9 Week course in dietary health for service users

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Course outline:

Week 1

Introductory talk ‘food and mood’ covering the main principles

Week 2: (Course begins):Understanding the role of food in health and well-being

1. Introductions and Mind depression questionnaire.
2. The three eras of human food: Paleolithic, Agricultural, Industrial
3. The human body and food –understanding how depression can be reduced and mood and energy lifted by good nutrition. Covers gut health and hormones. 'Gob': Gut - organs - brain.Some of the latest research made easy to understand from the Alliance for Natural Health.
4. An inspiration exercise: 'One, two or three things I can do to be healthier' – Introducing the principle of setting achievable targets.
5. Facebook group or social media thread established for course participants. (can be kept confidential)

Week 3: Understanding more about food groups, and food choices:

1. The main choices to make

Protein: meat, nuts, legumes\*, dairy\*

Carbs: roots, fruits, grains\*, refined sugar\*\*

Fats: animal and plant sources – different types of fat, discussion on suitable ways to get fat, benefits of omega 3, how to achieve a good omega 6/3 balance

Vitamins, minerals and fibre: Veg and fruit, grains\*

1. Phytochemicals: The importance of sunlight, cell reproduction, and why natural food is best, and why ‘Humans cannot make food, humans make products’.
2. Junk food\*\*: How modern industrial food is made, and why it's best to restrict it, and in some cases, eliminate it from your diet.

\* I suggest potential health issues with these foods with some research to show this - there is a lot of evidence that these foods are problematic but there is no conclusive scientific data and I will leave people to decide for themselves.

\*\* I suggest the less you eat of these foods, the better.

Week 4: Sugar awareness

1. The history of sugar and the sugar industry, why we love to eat it and what place should it have in society today? "Sugar was a celebration food, but it has become a staple....sugar is destroying our health" - Robert Lustig.
2. What is it in? What does it do to you? Is it a food or a drug? What are the alternatives?
3. Hypoglycaemia: A hypoglycaemia questionnaire for participants to fill in or take home.
4. Sugar and adrenalin fatigue.

Week 5: How to shop, where to shop

1. What are food companies and shops doing to help and/or hinder your health?
2. The typical supermarket layout and ways to 'cut out the nasties' from your food shopping.
3. What are the advantages / disadvantages of the supermarket?
4. What are the alternatives to the supermarket?

Week 6: Fresh food quick and easy

1. Healthy ways to cook with a grill, a chopping board and a frying pan. 'Design a quick meal' exercise.
2. Problem solvers: 'But what about breakfast?'  'I can't cook lunch at work'. 'I don't have time to cook'.

Week 7: The seven 'S's' of real cooking: Stock, Soup, Stew, Salad, Sauté, Steaming, and Slow-cooking.

1. Understanding traditional foods and why they are so healthy.  Learn more about these techniques and get inspired to try them. More ideas and websites to consider. Free information that’s out there.
2. I will be presenting some traditions and asking participants about theirs.

Week 8

Eat, sleep and move: Healthy living in three stages.

1. Material from the acclaimed fitness coach and movement expert Darryl Edwards, who advocates a type of exercise called 'Primal Play'
2. The latest research into the importance of sleep for human health
3. A video of the ‘guerrilla gardener’ - an award winning social activist from one of Los Angeles' most deprived areas who turned pavements into food. Some more examples of this type of project in the UK.
4. Some accounts from my foraging classes, and introducing the general benefits of getting out into nature.

Week 9

Summary of the course: Take charge of your diet and your health.

1. Group exercises,
2. Quiz
3. Prizes / completion certificates.
4. Mind end of course depression questionnaire.

Feedback / Course Evaluation