kamut, semolina, spelt and triticale are all types of wheat that are likely to cause symptoms in a wheat sensitive person. Despite its name, buckwheat is not related to wheat. It is a member of the same family as rhubarb and not a member of the grass family. If gluten in wheat is the problem a cross-reaction with other gluten-containing grains is likely (see cross reactions section in this chapter).


Related risks (non-food) Glue on labels, stamps, envelopes etc (spit don’t lick!), communion wafers, some medications.

Foods to have instead Alternatives to wheat based bread include breads made from rye including pumpernickel bread, or corn (maize) bread. Non-wheat crackers can substitute for bread and include rice cakes, oat cakes, ryvita and corn crackers. Other non-wheat flours suitable for making batters or baking include buckwheat, chestnut, chickpea (gram), millet, potato, rice, sago, soya, tapioca. Wheat free baking powder is available. Oats can be used for crumbles, biscuits and flapjacks. Note that gluten-free products are not necessarily wheat free.

ACTION PLAN I will:

(What)

(When)

How confident are you that you will achieve your action plan?

NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 : TOTALLY CONFIDENT

Sample action plans
• I will use rye sourdough bread for making toast for breakfast for the next two weeks.
• I will use feta cheese in my salad for work tomorrow.
• I will get some wheat-free pasta from the ‘free from’ section at the supermarket this afternoon.
Reflection and action planning

**Reflection**

The group could be asked to reflect on:

- the information recorded on the flipchart(s) (if applicable)
- any ideas or suggestions for exploring the subject further – either as individuals or as a group

**Action planning**

Give each person a copy of the *Action planning* handout. Read out *Making an action plan* (see next page) or ask the group participants to read through the same text on the handout. It is important to stress that there is no requirement to commit to an action plan.

Ask if there are any questions and discuss possible solutions. Refer to topic worksheets for practical examples of action plans.

Ask group participants to consider which topic they may wish to create an action plan for and then, if desired, to write their plan in the space provided on the appropriate topic worksheet.

If time allows, individuals can then pair up to compare action plans or discuss their response to the idea of action plans.

Close with a round where each person states their action plan, says they prefer not to have an action plan, or that they need to think some more about making an action plan.

Thank the group for taking part, and finish.
Making an action plan

In order to find out if food is affecting our mood we need to make changes to what we are eating, and then see how we feel as a result. Whatever stage we are at in the change-process, the discipline of writing down an action plan can be useful.

Action planning can help us to focus on the next step. If fully completed, an action plan will provide a sense of achievement that boosts our progress towards the larger changes we want to make. And if we find we have been over-ambitious, careful attention to our words will reveal where we need to make subtle and important adjustments to our action plan.

The following approach to writing an action plan is based on the NHS Expert Patients Programme course information.

To maximise our chances of success, an action plan needs to be:

• a commitment to do something you want to do – not what someone else thinks you should do, or that you think you ‘should’ do.

• reasonable – something you can expect to be able to accomplish in the very near future eg this week.

• behaviour-specific – eg feeling less anxious is not a behaviour (it is a feeling), but ‘cutting down on caffeine’, for example, is a behaviour (something that someone else could see you do, or not do).

It is more likely to help you if an action plan can answer these questions:

• What am I going to do? (eg drink more water)

• How much? (eg a mug-full)

• When? (first thing in the morning)

• How often? (eg at least four times this week. Try to avoid phrases like ‘most days’. Numbers are more precise.)

Finally, if we can give an honest-as-possible confidence rating for completing all of our action plan, it shows whether or not we need to go back and reword our plan into something we are more likely to manage. This is because, if we really want to complete our plan, then it is better to commit to something for which we have a confidence level of 7 or more. On this rating scale 0 = no confidence and 10 = total confidence that we will finish our entire action plan.

Good luck!
Feedback

...from workshop participants

Inviting feedback from the workshop participants can provide useful information about what was helpful and also what may need to change.

You could photocopy the Feedback from workshop participants sheet included with this guide, give each participant a copy at the end of the session and ask them to fill it in (anonymously unless they wish to be identified). Participants can then fold it in two and put it in a box (or leave it on a table) before they go.

...from workshop leaders

Reflecting on how the workshop went from the workshop leader’s point of view can be helpful for your personal and/or professional development. Therefore, included with this guide, is a Feedback from workshop leaders sheet. We would love to hear about your workshop so that we can continue to improve this guide and we would be pleased if you would share your experiences with us and/or with the email group for Food and Mood Workshop Leaders*

For each workshop you run, please photocopy the Feedback from workshop leaders sheet included with this guide and send us your views. Alternatively contact info@foodandmood.org for an email copy to complete by email.

*All Food and Mood Project customers who purchase The Food and Mood DIY Workshop Pack or The Guide for Workshop Leaders should automatically receive an invitation to join the free email group for Food and Mood workshop leaders hosted at www.smartgroups.com. If you have not received this invitation please contact us at info@foodandmood.org or visit www.smartgroups.com/groups/foodandmoodworkshopleaders.
Food and Mood resources

*The Food and Mood Handbook* is ideal for DIY Food and Mood Workshop participants who wish to investigate further the ideas covered in this introductory session. It also makes an excellent course book for an on-going Food and Mood support or study group.

*The Mind Guide to Food and Mood* is an easy-to-digest 16-page booklet written in a Q&A format covering topics such as which foods to eat, which foods to avoid, why and how to make changes, and where to find help. It is ideal as a summary handout for use with the DIY Food and Mood Workshop.

*The Food and Mood Poster* summarises the topics covered in this DIY Food and Mood Workshop and presents key information as an attractive and accessible poster. This makes a special souvenir to take home from the workshop.

The Food and Mood *Try this* postcards and posters each focus on one of ten different topic areas relating to dietary self-help for mental and emotional health. The postcards come with an optional clear plastic display case which doubles as a desktop holder for a handy self-help reminder or unusual gift. The posters are ideal for an exhibition or food and mood stall.

*The Mind Meal Postcard* is a recipe card featuring the meal plan devised in conjunction with the mental health charity. The Mind Meal aims to draw attention to the important relationship between food and mood and serves as an example of what can be done with some of the good mood foods that are generally recommended as beneficial for emotional and mental health.

*The Festive Food Plan* postcard gives practical suggestions for healthy eating during the festive period.

More information and price details (including discounts on bulk orders) for these and other Food and Mood Project publications are available at www.foodandmood.org. Please contact us for information flyers (or master copies for photocopying) about Food and Mood Project publications for distribution to workshop participants.

**Further information**

Other organisations providing information and support are listed in the resources section at the back of *The Food and Mood Handbook*, *The Mind Guide to Food and Mood* and on the Food and Mood Project website.
About The Food and Mood Project

The Food and Mood Project is a web-based, user-led, dietary self-help service that provides resources for individuals and groups. It was started in 1998 with a Mind Millennium Award ‘to empower individuals to explore the relationship between diet, nutrition and emotional and mental health and to share this information with others’.

The Project is backed by Mind, the UK mental health charity. It is lead by former nutritional therapist Amanda Geary and founded on Amanda’s first-hand experience of recovery from ill health using dietary self-help.

To find out more about the Food and Mood Project and our publications please visit www.foodandmood.org.

The Food and Mood Project
PO Box 2737
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 2GN
UK

or email info@foodandmood.org
GROUP EXERCISE: FIND SOMEONE WHO...

TOPIC 1 WORKSHEET: WATER
TOPIC 2 WORKSHEET: CAFFEINE
TOPIC 3 WORKSHEET: CARBOHYDRATES
TOPIC 4 WORKSHEET: PROTEIN
TOPIC 5 WORKSHEET: ESSENTIAL FATS
TOPIC 6 WORKSHEET: ADDITIVES
TOPIC 7 WORKSHEET: BREAKFAST
TOPIC 8 WORKSHEET: GUT HEALTH
TOPIC 9 WORKSHEET: FRUIT and VEG
TOPIC 10 WORKSHEET: FOOD INTOLERANCE

HANDOUT: ACTION PLANNING
WORKSHOP FEEDBACK SHEET
WORKSHOP LEADER’S FEEDBACK
GROUP EXERCISE

FIND SOMEONE WHO…

To do this exercise you will need a pen and you will need to move around and ask the other people in the room the questions on this sheet. You can ask the questions in any order. When you have found someone who can answer ‘yes’ to one of the questions, write their name in the space provided and then move on to someone else. (If there are enough people in the group it is preferable if the same person does not answer ‘yes’ to more than one question on your sheet.)

Now, find someone who …

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 … really does drink some water every day</th>
<th>2 … has experienced caffeine withdrawal symptoms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Name:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 … gets food cravings</th>
<th>4 … is (or has been) vegetarian or vegan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Name:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5 … eats omega-3-rich foods</th>
<th>6 … notices they are affected by artificial additives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Name:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7 … ate some breakfast today</th>
<th>8 … regularly eats extra fibre or ‘live’ yogurt (or similar) to improve their digestion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Name:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9 … eats the minimum recommended ‘5 a day’ (five portions of fruit and veg)</th>
<th>10 … has a food intolerance or allergy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Name:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© The Food and Mood Project, 2006 · This self-help information is not intended as an alternative to medical advice
Dietary self-help for mental and emotional health · www.foodandmood.org
TOPIC 1 WORKSHEET

WATER

80% of people using dietary self-help said ‘drinking more water’ was beneficial to their mental and emotional health. Source: The Food and Mood Survey

Do you drink some water every day?

☐ YES!

What helps you to do this?

How does this make you feel?

What advice would you give to people who find it difficult to drink more water?

Tips for drinking more water:

1. 
2. 
3. 

☐ NO!

What stops you from drinking more water?

Blocks to drinking more water:

1. 
2. 
3. 

‘The easiest change for me was drinking more water in the morning - it costs nothing, takes no time to prepare and helps me start the day off well.’ Food and Mood Survey participant

ACTION PLAN I will:

(What)

(When)

How confident are you that you will achieve your action plan?

NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 : TOTALLY CONFIDENT

Sample action plans

• I will carry a small bottle of water around with me and drink it throughout the day.
• I will start the day with a mug of warm water from the kettle, every morning.
• I will keep a chart of how many glasses/mugs of water I drink at work each day.
WHY TRY THIS?

The problem
Dehydration affects your ability to think clearly and to concentrate.

The clues
A sign of dehydration is urine that is dark-coloured and smelly. The thirst sensation may not be triggered until dehydration is well established, and the feeling of thirst can become desensitised if habitually ignored.

TRY THIS
Drink 1.5-2 litres of fluids daily. The simplest fluid for the body to process is water. Try drinking 6-8 glasses of refreshing water (warm or cool) daily to stay hydrated.

Why?
Water is essential for the transport and elimination of toxins, and for the absorption of nutrients throughout the body and brain.

What to look out for
How much of a difference does this make to your ability to think clearly and to concentrate?

MORE INFORMATION adapted from The Food and Mood Handbook, page 179.

Water drinking tips

- Warm water can be more pleasant to drink than cold - especially in winter - and is less of a ‘shock’ to the stomach. On occasions try drinking just warm water from the kettle instead of your usual cup of tea or coffee.

- Plain water can be livened up with a slice of lemon - but not if you have a sensitivity to citrus fruit!

- Starting the day with a drink of water supports your body in flushing out the toxins that have been building up during your overnight fast. This healthy habit can also be used to encourage the regular bowel motions that help with healthy brain functioning.

- If you dislike the taste of tap water, try bottled water or water that has been filtered through a filter jug or under-sink unit. This can also benefit those who are sensitive to the chemicals in tap water that are not found in the bottled or filtered alternatives.

- Aim to have the majority of your water intake away from meals. Large quantities of water drunk at mealtimes can dilute digestive juices making them less effective.

- Decide on a daily water-drinking target and schedule water-stops throughout the day to ensure you reach your goal. You could draw a chart to record each time you drink some water. Or you could fill a bottle with water each morning and then watch how the level goes down as you drink its contents during the day.
CAFFEINE

79% of people using dietary self-help said ‘cutting down on caffeine’ was beneficial to their mental and emotional health. Source: The Food and Mood Survey

Have you experienced caffeine withdrawal symptoms?

☐ YES!
What was it like?
How long did it last?
Do you still avoid or reduce the amount of caffeine you have?
Why/why not?

Tips for getting on top of caffeine:
1.
2.
3.

☐ NO!
Have you thought about reducing or avoiding caffeine?
What prevents you from reducing or avoiding caffeine?

Blocks to getting on top of caffeine:
1.
2.
3.

“This change was easy because I experienced a very obvious rise in anxiety when I drank it, which was unpleasant” Food and Mood Survey participant

ACTION PLAN  I will:
(What)
(When)

How confident are you that you will achieve your action plan?
NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10: TOTALLY CONFIDENT

Sample action plans
• I will replace one cup of tea with herbal tea every day.
• I will keep a record of the number of cups of tea and coffee I drink each day for a week.
• I will go shopping for caffeine-free alternative drinks on Wednesday.
**WHY TRY THIS?**

_The problem_
Caffeine blocks the uptake of a natural sedative in the brain called adenosine, causing an increase in levels of dopamine and adrenalin that stimulate drive and alertness. By over-riding the natural chemical balance, the body-mind is fooled into staying awake for longer, and the long-term consequence can be adrenal exhaustion and dependency on caffeine.

_The clues_
If you feel worse for not having a regular cup of tea, coffee, cola or chocolate this can be due to caffeine withdrawal symptoms. Even decaffeinated drinks aren’t necessarily completely stimulant-free.

**TRY THIS**
Find out your main sources of caffeine (from coffee, tea, cola, chocolate and some medication) and then try cutting down (or cutting out) the amount you have.

_Why?_
You will find out how much of an effect too much caffeine (which is a different amount for each of us) is having on your mental and emotional health. You will then have the information you need to take control and use caffeine wisely.

_What to look out for_
Withdrawal symptoms (typically a headache) that can last 1-3 days (if in doubt about the symptoms you experience please consult a medical practitioner). You may then find that symptoms such as anxiety, cravings, nervousness, irritability, depression or fatigue have improved.

**MORE INFORMATION** adapted from _The Food and Mood Handbook_, p122

**Approx levels of caffeine in some common drinks**
- cup of filter coffee: 100mg
- can of Red Bull: 80mg
- cup of instant coffee: 66mg
- cup of tea made with loose leaf tea: 41mg
- cup of tea made with a tea bag: 40mg
- can of cola: 23mg
- 50g bar of plain chocolate: 20mg
- 50g bar of milk chocolate: 7mg
- cup of ‘green’ tea: 4mg
- cup of ‘decaff’: 3mg

Caffeine is also present in some over-the-counter medication such as pain-killers (analgesics) or cold and ‘flu remedies, diuretics (which urine production), ‘alertness’ supplements, tonics, and appetite suppressants bought from the pharmacist. It can also be hidden in cola drinks and other food products listed as ‘flavourings’.
TOPIC 3 WORKSHEET
CARBOHYDRATES

80% of people using dietary self-help said ‘cutting down on sugar’, and 50% said ‘having more wholegrain foods’, was beneficial to their mental and emotional health. Source: The Food and Mood Survey

Do you get food cravings?

☐ YES!

For which food(s) do you get cravings?
What do you think triggers the craving(s)?
How difficult is it for you to control your cravings?

Blocks to controlling cravings:
1.
2.
3.

☐ NO!

How do you manage to avoid, or control, food cravings?

Tips for controlling cravings:
1.
2.
3.

“Try it! It is such a simple and harmless way to explore, and it beats taking drugs as a first choice from the doctor.” Food and Mood Survey participant

ACTION PLAN  I will:
(What)
(When)

How confident are you that you will achieve your action plan?
NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT:  0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  : TOTALLY CONFIDENT

Sample action plans
• I will have one less teaspoon of sugar in my tea, every cup I drink today.
• I will have wholemeal bread instead of a white loaf for my sandwiches this week at work.
• I will dilute my breakfast orange juice half-and-half with water.
WHY TRY THIS?

The problem
Cravings for ‘white’, refined, starchy or sugary snacks, chocolate and other stimulants.

The clues
Mid-morning or mid-afternoon dips in mood and energy associated with feeling irritable, anxious, unable to concentrate, tired and depressed.

TRY THIS
Eat slow energy-releasing foods such as wholegrain cereals, brown rice, oats, nuts and seeds.

Why?
Some mental and emotional symptoms can be a sign of dipping blood sugar levels. Slow-burn foods release their energy more slowly and steadily into the blood-stream. These foods also help prevent weight gain by making the body less likely to produce fat and more efficient at burning stored fat.

What to look out for
See how much this reduces symptoms of irritability, anxiety, poor concentration, fatigue or depression that are being triggered by low blood sugar.

MORE INFORMATION adapted from The Food and Mood Handbook, pages 150-160.

Ten ways to improve sugar sensitivity
1 Cut down on the sugar you add to food
2 Cut down on ‘free’ sugars unlocked from food such as in fruit juice.
3 Change from ‘white’ refined foods to ‘brown’ wholefoods
4 Always include some protein with every meal
5 Always eat breakfast
6 Plan ahead what you are going to eat
7 Eat at regular intervals and eat three main meals a day
8 Eat snacks between meals (and before bed) if needed
9 Be prepared and carry healthy snacks when out and about
10 Cut down on stimulants
TOPIC 4 WORKSHEET
PROTEIN

41% of people using dietary self-help said ‘having more protein’ was beneficial to their mental and emotional health. Source: The Food and Mood Survey

Have you ever been vegetarian or vegan?

☐ YES!
Which protein foods do/did you have instead of meat and fish (if a ‘proper’ vegetarian) or instead of meat and fish, eggs and dairy (if a ‘proper’ vegan)?

Tips for vegetarian/vegan protein sources:
1. 
2. 
3. 

☐ NO!
What protein foods do you eat?

Blocks to eating protein:
1. 
2. 
3. 

“What helped me was eating more protein and reducing high glycaemic index (GI) carbohydrates because I felt so much better and the flabby bits on my body reduced, especially my tummy”.
Food and Mood Survey participant

ACTION PLAN I will:
(What)
(When)

How confident are you that you will achieve your action plan?
NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10: TOTALLY CONFIDENT

Sample action plans
• I will sprinkle some nuts and seeds onto my breakfast cereal every morning.
• I will go to the health food shop and buy some tofu chunks for a stir-fry on Friday.
• I will keep a food diary of all the protein foods I eat for a week.
WHY TRY THIS?

The problem
Depression, anxiety, irritability, poor concentration or fatigue may be linked to insufficient protein in the diet.

The clues
A diet that is low in protein from lean meat, meat substitutes (such as soya, tofu or tempeh), fish, eggs, cheese, legumes (peas, beans, lentils), nuts and seeds.

TRY THIS
Notice the effect of including some protein with every meal or snack.

Why?
Protein foods contain the building blocks for brain chemicals that influence how you think and feel e.g. tryptophan is a protein fragment (or amino acid) that is essential for making serotonin, the neurotransmitter that is often low in people experiencing depression. Protein foods also help control fluctuating blood sugar levels.

What to look out for
Improvement to symptoms of depression, anxiety, irritability, poor concentration or fatigue and a reduction in sudden mood and energy dips.

MORE INFORMATION  adapted from The Food and Mood Handbook, pages 38-39

Brain chemicals and food

**Neurotransmitter:** serotonin

*important for:* appetite control, mood and sleep

*made from:* tryptophan, an amino acid found in protein foods which is carried into the brain in the presence of carbohydrates

*some food sources:* poultry, oil-rich fish, beans, baked potatoes, oats, nuts and seeds.

**Neurotransmitters:** dopamine and noradrenaline (norepinephrine) - catecholamine neurotransmitters

*important for:* staying awake, being alert and active

*made from:* tyrosine and phenylalanine, amino acids found in protein

*some food sources:* meat, fish, beans, nuts, seeds, soya and cheese

**Neurotransmitter:** acetylcholine

*important for:* memory and learning

*made from:* choline (a fat-liking, vitamin-like substance) and lecithin (a phospholipid or type of fat).

*some foods sources:* higher levels of choline and lecithin are found in eggs, liver, wheatgerm, brewer’s yeast, fish, soybeans, corn and peanuts

Production of these neurotransmitters depends on vital co-factors (helping substances) that include vitamins and minerals. It is therefore important to eat a varied diet that contains plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables in order to obtain the nutrients your brain needs.
52% of people using dietary self-help said ‘having more oily fish’, and 51% said ‘having more nuts and seeds’, was beneficial to their mental and emotional health.

Source: The Food and Mood Survey

**Do you eat omega-3-rich foods?**

☐ YES!

Which foods do you eat?

How do you eat them?

What advice would you give to others who need to eat more omega-3 rich foods?

**Tips for eating omega-3 rich foods:**

1. 
2. 
3.

☐ NO!

What stops you from eating (more) omega-3 rich foods?

**Blocks to eating omega-3 rich foods:**

1. 
2. 
3.

*What helped me was adding nuts and seeds to my diet – I keep a jar in the kitchen next to the kettle so it’s easy to remember*. Food and Mood Survey participant

**ACTION PLAN** I will:

(What)

(When)

How confident are you that you will achieve your action plan?

NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 TOTALLY CONFIDENT

**Sample action plans**

- I will buy a omega-3 oil supplement this week and start taking it next Monday.
- I will try having sardines on toast for breakfast at the weekend.
- I will sprinkle sunflower and pumpkin seeds onto my salad at lunchtimes.
WHY TRY THIS?

The problem
Depression, anxiety, fatigue, poor concentration.

The clues
Low levels of essential fats can also contribute to poor skin condition and painful joints.

TRY THIS
Eat oil-rich fish such was mackerel, sardines, herring, salmon, trout, pilchards, two or three times each week. A daily fish oil (or linseed or hemp oil) food supplement will also boost levels of brain-enhancing omega-3 oils.

Why?
Brain cells need ‘oiling’ with essential unsaturated fats if they are to communicate properly with each other.

What to look out for
Improvements to symptoms after a few weeks.

MORE INFORMATION adapted from The Food and Mood Handbook pages 169-170.

Essential fats in food

The omega-3 essential fats are particularly important for the structure and functioning of the brain. These oils are plentiful in oil rich fish such as mackerel, herring, pilchards, sardines, tuna and salmon. Contrary to popular belief, tinned tuna (but not other oily fish) is not a good source of oil as the oil is removed in the tuna tinning process.

EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) and DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) are two beneficial omega-3 fats found in fish oils. For those who are allergic to fish or who are vegetarian or vegan and don’t eat fish, the omega-3 essential fatty acids can also be obtained from linseed (flax) oil, pumpkin and hemp seeds and walnuts. The alpha-linolenic (omega-3) fatty acid in these sources can be converted by the body into the ‘active’ fatty acid EPA.

Omega-6 fatty acids are found in vegetable oils such as sunflower and rapeseed oils often used in margarines. They are then converted by the body into a substance called GLA (gamma linolenic acid). Hemp oil contains a small amount of ready-made GLA as does Evening Primrose oil.

Essential fats need to be eaten regularly so that the body and brain receive a steady supply of these important nutrients. It is recommended that these good mood fats are eaten at least three times a week or taken daily as a nutritional supplement. Many people are put off eating fish by the thought of having to deal with fish heads and bones. Fresh fish can be filleted by the fish-monger or buy pre-packed fillets or fish steaks. Concerns about the environmental pollution in fish can be counterbalanced by the definite improvements to health that can be experienced within weeks of regularly including fish in the diet.
47% of people using dietary self-help said ‘cutting down on additives’ was beneficial to their mental and emotional health. Source: The Food and Mood Survey

Are you affected by artificial additives?

☐ YES!
Which additives or additive-containing foods affect you? What affect do they have? How did you find this out?

☐ NO!
Do you suspect any foods or drinks are affecting you because of the additives they contain? Why?

Tips for reducing or avoiding additives:
1.
2.
3.

Blocks to reducing or avoiding additives:
1.
2.
3.

“I recommend you go slowly, change one thing at a time and monitor the effects. Tell yourself ‘if this does work I’ll know quickly – if it doesn’t I’ll try something else’”.
Food and Mood Survey participant

ACTION PLAN  I will:
(What)
(When)

How confident are you that you will achieve your action plan?
NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 : TOTALLY CONFIDENT

Sample action plans
• I will have fruit juices and sparkling water instead of colas at work.
• I will buy plain crisps that don’t have any additives for one week.
• I will avoid any food or drink that has artificial colourings in today.
WHY TRY THIS?

The problem
A rapid change in emotion or behaviour within minutes or hours after eating additive-containing foods or drinks. Physical signs of an effect can include itching, eczema or asthma.

The clues
Check labels for artificial additives. Be suspicious of brightly coloured foods or drinks and highly processed foods with flavour enhancers and preservatives. Additives may be listed by their full chemical name or by a number, which in the UK is known as the ‘E number’.

TRY THIS
Do you feel better if you avoid colourings such as tartrazine (E102), flavour enhancers such as monosodium glutamate (MSG or E621), artificial sweeteners such as aspartame (E951), and preservatives such as sulphur dioxide (E220) and BHT (E321)?

Why?
Although additives do not affect everyone, certain artificial additives may be toxic to the body-mind and/or cause nutritional deficiencies. Certain additives have been associated with a range of mental and physical in some people. The combined effect of a mixture of additives is unknown but is potentially more harmful than the effect of individual additives. Children are more vulnerable to the effects of additives.

What to look out for
If symptoms disappear when you avoid additive-containing foods or drinks and return only if the additive-containing food or drink is consumed, then it is reasonable to conclude that the additive(s) is/are the problem.

MORE INFORMATION adapted from The Food and Mood Handbook, page 87
Additives to avoid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLOURINGS</th>
<th>E129</th>
<th>E123</th>
<th>E151</th>
<th>E124</th>
<th>E110</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allura Red AC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amaranth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brilliant Black BN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponceau 4R, Conchineal Red A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunset Yellow, FCF, Orange Yellow S</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tartrazine (FD&amp;C Yellow No. 5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FLAVOURINGS</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aspartame</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monosodium glutamate (MSG)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saccharin, saccharin Na, K, Ca salts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRESERVATIVES</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benzoic acid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcium benzoate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcium sulphite</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potassium benzoate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potassium nitrate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propyl p-hydroxy-benzoate, propyl-paraben, paraben</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium metabisulphite</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium sulphite</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stannous chloride (tin)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulphur dioxide</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additives: worksheet no. 6 in a series of 10
55% of people using dietary self-help said ‘eating breakfast’ and ‘eating regular meals and snacks’ (67%) was beneficial to their mental and emotional health. Source: The Food and Mood Survey

Have you had some breakfast today?

☐ YES!
Do you usually eat breakfast?
What do you eat for breakfast?
How do you feel if you skip breakfast?

Tips for an easy and enjoyable breakfast:
1.
2.
3.

☐ NO!
Do you usually skip breakfast?
How do you feel as a result?
How do you feel if you do have breakfast?

Blocks to eating breakfast:
1.
2.
3.

“What also helped me was to replace my mid-afternoon cake or biscuit with apple and nuts, and this was easy because the effect was immediate.” Food and Mood Survey participant

ACTION PLAN I will:
(What)
(When)

How confident are you that you will achieve your action plan?
NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 : TOTALLY CONFIDENT

Sample action plans
- I will get up 15 mins early on three days this week and have some breakfast before I leave for work.
- I will buy the ingredients today so I can have a smoothie for breakfast tomorrow.
- I will try porridge for breakfast on Thursday.
WHY TRY THIS?

The problem
Not everyone always feels like eating breakfast, and it can be an easy meal to skip when time is short, or if you are concerned about weight gain due to over-eating. However, eating breakfast is an important meal for establishing an even blood-sugar ride through the rest of the day, for obtaining important nutrients, and also for weight control. Eating breakfast has a direct impact on performance at work, school or college, and on behaviour.

The clues
Mid-morning or mid-afternoon dips in mood and energy associated with feeling irritable, anxious, unable to concentrate, tired and depressed, and cravings for quick-fix sugary snacks or caffeine-containing drinks.

TRY THIS
Eat breakfast every day for a week and see how you feel and function. Quick and easy good mood breakfast suggestions include: porridge, wholegrain cereals or ‘live’ yogurt, with fresh or dried fruit, nuts and seeds, or wholemeal bread plus nut or seed butters and sugar-free jam.

Why?
Some mental and emotional symptoms can be a sign of dipping blood sugar levels. Slow-burn foods release their energy more slowly and steadily into the blood-stream. These foods also help prevent weight gain by making the body less likely to produce fat and more efficient at burning stored fat.

What to look out for
See how much this eating strategy reduces symptoms of irritability, anxiety, poor concentration, fatigue or depression that are being triggered by low blood sugar. How has this affected your performance at work, school or college?

MORE INFORMATION adapted from The Food and Mood Handbook, page 199

Seven low-allergy breakfast ideas
- Buckwheat porridge with almond nut butter and sugar-free blackberry jam
- Puffed corn/corn flakes with fresh fruit, sunflower seeds and almond milk
- Pumpernickel bread, toasted with tahini (sesame seed paste) and fruit spread
- Oat porridge with dried dates and oat milk
- Toasted corn bread with cashew nut butter and sugar-free cherry jam
- Wheat-free muesli (make your own from oat, millet, buckwheat and rice flakes, dried fruit and nuts or buy ready-made) with an alternative milk of your choice
- Millet porridge, dried apricots and rice milk
TOPIC 8 WORKSHEET
GUT HEALTH

48% of people using dietary self-help said ‘having more fibre’ was beneficial to their mental and emotional health. Source: The Food and Mood Survey

Do you eat extra fibre or ‘live’ yogurt (or similar) to improve your digestion?

☐ YES!
Do you feel that eating fibre-containing foods or ‘live’ yogurt (or similar food products) helps your digestion?
How long have you been doing this?
What prompted you to start?

Tips for better digestive health:
1.
2.
3.

☐ NO!
Do you have other ways to maintain or improve your digestion?
How does stress affect your digestion?

Blocks to better digestive health:
1.
2.
3.

“Follow your instincts or gut feelings on what may be the problem no matter what others think, and try a change. Keep trying but don’t make it a struggle and be kind to yourself. Do it gradually, in your own time.” Food and Mood Survey participant

ACTION PLAN I will:
(What)
(When)

How confident are you that you will achieve your action plan?
NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 : TOTALLY CONFIDENT

Sample action plans
• I will buy some linseeds and add them to my soup at lunchtime tomorrow.
• I will have live yogurt and fruit for dessert every other day this week.
• I will eat an apple for my mid-morning snack at work today.
WHY TRY THIS?

The problem
Gut health is central to the well-being of body and mind. An unhealthy digestive system can be linked to mental and physical distress and produce a range of symptoms from mild temporary physical discomfort that can make someone tired and irritable, to chronic serious illnesses such as coeliac disease that has been associated with schizophrenia.

The clues
Abdominal discomfort, bloating, indigestion, acid reflux, constipation and diarrhoea are all symptoms of digestive ill-health. If blood or mucus are present in the stools you should consult a medical practitioner.

TRY THIS
Notice if your mood is linked to how well you’re digesting your food. Mental and physical constipation can be improved by eating wholegrain foods, legumes (beans, peas, lentils), fruit and vegetables. Also, try live yogurt and functional food products containing probiotics or ‘friendly’ bacteria.

Why?
The state of your mind is closely connected to the health of your digestive system. Special ‘receptors’ that join up with particular brain chemicals are also found in the gut, which can therefore be seen as an extension of the brain. Chronic constipation can lead to increased levels of toxins circulating in the blood that can also impact on brain functioning.

What to look out for
Improvements in physical symptoms directly associated with the gut, as well as symptoms such as skin complaints and headaches. Also, improvements in emotional and mental well-being within days or weeks of making a change.

MORE INFORMATION  adapted from The Food and Mood Handbook, pages 47-48

Top tips for a healthy digestive system
• Eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables to ‘keep you regular’ (see worksheet no. 9).
• Drink plenty of water every day (see worksheet no. 1).
• Include fibre-containing foods in your daily diet (see above). Oat and rice bran are less likely to irritate the gut lining of sensitive people.
• Sprinkle linseeds onto foods or add to porridge or soups. They swell to increase the size of stools and help with constipation.
• Cut down on concentrated sugars (see worksheet no. 3) and yeast-containing foods (see worksheet no. 10) and alcohol and reduce the risk of gut dysbiosis or ‘candida overgrowth’.
• Avoid any foods to which you are sensitive and which may be irritating to the gut lining
• Learn to cope with stress through, for example, breathing and relaxation techniques.
TOPIC 9 WORKSHEET
FRUIT and VEG

78% of people using dietary self-help said ‘having more vegetables’ and 72% said ‘having more fruit’ was beneficial to their mental and emotional health. Source: The Food and Mood Survey

Do you eat the minimum recommended ‘5 a day’ (five portions of fruit and vegetables)?

☐ YES!

What helps you to do this?

How do you think it affects how you feel?

What advice would you give to others who find it difficult to do this?

Tips for reaching 5 (or more) a day:

1.
2.
3.

☐ NO!

What stops you from having ‘5 a day’?

Blocks to eating 5 a day:

1.
2.
3.

“An easy change for me was to eat more fruit - it’s convenient to carry around and tastes delicious.”
Food and Mood Survey participant

ACTION PLAN I will:

(What)

(When)

How confident are you that you will achieve your action plan?

NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 : TOTALLY CONFIDENT

Sample action plans
• I will eat a green vegetable every day for a month.
• I will order a side salad with my lunch today.
• I will try eating a different fruit for a mid-afternoon snack for 5 days this week.
WHY TRY THIS?

The problem
Specific micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) are being found to be essential for mental as well as physical health e.g. antioxidants including vitamins A, C, E and the mineral selenium protect the brain from free-radical damage and B-vitamins and Folic Acid are important for nerve and brain health and to avoid the build-up of a digestive by-product called homocysteine that is associated with dementia and heart disease.

The clues
The nutritional content of fruit and vegetables is fundamental to mental and physical health. Poor skin, hair and nail quality and a tendency to catch colds and flu are reliable signs of various nutritional deficiencies.

TRY THIS
Eat at least five portions (about a handful each time) of fruit and vegetables daily, and notice how you feel in your body-mind. Aim to eat a rainbow of colours every day for a balanced diet of essential phytonutrients (plant nutrients).

Why?
The different colours in fruits and vegetables relate to different essential phytonutrients (plant nutrients) that are needed to nourish and protect the body-mind. Five is the very minimum number of portions of fruit and vegetables you need each day. A portion is about a handful.

What to look out for
A general improvement in physical and mental health together that is reflected in the appearance of skin, hair and nails and resilience against infections.

MORE INFORMATION adapted from The Food and Mood Handbook, page 170-177

Good mood nutrients and where to find them

Antioxidant vitamins dried apricot, almonds, avocado, beans, berries, blackcurrants, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cashew nuts, cauliflower, citrus fruit, eggs, hazelnuts, kiwifruit, liver (and fish liver oil), mango, melon, oranges, papaya, tangerines, organ meats, pumpkin, red and green sweet peppers, seeds, sweet potato, spinach, sweet potato, tomatoes, vegetable oils, walnuts, watercress.

B-vitamins avocados, bananas, beans, carrots, eggs, fish (e.g. salmon, tuna), meat, milk, molasses, nuts (e.g. almonds, cashew nuts), seeds (e.g. sunflower seeds), wholegrains (e.g. brown rice), lentils, yeast.

Magnesium leafy green vegetables, nuts (such as brazil nuts, almonds, hazelnuts and peanuts) and whole grains (particularly millet and oats).

Manganese beetroot, blackberries, celery, grapes, lettuce, lima (butter) beans, oats, pineapple, raspberries, strawberries, watercress.

Potassium avocado, apricots, almonds, bananas, beans, cabbage, cashew nuts, cauliflower, celery, courgettes, melon, molasses, mushrooms, parsley, pumpkin, radishes, sunflower seeds, watercress.

Selenium brazil nuts, cabbage, courgettes, chicken, tuna, herring, seafood, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, wholegrains.

Zinc brazil nuts, herring, meats, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, walnuts, wholegrains, lamb, oysters.

Fruit & Veg: worksheet no. 9 in a series of 10
TOPIC 10 WORKSHEET

FOOD INTOLERANCE

48% of people using dietary self-help said ‘cutting down on wheat’ and 44% said ‘cutting down on dairy’ (and having wheat/dairy-free alternatives instead) was beneficial to their mental and emotional health. Source: The Food and Mood Survey

Do you have a food intolerance or allergy?

☐ YES!

What food(s) affect you and how?

How did you find out?

What do you eat instead?

Tips for escaping the shadow of food intolerance:

1.

2.

3.

☐ NO! or ☐ DON’T KNOW!

Do you suspect any foods or drinks might be affecting you?

Blocks to finding out about food intolerance:

1.

2.

3.

“Be organised and careful in your trials ... enjoy the knowledge you gain about your personal reactions to food.” Food and Mood Survey participant

ACTION PLAN I will:

(What)

(When)

How confident are you that you will achieve your action plan?

NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10:TOTALLY CONFIDENT

Sample action plans

• I will use rye sourdough bread for making toast for breakfast for the next two weeks.
• I will use feta cheese in my salad for work tomorrow.
• I will get some wheat-free pasta from the ‘free from’ section at the supermarket this afternoon.
WHY TRY THIS?

The problem
Food intolerance may remain undetected until the culprit food (or foods) are eaten less often, or (preferably with support from a health professional) avoided altogether. Food allergy is different because the reaction is usually immediate, severe and never changes.

The clues
Food intolerance can contribute to a wide variety of unpleasant or uncomfortable physical and mental symptoms and is often considered only when all other treatments or self-help approaches have been unsuccessful.

TRY THIS
Keep a food and mood diary, become a food detective: find out how much of the common culprit foods for intolerance you are eating e.g. wheat (bread, pasta, pizza, cakes, biscuits), dairy (milk, cheese, yoghurt, butter) and yeast (in bread, cheese, yeast extract, wine and beer). Discover the alternatives you can have instead. Consider making small changes which are easier to manage. Try one food at a time and note any symptoms.

Why?
Food intolerance reactions can change over the course of a lifetime. You may not always need to reduce or avoid a food in order to avoid symptoms. A rotation diet can be used to successfully manage intolerances and to maintain a balanced diet.

What to look out for
If you have a food intolerance you may initially feel worse if you reduce the amount you have of a problem food. This withdrawal period should be brief (a few days only) and then be followed by a marked improvement in health. If the food is eaten again it may provoke an exaggerated response that confirms the link between food and symptom.

MORE INFORMATION adapted from The Food and Mood Handbook, page 170-177

The top ten culprit foods: wheat

Main food sources Most batters, biscuits, breads, cakes, chapattis, nan bread, pasta, pastry, pitta bread, pizza base, some poppadoms.

Main drink sources Ale, beer, gin, lager, malt, malted milk drinks, spirits, whisky.

Watch out for Bakery products, baking powder, breadcrumbs, breakfast cereals, burgers, confectionery, crackers, croutons, dumplings, flour, gravy, noodles, pancakes, puddings, pretzels, rye bread may contain wheatflour, sauces, sausages, stuffing mix, snackfoods, soups, waffles, and many packaged and processed foods.

Close relatives Bulgar wheat, cous-cous, durum wheat, kamut, semolina, spelt and triticale are all types of wheat that are likely to cause symptoms in a wheat sensitive person. Despite its name, buckwheat is not related to wheat. It is a member of the same family as rhubarb and not a member of the grass family. If gluten in wheat is the problem a cross-reaction with other gluten-containing grains is likely (see cross reactions section in this chapter).


Related risks (non-food) Glue on labels, stamps, envelopes etc (spit don’t lick!), communion wafers, some medications.

Foods to have instead Alternatives to wheat based bread include breads made from rye including pumpernickel bread, or corn (maize) bread. Non-wheat crackers can substitute for bread and include rice cakes, oat cakes, ryvita and corn crackers. Other non-wheat flours suitable for making batters or baking include buckwheat, chestnut, chickpea (gram), millet, potato, rice, sago, soya, tapioca. Wheat free baking powder is available. Oats can be used for crumbles, biscuits and flapjacks. Note that gluten-free products are not necessarily wheat free.

Food intolerance: worksheet no. 10 in a series of 10

© The Food and Mood Project, 2006 · This self-help information is not intended as an alternative to medical advice Dietary self-help for mental and emotional health · www.foodandmood.org
HANDOUT

Action planning

In order to find out if food is affecting our mood we need to make changes to what we are eating, and then see how we feel as a result. Whatever stage we are at in the change-process, the discipline of writing down an action plan can be useful.

Action planning can help us to focus on the next step. If fully completed, an action plan will provide a sense of achievement that boosts our progress towards the larger changes we want to make. And if we find we have been over-ambitious, careful attention to our words will reveal where we need to make subtle and important adjustments to our action plan.

The following approach to writing an action plan is based on the NHS Expert Patients Programme course information.

**To maximise our chances of success, an action plan needs to be:**

- **a commitment to do something you want to do** – not what someone else thinks you should do, or that you think you ‘should’ do.

- **reasonable** – something you can expect to be able to accomplish in the very near future, eg this week.

- **behaviour-specific** – eg feeling less anxious is not a behaviour (it is a feeling), but ‘cutting down on caffeine’, for example, is a behaviour (something that someone else could see you do, or not do).

**It is more likely to help you if an action plan can answer these questions:**

- **What am I going to do?** (eg drink more water)

- **How much?** (eg a mug-full)

- **When?** (first thing in the morning)

- **How often?** (eg at least four times this week. Try to avoid phrases like ‘most days’. Numbers are more precise.)

Finally, if we can give an honest-as-possible confidence rating for completing all of our action plan, it shows whether or not we need to go back and reword our plan into something we are more likely to manage. This is because, if we really want to complete our plan, then it is better to commit to something for which we have a confidence level of 7 or more. On this rating scale 0 = no confidence and 10 = total confidence that we will finish our entire action plan.

Good luck!
Food and Mood Workshop feedback

Before you go, please let us know how you feel about the workshop.

😊 What did you like about this workshop?

😞 Is there anything you would like to have changed about this workshop?

Thank you for your comments. They will help in the planning of future Food and Mood workshops.
Food And Mood workshop leader’s feedback

We would love to hear how your workshop went so we can continue to improve this guide. For each workshop you run, please photocopy this sheet and send us your brief answers to the following questions. Alternatively email info@foodandmood.org for the Workshop Feedback Questionnaire.

1 How many people took part in this workshop?
2 Briefly describe the group characteristics (eg service users, mental health professionals, the approximate age range and gender mix):
3 How long did the workshop last?
4 Did you have time to complete it?
5 What worked well?
6 Do you hope to lead another workshop?
7 What didn’t work so well?
8 What might you do different next time?
9 Please suggest any changes you would like to see to this guide or worksheet (continue overleaf if you wish):
10 The following information is optional:

Name: ____________________________________________
Job title: _________________________________________
Organisation: ____________________________________
Address: _________________________________________
Postcode: _________________________________________
Email: ___________________________________________
Telephone: _______________________________________

Please return this sheet to:
Workshop Feedback, The Food and Mood Project, PO Box 2737, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 2GN, UK or email your feedback to info@foodandmood.org.