

Focusing on MORE[©]



Taking a positive, inclusive approach to healthier eating and seeing results



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What is Focusing on MORE?

Focusing on MORE is evidence-based nutrition education, delivered by a registered Dietitian and registered Public Health Nutritionist to Somerset's health, social care, voluntary and community sector workforce. Recognising that current dietary education predominantly targets individuals with obesity, neglecting broader nutritional needs across the population. Focusing on MORE aims to change the narrative by promoting inclusive, practical, sustainable evidence-based messaging to support **healthier** eating for Somerset's population.

MORE vegetables and whole fruit

MORE pulses (beans, peas and lentils)

MORE whole and minimally processed whole grains

MORE nuts and seeds

MORE herbs and spices



Being mindful of:

- Added sugar
- Refined grains
- Ultra processed foods

Figure 1: The Focusing on MORE messages. The approach encourages step-by-step nudging towards more fibre, natural colour and minimally processed foods.

Why are we Focusing on MORE?

Approaches to heart health and weight management typically focus on macronutrient restriction, often fat or carbohydrate. Maintenance of long-term dietary restriction is challenging and evidence clearly shows that benefits of restrictive dietary approaches are largely diminished at 12-months¹. More concerning is evidence which suggests weight cycling (yo-yo dieting) increases risks of mortality². Exercising will-power as a solution has not helped our nations increasing trajectory of poor health, yet we continue to repeat the same ineffectual restrictive dietary approaches.

Popular diets share common themes: emphasising whole, minimally processed foods from plant-based sources (vegetables, fruit, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds) and limiting or avoiding added sugar, refined grains and processed foods³. We are all about focusing on MORE, because evidence tells us dietary patterns which include more whole and minimally processed plant foods are associated with improved metabolic health (including weight regulation) and reduced incidence and mortality of non-communicable diseases including type 2 diabetes, stroke, coronary heart disease, alzheimers and cancers^{4,5,6}.

Fibre and phytonutrients, exclusively found in plant foods, are important fuels for a healthy gut, which helps regulate the production of appetite hormones, glucose levels, insulin sensitivity and much much more⁷. However, food processing matters; evidence for the health benefits of fibre is largely based on naturally occurring fibres from minimally processed whole plant foods⁴. Focusing on MORE prioritises nutrient quality over calories as food processing affects how foods are digested and metabolised, influencing our ability to regulate appetite and weight^{8,9}.

How are we Focusing on MORE?

Education sessions are delivered in-person. Sessions focus on what to eat MORE of (Figure 1), with explanation of the 'whys' and 'hows' to facilitate steps towards being healthier. Focusing on MORE also encourages a shift away from weight alone as a marker of health to MORE health gain. For example, noticing improvements to energy levels, sleep quality and mood which are important markers of health and wellbeing.

A key message is nutrition matters for everyone, and all of us can be healthier.

Focusing on MORE is not about being vegan or vegetarian, it is simply educating people on why (and how) including more plant foods (MORE plant-focused) can support better gut health and long term health. Emphasising a nudge towards more minimally processed plant foods, naturally displacing room for added sugar, refined grains and more processed foods.

Focusing on MORE offers resources including no-cook and low skill recipes, shopping guides and bite sized information leaflets. It also links to wider local support, for example, 'Kettle' and 'Family friendly' recipe cards and Somerset Food Champion training to support with cookery skills. Helping people to make small attainable and sustainable steps towards healthier eating.



Figure 2: Resources to support with healthier eating produced by Focusing on MORE and the Somerset Healthier Lifestyles Team

Focusing on MORE is seeing sustainable diet and lifestyle change

More than 800 staff have attended a Focusing on MORE education session (full or condensed version). 510 of these have completed the full training. 302 completed the post training evaluation. 97% or more reported more knowledge, confidence and motivation to make healthier eating choices for themselves and support others with healthier eating choices.

192 out of 510 eligible attendees completed the 3-month follow up evaluation (37% response rate). 176 (92%) reported making positive changes to their diet and lifestyle following the training (Figure 3).

Self-reported diet and lifestyle changes of Focusing on MORE attendees

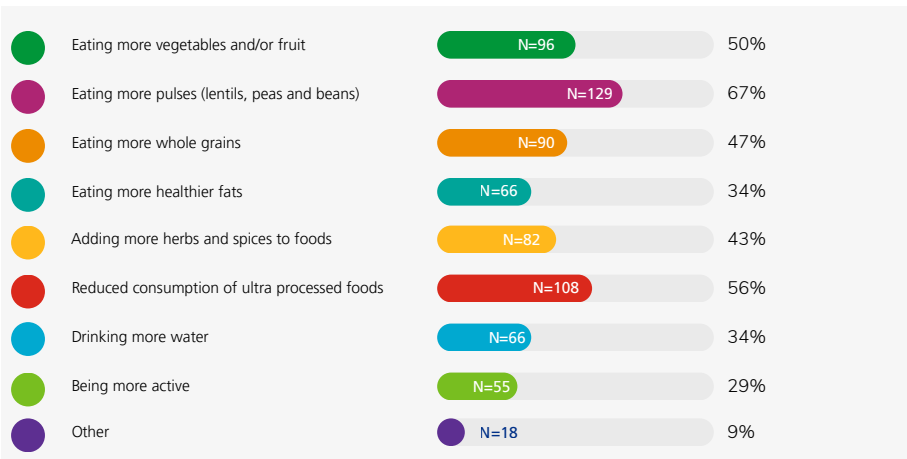


Figure 3: The graph above details self-reported diet and lifestyle behaviour changes of 'Focusing on MORE' attendees measured in the online (Microsoft Form) 3-month post training evaluation.

Our workforce are noticing improvements to their health and wellbeing

160 (83%) reported improvements to their health and wellbeing having sustained these dietary changes (Figure 4). 188 (99%) reported sharing their learning with friends and family.

Early 6 (N=106) and 12-month (N=60) evaluations show 100% report they are confident they can maintain the diet and lifestyle changes they have made.

Self-reported improvements in health and wellbeing of Focusing on MORE attendees

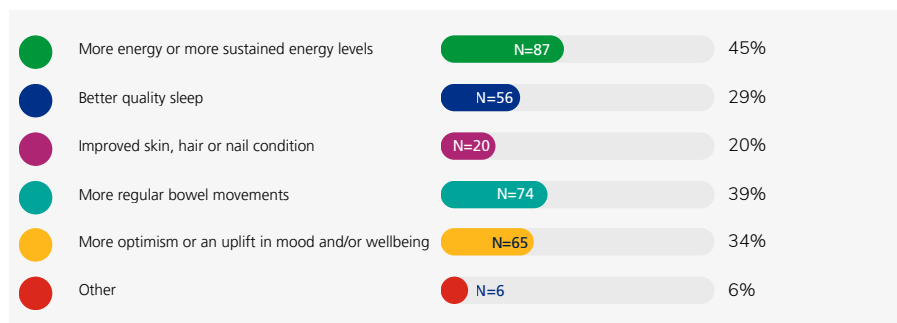


Figure 4: The graph above details self-reported health and wellbeing improvements of 'Focusing on MORE' attendees measured in the online (Microsoft Form) 3-month post training evaluation.

A workforce which recognises that nutrition matters for everyone, living it and noticing health gains themselves, is more likely to embed prevention messages into everyday practice.

Conclusion

'Focusing on MORE' has led to **significant** positive change in diet and lifestyle, with notable improvements in the health and wellbeing of our workforce who have been empowered to adopt healthier habits. In doing so, potentially, increasing the sustainability, in the 'ripple effect', by positively influencing dietary changes within their households/family members, service users, and the wider population.

Want to find out more?

Visit www.healthysomerset.co.uk/starting-well/focusing-on-more/ or scan the QR to the right.

Alternatively, contact Lesley.harper1@nhs.net or Tamara.bennett@somerset.gov.uk for more information.



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