

PHASE 2

STAFF RESOURCE – WORKSHOP FLOWS AND SCRIPTS

WORKSHOP (WEEK) 8 – Love your Gut: Gut Health Part II

Key:

[Blue bold] = Notes to facilitator

Italics bold = Questions for facilitator to ask the room/group

Italics = Script to guide sessions

The room set up/environment

- A comfortable space for chatting and sharing
- Herbal teas

Resources:

- Week 8 workshop handouts
- Optional spot prize for the quiz (suggest mini bottles of kombucha or probiotic yogurts)
- Pens
- Copy of the journal – Hard cover or printed PDF (new version phase 1 & 2 combined)
- The Why and How of Slow Nostril Breathing PDF
- Love your gut for health & weight management PDF
- Gut Health (resource from week 2)
- The Bristol Stool Scale PDF
- What's the go with gluten? PDF
- Week 8 Nutrition Tasks
- Week 8 Meal Plan (print from MyFernwood)

Overview: Session duration - 1 hour

- Welcome and review of last week's activities and questions – 5 minutes
- Love your Gut (topic overview) – 5 minutes
- Gut Health Quiz (activity and discussions) – 10 minutes
- Bristol Stool Scale (activity) – 10 minutes
- Your Gut Health Inventory (discussion) – 5 minutes
- Slow Nostril Breathing (activity) – 10 minutes
- Session close – 1 minute

Session flow

NB the scripts are merely guides and do not need to be verbatim. Run the discussions and activities to suit your personality and style.

Welcome and review of week 7 [DISCUSSION] – 5 minutes

*Welcome to week 8. Today we will explore the topic, 'Love your Gut: Gut Health Part II' (recall we touched on gut health already in week 2) focusing primarily on what optimal digestion looks like as well as the role of overall gut health in relation to mood health and healthy weight management. Before we jump into this week's topics, **[ASK THE GROUP] does anyone want to share how they got on in week 7***

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or have any questions? [Encourage discussion and support contributions from the group - ask about success with the recipe plan, any favourite recipes? How did they get on with their journal activities? And is everyone up to date?]

[OVERVIEW] Love your Gut – 5 minutes

Ok, let's dive in to this week's topic – Love your Gut: Gut Health Part II,

Cast your mind back to week 2, where we focused on the concept of food as information – meaning it provides us much more than calorific value. One example of where food provides powerful information is in regards to our gut health. The health of our intestinal tissues, the function of the gut, including optimal digestion relies on us all having a healthy balance of microbes that live in and on us (primarily in our gut) and science is proving that the foods we eat (in particular plant based fibrous foods) DIRECTLY dictate how healthy and balanced these microbes are.

[ASK THE GROUP] Can anyone recall the collective name for these microbes that include bacteria, yeasts, viruses and even parasites? [Wait for contributions – the answer you want to land on is 'the Microbiome'. Refer to the Gut Health resource from week 2].

This is called the Microbiome and if you recall from week 2 the Gut Health resource talked about how these microbes produce chemical messages that influence many different health and metabolic outcomes, including weight management, immune health and brain health. They do this essentially through what we call 'post-biotics' the chemical messengers produced as a result of these microbes digesting the food that we eat. They love to eat and thrive off fiber and plant nutrients in particular.

So, when we choose to eat highly nutritious foods, we give our bodies great information (nutrition) to work with to support our health and weight management goals. But of course, that information is only useful if it can reach our cells! So, you could say, we are what we digest! Optimal digestion essentially means three things:

- 1. Assimilation of nutrients from food, into the blood stream to be delivered to cells*
- 2. A robust yet functional barrier (gut wall) that allows the good stuff (nutrients) in and keeps the bad stuff (pathogens food waste and metabolic waste products) out of the blood stream.*
- 3. Complete and efficient elimination of waste (regular number 2's).*

[ACTIVITY] Gut Health Quiz – 10 minutes

For something a bit different this week, we thought we might revise this week's topic through a quick quiz. [Instruct the group] In pairs or a small group, have a brief discussion on the following statements and then answer the quiz on your workshop handout. You have 5 minutes to complete the quiz and then we will go through the answers – there may be a small prize up for grabs [You may wish to have a small spot prize (a bottle of Kombucha each is a great gut health gift) for the winning pair/group. Once the 5 minutes is up – go through the answers and read out the statement along with the correct answer as per notes below]

[Going through the answers. Read out the question and then the correct answer (highlighted) with the explanation below]

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1. **True** or false, the ecosystem of microbes that live in us and on us is collectively referred to as the microbiome?

True - The Microbiome describes the the microorganisms in a particular environment, including the human body. It specifically relates to the combined genetic material of these micro-organisms. We rely on a vast range of microbes to survive. A healthy and balanced microbiome protects us from germs, help to digest food and also produce vitamins and other nutrients for our mind and body.

2. The microbiome consists of how many microbes?

- a) Thousands
- b) Millions
- c) Billions
- d) **Trillions**

Trillions - there are an estimated 100 trillion microbes that make up the Human Microbiome.

3. True or **false**, the foods we eat have no bearing on the health of the gut microbiome?

False - the gut microbiota need feeding and numerous studies show that what we eat can have positive or negative effects on the health of our microbiome. Fibrous plant foods seem to be most beneficial, whilst artificial sweeteners and additives may increase the growth of least beneficial and harmful bacteria.

[Valdes. A, et al. 2018 - [The Role of the gut microbiota in nutrition and health](#). Published in the British Medical Journal]

4. **True** or false, fibre from fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, legumes, and wholegrains is a pre-biotic (food) for good bacteria?

True - the health of the microbiome appears to be dependent on eating a variety of plant-based foods to provide a diversity of fibre

5. Which numbered 'types' of stool in the Bristol Stool Scale are considered healthy?

- a) 1 & 3
- b) 2 & 3
- c) **3 & 4**
- d) 5 & 6

C - 3&4 are considered healthy and normal - that's log or snake shaped either smooth or with some cracks on the surface [The Bristol Stool Scale, Bristol Royal Infirmary 1997]

6. True or **false**, bowel movements less than 3 times per week is healthy and normal?

False - According to a 2010 Scandinavian Journal of Gastroenterology, that between three times per week and three times per day is considered normal bowel frequency. However, leading gut experts suggest that at least one movement per day may be more optimal

7. True or **false**, Coeliac disease and wheat allergy are the same thing?

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False, Coeliac disease is an autoimmune reaction to the presence of gluten (a protein found in wheat and other glutenous grains). Wheat allergy is an allergic reaction to the proteins in wheat, which may include but not be limited to gluten. This is not an autoimmune reaction where the body is triggered to attack it's own tissues as in the case of coeliac. A wheat allergy presents very much like other severe food allergies and may trigger anaphylaxis.

8. True or **false**, optimal digestion is a process that happens when the body is in a sympathetic (stressed/fight or flight) state?

False - Digestion is a Parasympathetic activity, meaning it takes place when the body is not in a stressed state and is more rested and relaxed.

9. Digestion begins in the:

- a) Small intestine
- b) Stomach
- c) Liver
- d) Mouth**

D- Mouth. Both the action of chewing and the exposure to digestive enzymes in saliva start the digestive process.

10. The cranial nerve that connects the brain and the gut and is involved in parasympathetic (rest and digest) activity is called the:

- a) Femoral nerve
- b) Sciatic nerve
- c) Vagus nerve**
- d) Optical nerve

C - the Vagus nerve which is the 10th cranial nerve and innervates the gut as well as the heart, lungs and adrenal glands that are part of the autonomic nervous system that governs the flux between states of stress (sympathetic) and rest (parasympathetic).

Ok - So tally up your scores and let's see if we have a spot prize for the winning group. [Congratulate the winners]

[ACTIVITY] - Bristol Stool Scale Match Up - 10 minutes

By now you will realize that gut health not only relies on good nutrition and healthy microbiome but healthy digestive processes too. An indication of over all digestive health is of course stool health. Now it's important to note that we are not stool experts and so any specific concerns you have regarding your gut or digestive health, we recommend speaking to your healthcare provider. The activities in this week are merely to guide observational awareness and to emphasize the importance of gut health to your overall health and weight management goals.

One of your journal activities this week - How good is your form? Asks you to start to take notice and observe your stools over the coming weeks, using the Bristol Stool Scale as a reference tool. Though this may seem a little strange, becoming

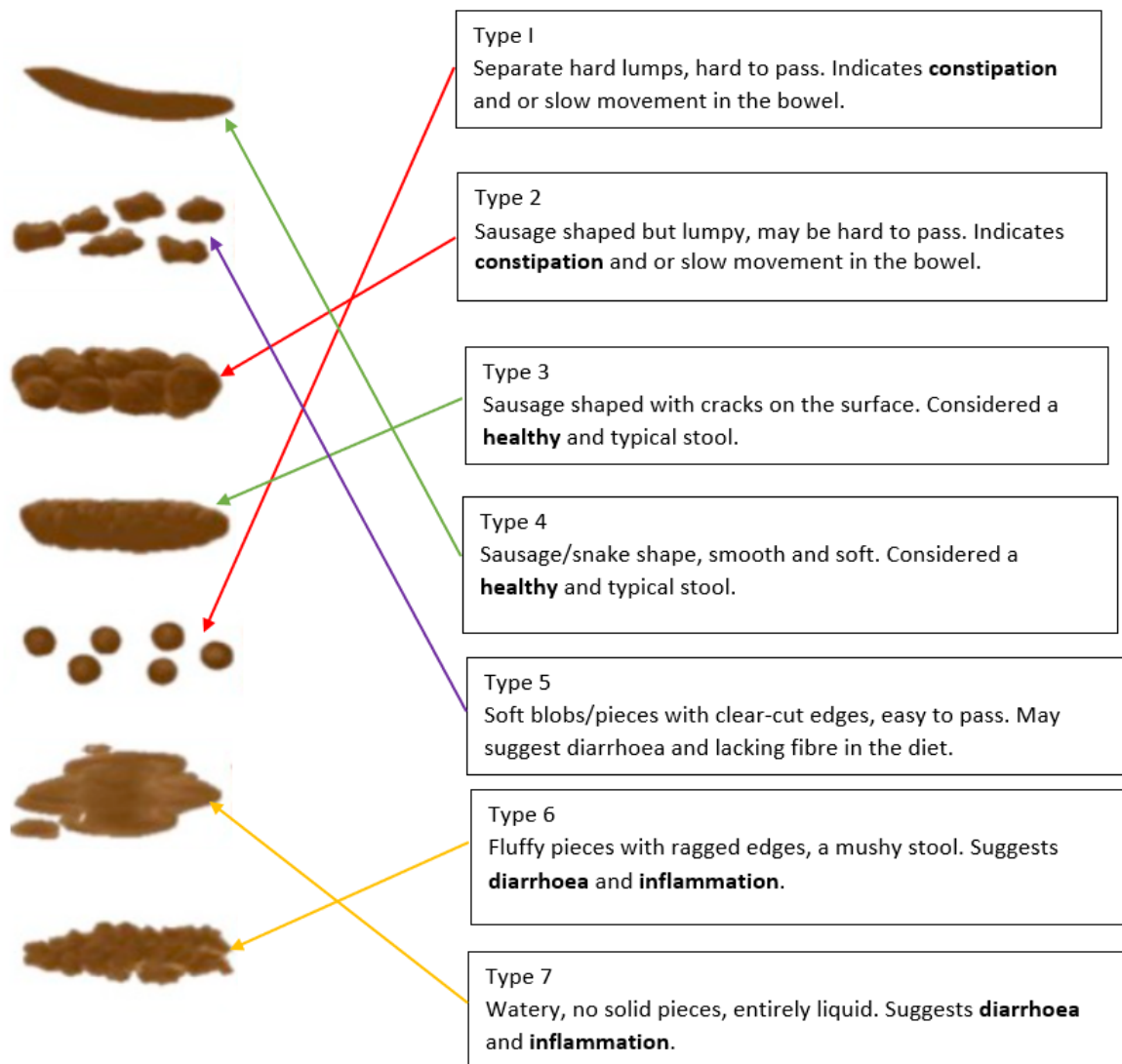
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familiar with our stools and looking out for consistent irregularities is a part of self-care.

[Instruct the group] On your workshop handout, the next activity is a match up activity, where you are to in pairs see if you can match the Stool picture with its rightful type and description. Just for a little fun – let's have a go. You have 5 minutes to match the 7 types of stools to their description and then we will go through correct matches at the end.

[Below are the correct matches. Once the groups have had 5 minutes to complete the activity, spend a few minutes going over the correct answers and compliment their efforts all round 😊]



[DISCUSSION] Your Gut Health Inventory – 5 minutes

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Finally, before we move into the last activity for this workshop, I'd like to direct your attention to the activities in your journal this week pages 236 - 241. Your activities conclude with a subjective gut health inventory. This list serves as a daily reminder of positive influences on gut and digestive health. You have the opportunity to rate your perception of how these statements apply to you. These can help guide you to more awareness around gut health - one of THE most important contributors to overall health and wellbeing.

[Show the group the gut inventory activity by holding up the page of the journal (240) and briefly explain the activity. Emphasize this is a subjective observation exercise, and is not marked or judged in anyway. It is for the participants reference only].

1 = Never 2 = Hardly ever 3 = Sometimes 4= Mostly 5 = Always

Healthy gut /healthy digestion statement	Rating 1-5
I include gut loving foods in each meal to support my microbiome and keep my bowels clean and clear.	
I have optimal sleep hygiene (recall week 6)	
I have low stress or manage my stress effectively.	
I practice intentional breathing exercises to stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system.	
I have regular bowel movements (between 3x per week - 3 x per day).	
My stools are optimal (#3 or #4 on the BSS).	

[ACTIVITY] Slow Nostril Breathing - group exercise - 10 minutes

And finally for our last exercise for today's workshop - Slow Nostril Breathing.

We are designed to breathe through the nose, where air is warmed, purified and moistened in the nasal passages. Nostril breathing as compared to mouth breathing has many benefits of its own. And even more when we slow the pace down. Slow breathing - at a pace that is slower than what's normal for you is a great place to begin. But today's exercise we are going to practice a slow breathing technique called Coherent Breathing - which is a technique that has been shown to benefit circulatory health as well as have benefits on mental and emotional wellbeing.

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Coherent breathing involves breathing at a pace of 5.5 seconds in and 5.5 seconds out, which results in around 5.5 breaths per minute. You can read a little more in the resource 'The Why & How of Slow Nostril Breathing' [\[show the group the resource for reference\]](#).

[Instruct the group to find a quiet comfortable space in the room for the final activity of the workshop, Slow Nostril breathing]

1. *Sit with spine erect, but relaxed (sit on a block, a cushion to assist this posture) OR If you are new to breathing exercises you may find it much more comfortable to lie down on your back.*
2. *Relax your hands either at your side or on your belly if laying down, or on your thighs or in your lap if seated*
3. *Gently close your lips to inhale and exhale easily through the nose*
4. *For your first few rounds of breath, breathe at a pace that is natural for you*
5. *Then start to slow your breathing pace down. Drawing longer inhalations and longer exhalations.*
6. *Building towards a pace of inhaling for 5.5 seconds (count 1-one-onethousand, 2-one-thousand, 3-one-thousand etc.) and without pausing, exhaling for 5.5 seconds*
7. *Continue breathing in this way for 1 minute or two*

[Allow the group time to continue the exercise for a couple of minutes, if you are short on time, one minute is enough. When you are ready to close the exercise in struct the group as follows:]

When you are ready, in your own time, there is no rush, allow your breath to return to what is natural and usual for you. If your eyes are closed, slowly blink them open. If you are laying down, roll onto one side, pause for a beat and then slowly bring yourself back to your seat.

[If time permits, you may wish to ask the group how they found that exercise and remind them to complete a few minutes of this week's breathing exercise each day this week].

Session close – 1 minute
Any questions?

That concludes the workshop for this week, thank you everyone for attending. Have a great week, see you next in the workshop, if not before!