

# **Nutrition, Diet and Mental Health - Evidence-Based Approaches for the 21st Century**

**16<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

**9.00 – 13.15**

Good nutrition is fundamental to mental as well as physical health and wellbeing, and scientific evidence shows that diet is an important modifiable factor in the prevention and treatment of mental illness.

Nutritional psychiatry is now a growing discipline, considering food and diet (and the use of supplements if needed) as part of an integrated and complementary approach to the management of mental health disorders.

Importantly, this approach can also help to alleviate many of the physical conditions or symptoms associated with psychiatric disorders, and to minimise possible side-effects of some standard treatments.

At this event, Chy Sawel brings you the chance to hear from two of the leading experts in this field.

**Dr Alex Richardson**, Founder Director of Food and Behaviour (FAB) Research, and Visiting Senior Research Scientist at the University of Oxford

**Dr Kevin Williamson RNutr**, Head of Research and Senior Nutritionist, Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust

- Hear the latest research evidence on how nutrition and diet affect brain development and function, and therefore mental health and wellbeing, with a focus on:
  - Psychotic Disorders such as Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia and other forms of serious mental illness
  - ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorders and related neurodevelopmental conditions
  - Anxiety, Depression, Insomnia and related conditions including Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Fibromyalgia
- Learn how the findings from research can be applied in practice, and what dietary changes can help people with these kinds of difficulties, and those who care for them
- Ask questions, join the discussion – and learn about some simple and effective ways to assess diet and nutrition, and to find strategies that best suit the individuals involved



## Programme

9.00 – 9.15	Login
9.15 – 9.45	Chair's Introduction and Update on Chy Sawel. <i>Sandra Breakspeare</i>
9.45 – 10.45	<b>The Role of Nutrition in Developmental and Mental Health Disorders: Evidence-Based Dietary Interventions to Improve Mood, Behaviour and Cognition.</b> <i>Dr Alex Richardson</i>
10.45– 11.00	Break / Time for Tea
11.00 - 12.00	Nutrition and Psychosis: clinical data, latest findings from research, and the views of patients, carers and staff. <i>Dr Kevin Williamson</i>
12.00– 12.15	Break / Time for Tea
12.15 - 12.45	<b>The year my life was stolen: One Woman's Terrifying Journey to Discover the Truth about Antidepressants.</b> <i>Katinka Blackford Newman</i>
12.45– 13.15	Speakers Panel / Q&A and Discussion. <i>All speakers</i>
13.15	Conference close



## **The Role of Nutrition in Developmental and Mental Health Disorders: Evidence-Based Dietary Interventions to Improve Mood, Behaviour and Cognition**

*Dr Alex Richardson, Founder Director, Food And Behaviour Research; and Visiting Senior Research Scientist at the University of Oxford*

Mental health disorders account for a greater burden of ill health in the UK and other developed countries than heart disease and cancer combined; and this burden continues to increase, with huge numbers of those affected unable to access effective support or treatments. The causes of mental ill-health are complex and multi-factorial, involving biological, psychological, socio-economic and cultural factors that all interact. The diagnoses used in psychiatry, however (and required to access many mental health services) are essentially descriptive. Because despite significant advances in our knowledge and understanding in recent decades from genetic, biochemical, pharmacological and neuroscientific research into 'brain disorders', there are still no reliable objective markers for these diagnoses.

What has become very clear is that nutrition and diet play a fundamental role not only in physical health and development, but also in the development and functioning of our brains and nervous systems – and that both brain and body health are intrinsically connected. Nutrition and diet also operate at all levels - biological, psychological, socio-economic and cultural. And most important, they are modifiable - provided that people have access to the information and resources they need to make the appropriate dietary changes (which will differ between individuals).

This presentation will provide:

- 1) An overview summary of findings from the latest research into the role of nutrition in neurodevelopmental and psychiatric disorders, particularly ADHD, ASD, anxiety, depression and psychosis, covering:
  - The links between gut health, immune function, metabolism and brain health
  - The relevance to brain function of dietary intakes of: sugar and 'carbs' (including fibre); fats (particularly omega-3); vitamins, minerals and other essential nutrients; and 'anti-nutrients' or toxins
  - the potential benefits - and risks - of both common dietary patterns and specific nutritional interventions
- 2) A framework of evidence-based guidelines for parents/carers and practitioners to evaluate nutritional and dietary approaches to the management of these conditions.

More information on these issues is available from Food And Behaviour Research:

[www.fabresearch.org](http://www.fabresearch.org)



**Nutrition and Psychosis: clinical data, latest findings from research, and the views of patients, carers and staff**

*Kevin Williamson, Head of Research, Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust (RDaSH), and Consultant Nutritionist and the Clinical Lead at their Centre for Nutrition and Behaviour*

Research clearly shows that nutrition and diet can influence both the risks for developing psychosis, and the course of illness and recovery from this condition. This presentation provides an overview of how this evidence can be translated into clinical practice, drawing on the pioneering work of speaker Kevin Williamson and his colleagues at a leading NHS Trust that has already been putting this evidence into practice for many years, and also providing education and training on how others can do the same.

The presentation also includes key outcomes and conclusions from a recent review of the literature on nutrition and mental health, carried out as part of Kevin's current PhD work in this rapidly expanding field. In addition, preliminary results will be presented from his ongoing qualitative research – which explores the views of patients, carers and healthcare professionals on the topic of nutrition for the management of psychosis.

The presentation is therefore structured into three sections, covering:

- 1) Practical approaches to including nutritional assessment and dietary intervention as part of mainstream psychiatric services, including:
  - nutritional assessment of patients with psychosis
  - practical dietary intervention strategies
  - case studies
  - professional education and training in nutrition and clinical psychiatry
- 2) A review of the current research literature on the role of nutrition in mental health: key findings and their implications
- 3) Nutritional psychiatry: The views and perspectives of patients, carers and staff



## About Chy Sawel



**Sandra Breakspeare** Founder & Trustee of the [Chy-Sawel Charity](#)

Due to the mental health issues of one of her sons and the fact that Anthony couldn't cope with the side effects of the treatment of the day (mainly psychiatric drugs) and both Sandra and her son asking for some other form of treatment were told there was NOTHING, only the drugs.

Sandra decided to look for some other form of help for her son. She attended various conferences in London, Oxford University, Belgium and also travelled as far as Canada for six consecutive years to three-day conferences. On returning to the UK she managed to form a committee of interested people and registered as a Ltd. Company eventually registering as a fully-fledged charity with the charity commission.

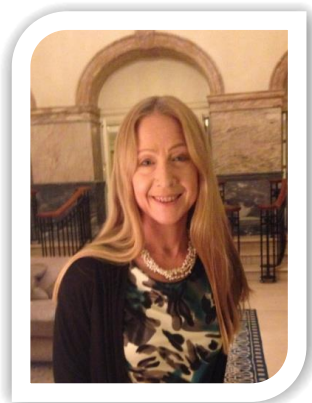
The main aim of the charity is to set up a therapeutic centre to help and support sufferers who like her son can't cope with the medications prescribed. With residency during the duration of the treatment which nutritional therapy will be a large part of the support but with also talking therapies and a whole person approach with a view to a more natural approach to their recovery to better mental health.

Sadly Anthony, after many years in various mental hospitals, on many different medications over the years and given ECT was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. He sadly died on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2019 only being home for three and a half weeks after nineteen years of solid hospitalization.

Although Anthony passed away Sandra can't give up on her vision knowing that there are many like Anthony. Their families suffer as she did and so she wants to be able to allow people to have a choice and not be forcibly given medication which causes many dreadful side effects which they find difficult to cope with.



## Speaker's Profiles



**Alex Richardson**, BA(Hons), DPhil(Oxon), PGCE, FRSA.

Dr Alex Richardson is Founder Director of the UK charity [Food and Behaviour Research](#), and a Visiting Research Scientist at The University of Oxford's Department of Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics where she has worked for over 30 years.

She is internationally known for her research into the role of nutrition – especially dietary fats – on brain development and function, and its implications for behaviour, learning and mood, as the citation impact of her 90+ peer-reviewed publications places her in the top 3% of researchers worldwide.

Her pioneering studies include the first published evidence that omega-3 fatty acids may help reduce symptoms of ADHD, dyslexia depression and schizophrenia, and controlled nutritional treatment trials in both general and clinical populations. Her research is highly collaborative and interdisciplinary, with experimental studies involving psychology, physiology, biochemistry and brain imaging as well as nutrition, and large-scale collaborative investigations into the epidemiology and genetics of both normal individual differences and developmental and psychiatric conditions in children and adults.

Alex's work has always been aimed at developing new methods of identification and management that will have real practical benefit. She therefore works closely with a wide range of practitioners in health, education and allied areas, as well as local and national support groups and charities like Chy Sawel. She also has extensive experience of organising and designing educational events, programmes and courses for public education and professional training - aimed at improving mental health, wellbeing and performance, and particularly in the areas of nutrition, neuroscience and psychology.

Alex is a highly experienced and popular speaker for public and professional as well as academic audiences, with excellent communication skills and a clear presentation style. Her own work has received substantial media coverage, and she is a frequent contributor for the press, radio and TV both in the UK and abroad. Her book 'They Are What You Feed Them' (Harper Thorson 2011), was written to help parents/carers and professionals interested in how diet can (and does) affect children's behaviour and learning, with all author royalties dedicated to the FAB Research charity.





**Kevin Williamson**, RNutr, MMedSci, BSc (First class Hons.)

Kevin Williamson is the Head of Research for Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust (RDaSH), and a Consultant Nutritionist and the Clinical Lead at their Centre for Nutrition and Behaviour.

Kevin has worked as a Registered Nutritionist supporting mental health for nearly 15 years; and his early work - helping young people with mental health problems at the early intervention in psychosis services at RDaSH - received a UK Parliamentary commendation in 2008.\* He developed a nutritional service there for young people experiencing their first episode of psychosis - looking at their diet in relation to their illness, and providing a healthier, more nutritionally balanced alternative. This service drew praise from the Government's Food and Health Forum, which recommended that all other NHS trusts should adopt a similar approach.

Since then, Kevin has further developed his nutritional care service for those with psychosis, and also created an accredited training package for healthcare professionals. The RDaSH Trust and their Centre for Nutrition and Behaviour have successfully developed, hosted and are now delivering a series of nutrition studies and training events, some of these funded by charities, national research institutions and industry.

In addition to his clinical work and qualifications as a Registered Nutritionist, Kevin has a Masters of Medical Science in Human Nutrition, and is currently studying for his PhD part-time at the University of Leeds, researching the subject of 'Nutrition for the Management of Psychosis', having already authored a number of academic research publications on the topics of nutrition, mental health and peer-support.

Kevin is a highly popular and engaging speaker, with many years' experience of both University lecturing and Clinical training, as well as having presented his clinical and research work both nationally and internationally. He has also assisted the FAB Research charity since 2008 as a Scientific and Professional Advisor, making a valued contribution to their educational and professional training events, as well as those of Chy Sawel and many other charities and support groups.

[\\*Associate Parliamentary Food and Health Forum Report 2008: Inquiry into the links between diet and behaviour.](#)





**Katinka Blackford Newman**

Katinka is a BBC trained documentary film-maker who lives in London. Her interest in this subject began in 2012 when she nearly lost her life because of an adverse reaction to an antidepressant. She was hospitalised and prescribed more drugs which made her extremely ill. After a year she was lucky to be taken off all the drugs and made a full recovery.

She researched the side effects of antidepressants and interviewed some of the world's leading experts. Her best-selling book '[The Pill That Steals Lives](#)' has been featured on Radio 5 Live, BBC London, Good Morning Britain, the Victoria Derbyshire Show and in The Times, The Sunday Times, The Daily Mail and The British Journal of Psychiatry.

In 2017 her research was made into a BBC Panorama programme '[A Prescription for Murder](#)' which investigated whether an antidepressant could be the cause of one of the worst mass killings of this century.

She has written articles highlighting the risks of antidepressants including:

- [Daily Mail September 2018](#)
- [Daily Mail December 2016](#)
- [The Independent August 2016](#)

She has also made an 8-minute film about her story: [A Family's Journey to Discover the Side Effects of Antidepressants](#)

