



community  
food and health

(scotland)

# Second Helpings



**National learning  
exchange on food,  
mental health  
and wellbeing**

Wednesday 5 March 2014  
Discovery Point, Dundee

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# Background

We know that food is good for building social connections, and those organisations supporting people living with mental health issues have a long history of work involving food. Equally, community food initiatives work with many people in their local communities who live with mental health issues.

In 2012, Community Food and Health (Scotland), or CFHS, held an event, Mind the Menu, to bring together mental health organisations and community food initiatives to look at the role that food can play in mental health and wellbeing. You can read a full report of that event on our website.

Two main messages emerged from the day:

1. Organisations enjoyed the opportunity to network and learn from each other.
2. Organisations were looking for more support with how to evaluate and describe the impact of their food work.

In response to this, CFHS developed the Building Evidence of Impact programme. In late 2012, we offered the opportunity to participate in four days' training on self-evaluation, at the end of which organisations could apply for a small amount of funding to carry out a piece of self-evaluation work. Twelve people from ten different organisations took part in the programme; nine received funding to carry out a self-evaluation in their own organisation and eight produced a report on their work.

The reports provide a rich picture of work taking place across the country. We believed that other groups and organisations would be interested in both the evidence generated and the methods used and we wanted to share these as widely as possible.

In January 2014, CFHS commissioned the Scottish Collaboration for Public Health Research and Policy (SCPHRP) to undertake a metasynthesis of the studies to find out what they tell us about the role that community-based food work can have on mental health and wellbeing. At the same time planning started for a national learning exchange to provide another opportunity for organisations working in this field to network and share their practice. This became Second Helpings.

## What we tried to achieve

We set the following objectives for the day:

- To showcase the creative work that is taking place across different organisations in Scotland.
- To create an opportunity to share ideas and practice.
- To focus on self-evaluation – what works and what doesn't work? Which tools and techniques are useful? What new tools and techniques have been developed?
- To develop ideas on what we are learning (the evidence) about the impact that work involving food can have on mental health and wellbeing.

We also wanted to maximise the impact of messages from the day and enlisted the talents of Albi Taylor to provide graphic representations. You will find these on pages 6 and 7 of this report.

# The programme

The day was divided into four main sections.

## 1 Sharing practice

Robert Nesbitt and Kevin Bruce from Scottish Association for Mental Health and Jennifer Cairns, Fiona Morrison and Phylis Andrew from Turning Point Scotland spoke about why they had started to work in the area of food, what helped to develop their interest and what got in the way. Fiona spoke of the impact that getting involved in Turning Point Scotland's food work has had on her life.

Participants in the room shared information about their current food work.

## 2 Evaluating the impact of what we do

Kate Bovill from The Breastfeeding Network (BfN) and Michele Mason from the Stafford Centre spoke about the self-evaluation work they had carried out as part of the Building Evidence of Impact programme.

Kate shared the tools she had developed to assess the impact on the wellbeing of women involved with BfN either as group members or helpers/supporters. They particularly looked at change in wider social networks, social involvement and the link between breastfeeding and other food choices.

Social information sharing

Food and mood

Food and health network in Dundee

Obesity levels

HERB – healthy eating on a reduced budget

Healthy Living Initiative in Whitfield Gardening groups

Weight management

The sunken garden in Dundee

Supper clubs

Planting trees

Recipe books

Cooking skills and food production

Lunch clubs

Waste not, want not course

Eating disorders

Eating communally

Cooking classes

Relationship with food

Penumbra Angus community cooking group

Michele described the evaluation that she had carried out of two different cookery courses offered at The Stafford Centre and learning about the impact of timing and particular individual issues on the overall outcomes. The evaluations showed improvements in all six areas identified as important by participants in the groups: motivation, confidence, ability, mental health, physical health and knowledge.

## 3 Useful evaluation tools

Emma Pattinson from Edinburgh Community Food and Alex Hodgson from Stepping Out provided hands-on experience of the tools they had developed from their learning on the Building Evidence of Impact programme. Jenny Roberts from Birchwood Highland Recovery Centre was also scheduled to share the tools she had used, but was unable to attend; Jacqui McDowell covered her session.

Emma from Edinburgh Community Food had everyone working on a body map and evaluation wheels to see how they could be used. Alex spoke about the creative use of video, still photography and social media at Stepping Out and shared the fantastic images taken by members of the group. Jacqui shared some of the tools that Jenny had developed, including the Birchwood Highland cooking star and blank jigsaw puzzles for people to identify what they had learned from the cooking skills sessions.



Birchwood Highland cooking star and jigsaw



Edinburgh Community Food body map



Edinburgh Community Food body map



Edinburgh Community Food evaluation wheel

## 4 Evidence of impact

Heather Cameron from CHANGES Community Health Project provided a presentation on the learning from the evaluation of its Eat Well – Keep Active programme, commissioned with support from CFHS. CHANGES employed an external researcher to look at the impact of this five-week programme designed to increase mental and physical wellbeing by increasing knowledge of eating well and exercising. The evaluation used a postal survey together with interviews with a sample of respondents to explore which elements of the programme people enjoyed, found useful or unhelpful, as well as to determine which outcomes the programme had most impact on. The conclusions have been useful in suggesting changes to make the programme more effective and a second-stage evaluation of people on two further programmes is currently underway.

**Community food work & its impact on mental health and wellbeing**

Second Helpings  
5<sup>th</sup> March 2014



**Background**

Few research publications involving community-led programs

- Questions of scientific rigor & control
- Food/diet interventions rarely evaluate mental health outcomes & vice-versa

**Meta-analysis**

**Participants**

- Adults with mental health issues (4)
- Women accessing peer support groups
- Mothers in deprived areas
- Elderly attending a day centre
- Adults with learning disabilities

**Typical group size 5-10**

- Up to 40 evaluated for one program

**Meta-analysis**

**Program length**

- 5-11 weeks
- 3 ongoing

**Program components**

- Cooking skills (7)
- Healthy eating (5)
- Food safety (4)
- Breakfast/lunch/supper club (3)
- Gardening
- Group discussion/peer support
- Light exercise

**Meta-analysis**

**Reported findings**

- Increased/improved
- social interaction (5)
- confidence (6)
- home cooking/cooking skills (6)
- Changes in specific dietary habits (4)

**Meta-analysis**

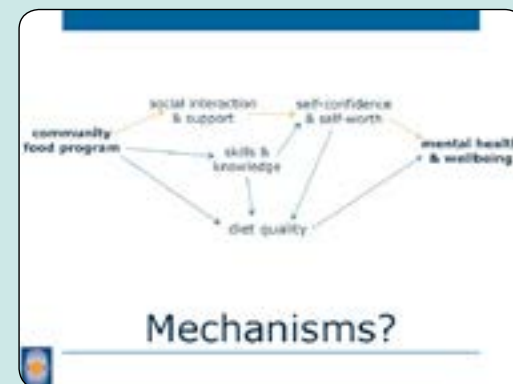
**Tools used**

- Pictures/words (4)
- Focus groups (3)
- Interviews (3)
- Evaluation wheels (3)
- Questionnaires (3)
- Staff observations (2)
- Video (1)
- Photos (1)

**Interviews with key staff**

**Barriers to Evaluation**

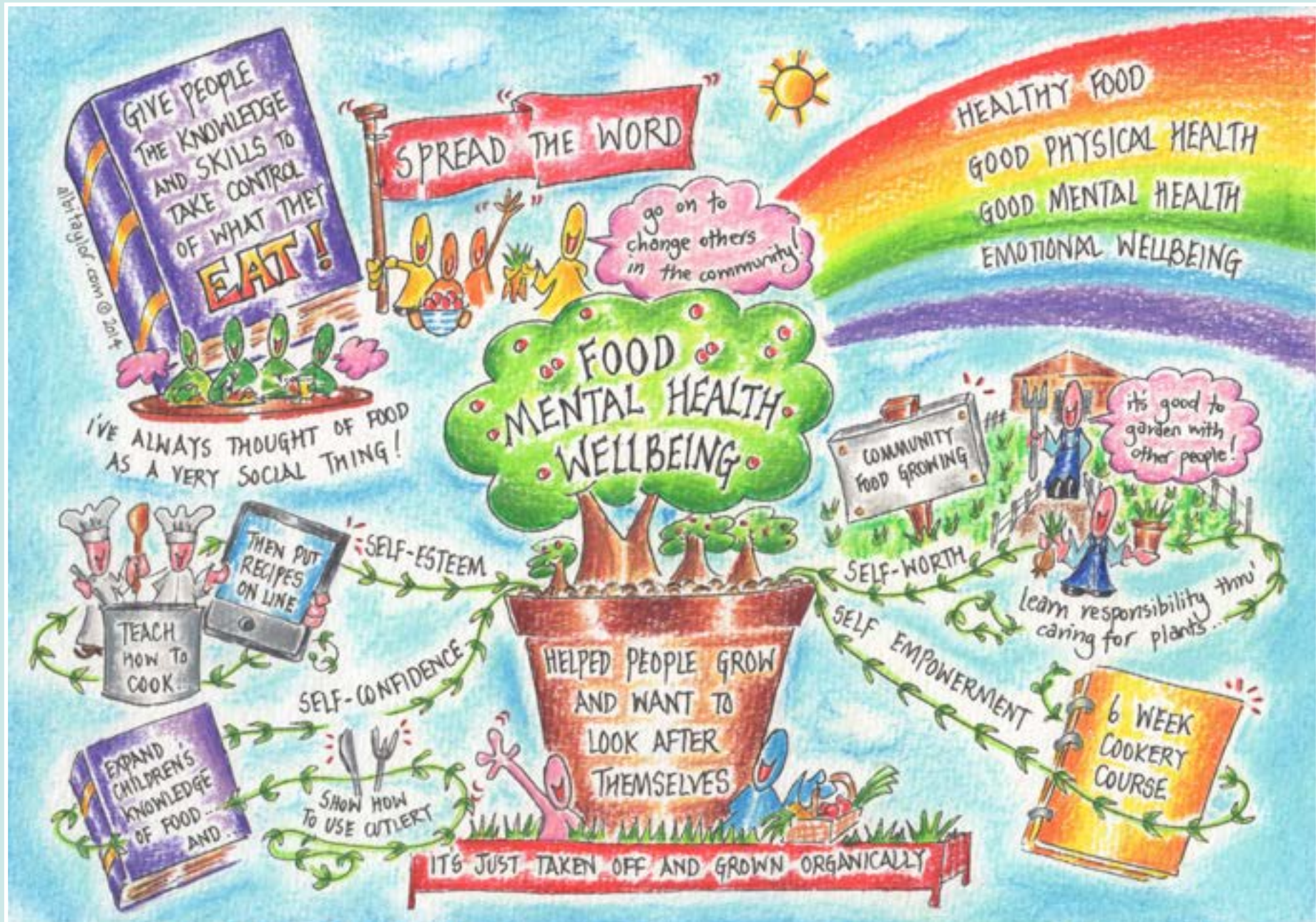
- Funding
- Cost of personnel time
- Other work suffers
- Wording
- Tools
- Questionnaires inappropriate for many
- Current tools inadequate to detect/measure small (significant) individual changes



Michelle Estrade from SCPHRP provided some early indications from the metasynthesis of the self-evaluation reports.

# The programme

Albi Taylor worked with us to distil all her drawings from the day into two key graphics.







# Where are we now?

At the end of the day participants were asked to note down what they were now thinking and any conclusions from the day, after discussing at their tables. This is what they recorded:

Definite link [with deprivation, isolation] - it's very encouraging

Need a lot more partnership working

Pressure funders to ... understand that qualitative stories are more meaningful

Evaluation tools make them more part of activity

New ideas, creative ways to evaluate

Use for the [REHIS] wheel

Better methods of evaluation, one fit doesn't suit all

Case studies and video work

Mechanisms - more awareness of ... research, other organisation[s] and work ongoing

So important to speak to service users for evaluation... closure and reflection

Spread the word, butter it up, share the pie and whip up enthusiasm

We liked the wheel

# Feedback on the day

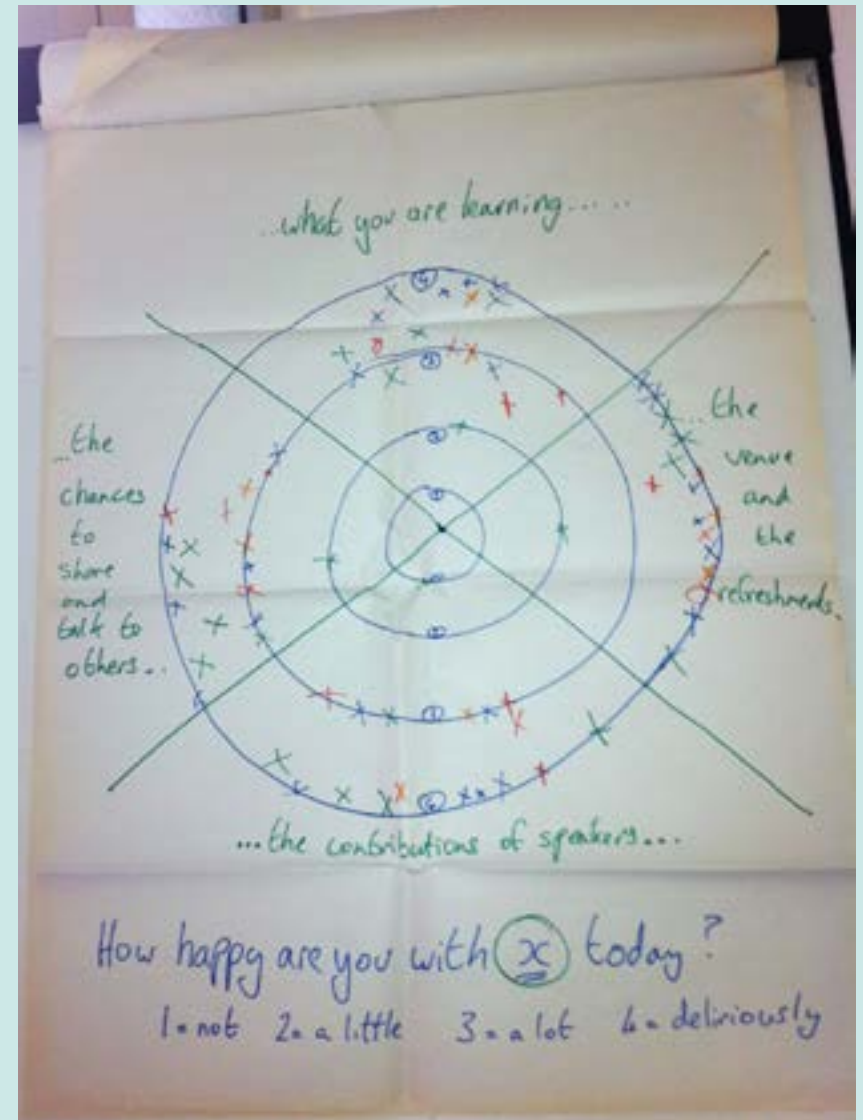
'It was a great event and I've taken away a lot in relation to evaluation. It was encouraging being with so many enthusiastic people.'

'I thought the day was great and as always well organised and attended – thanks.'

'I really enjoyed the event, and it was great to meet so many people who are doing work in this area.'

'Went really well. A good mix of folk with lots of knowledge to impart. We all learnt loads.'

'I've updated the website with some of the tools I mentioned at the event including the blank recipe card for other projects to use. I am so glad that so many people were interested in what I had to offer.'



Feedback evaluation wheel

# Comment tree

What has inspired or surprised you so far today?



# Birchwood Highland cooking star

**Birchwood Recovery Centre**  
**Cooking star**

Date	Key/colour	Completed by

I make a balanced meal for myself on a regular basis

I feel able to ask for help in the kitchen when I need it

I am able to plan my meals and keep within my budget

I aim to eat five fruit and vegetables a day

I feel I am managing to maintain a healthy weight

I feel comfortable sitting down at a table with others to eat

# What happened next?

## Research

SCPHRP completed its research which was published by NHS Health Scotland in March 2014.

Jepson R, Estrade M, Robertson R, Robertson T. *Meta-synthesis of findings from evaluations and qualitative interviews of work involving community food and its impact on mental health and wellbeing*. Edinburgh: NHS Health Scotland; 2014.

[www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/publications/metasyntesis-findings-evaluations-qualitative-interviews-work-involving-community-food-impact-mental-health-wellbeing/](http://www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/publications/metasyntesis-findings-evaluations-qualitative-interviews-work-involving-community-food-impact-mental-health-wellbeing/)

A summary from the evaluation of the CHANGES Eat Well – Keep Active course was published by SCPHRP.

Robertson R, Jepson R. *Evaluation of Eat Well – Keep Active (Stage 1)*. Edinburgh: SCPHRP; 2014. [www.scphrp.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/An-evaluation-of-Eat-Well-stage-1.pdf](http://www.scphrp.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/An-evaluation-of-Eat-Well-stage-1.pdf)

## Conferences

Michelle Estrade from SCPHRP presented the findings from the metasyntesis at the UK Public Health Research Centres of Excellence conference in Leeds in June 2014. It was very well received. There are plans to submit papers to further conferences.

## Publications

An article based on the research findings has been submitted for publication in an open access academic journal. Watch out for further news on our website.

# Contacts for further information

**Birchwood Highland Recovery Centre**

[www.birchwoodhighland.org.uk](http://www.birchwoodhighland.org.uk)

**The Breastfeeding Network**

[www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk](http://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk)

**CHANGES**

[www.changeschp.org.uk](http://www.changeschp.org.uk)

**Edinburgh Community Food**

[www.edinburghcommunityfood.org.uk](http://www.edinburghcommunityfood.org.uk)

**NHS Tayside**

[www.nhstayside.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.nhstayside.scot.nhs.uk)

**Scottish Collaboration for Public Health Research and Policy**

[www.scphrp.ac.uk](http://www.scphrp.ac.uk)

**Stepping Out**

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

**Scottish Association for Mental Health**

[www.samh.org.uk](http://www.samh.org.uk)

**Turning Point Scotland**

[www.turningpointscotland.com](http://www.turningpointscotland.com)

**The Stafford Centre**

[www.staffordcentre.org.uk](http://www.staffordcentre.org.uk)

**Community Food and Health (Scotland)**

[www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk](http://www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk)