

food and mood

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the Food and
Mood Project

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Special Food and Mood Conference Issue

Healing minds

by Dr Jan Wallcraft, Senior Researcher, the Sainsbury Centre



I am currently a Senior Researcher at the Sainsbury Centre carrying out a survey of the user/survivor movement in England. I recently completed my PhD on the subject of how people experience a crisis or breakdown and psychiatric treatment for the first time.

I am a survivor of mental distress and psychiatric services, and have struggled with issues around food since early childhood. I have had periods of anorexia, bulimia and compulsive eating throughout my adult life, usually related to stress and unhappiness. I have spoken and written on the subject of food

and eating problems on a number of occasions, the first of these was at the Survivors Speak Out conference, Personal Perspectives on Eating Distress.

While at the Mental Health Foundation, I wrote a report, *Healing Minds*, on complementary therapies and mental health, in which I covered the role of nutrition in mental health and the importance of looking at diet and nutrition as part of any mental health diagnosis and treatment. I also carried out a project on eating distress, to commemorate the life and work of Rosalinde Caplin, a close friend of mine. Ros, a highly qualified complementary therapist and campaigner for better understanding of issues around food and mental distress, died a few years ago after losing her battle with anorexia.

I believe that many people who are diagnosed and medicated may be suffering from the effects of poor nutrition, undiagnosed

FROM THE EDITOR



Welcome to this special conference edition of the newsletter where, for this autumn

issue, the regular newsletter features have been put aside. This has been to make space for the many words of wisdom that have flowed from the hearts, minds and pens (and keyboards) of each of the eleven mental health and nutritional experts who are contributing to the landmark Food and Mood event this September.

Topics covered in this bumper-sized issue include the evidence base underpinning 'food and mood', the fascinating area of food sensitivities and mental health, self-help experiences of service users, user-led research and a general call for positive action now in this exciting new area of mental health care.

To readers who have been unable to attend this sell-out conference, we hope you will appreciate learning something about the speakers, the information and insights these experts will be sharing on the day, and discovering how they see the food and mood approach being further developed.

If you are reading this as one of the hundred or so delegates attending on the day, then, it is hoped that your special copy of *Food and Mood* will become a valued record of what promises to be a memorable event.

Enjoy!
Amanda Geary
The Food and Mood Project Founder

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