



## Using Nutrition to Improve Mental Health

Like many family members with loved ones who hear voices and have struggled with them, we were dissatisfied with the choices offered to us by practitioners of the medical model. Thankfully we discovered the hearing voices movement. We also discovered the world of nutrition. In combination with the HVM, this has helped us make great strides toward helping our whole family. The following is an outline of what we did.

Our first step was partnering with an integrative medical physician who uses an appropriate blend of complementary and convention treatments to address each person's unique situation. We also read an important book by William Walsh called "Nutrient Power", about using nutrient therapy to heal our mental health.

Our physician put our son through a series of tests including blood, urine, hair, allergies, and fecal. He was not thrilled but knew and trusted our physician. *(By the way we also submitted to these same tests)* We first tried a dairy and gluten sensitivity test and found he had a high gluten intolerance, though does not suffer from celiac disease. He was also out of range for the following substances as well: coffee, tapioca, quinoa, amaranth, hemp, sesame, and buckwheat. Since he tested positive for gluten it was also recommended that he avoid barley, rye, and spelt as these contain gluten.

Several studies point to gluten intolerance and mental health issues. "Recent clinical studies have found raised gluten-related antibodies in patients with bipolar, major depressive disorder, and schizophrenia, while episodes of acute mania may be associated with increased serum levels of antibodies against gliadin. Hence, there is mounting evidence for a, potentially bi-directional, relationship between gluten sensitivity and psychiatric disorders." (*Nutrients*, Nov 2018)

***(Note: Normally we in the HVM do not use these diagnostic labels but am leaving them in throughout the article for accuracy)***

We also did a hair analysis that measures the levels of 21 minerals and toxic metals present in hair. Minerals are the "spark plugs" of life and play many important health related roles within the body. Analysis reflects long term metabolic activity of mineral accumulation over 3 months and can assist in identifying mineral patterns which may be associated with stress, blood sugar, carbohydrate imbalances, metabolic rate, biochemical energy production and glandular imbalances.

We also tested his urine for Pyroluria. "Pyroluria describes potentially harmful levels of something called kryptopyrroles in the body. While it's not a recognized medical condition, [several studies](#) suggest that a high percentage of people with a history of mental health issues test positive for Pyroluria." In a paper published in [Nature, International Journal of Science](#) the authors estimate that "up to 60 per cent of psychosis patients have much higher levels of kryptopyrroles than the general population. This is noteworthy as abnormally high levels of kryptopyrroles in the body leads to rapid depletion of two very important elements, Vitamin B6 and zinc, and it's known that low levels of these are associated with mental illness."

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“Vitamin B6 in particular is a vital component in the production of a chemical called serotonin – the brain’s ‘happy juice’ – responsible for regulating moods and warding off depression and anxiety. When the body has been depleted of B6 it’s no longer able to produce serotonin, leading to a range of mental and emotional disorders.” (*National Custom Compounding*, Dec 03, 2018)

His blood tests also showed he was very low in Vitamin D and B12. Following Dr. Walsh’s recommendations, we also tested him for zinc/copper and methylfolate imbalances, B6 deficiency, folic acid deficiency and other biochemical imbalances. Many of the supplements he is still on resulted from those tests.

We then started him on Cannabomega, which is a unique omega-3 formulation combining a 1:1 ratio of EPA/DHA, along with standardized phytocannabinoids found in hemp oil. “The omega-3 fatty acids found in this product are best known for their neuro-protective properties and their roles in brain health, including support for healthy mood and cognition.” As we increased his dosage of the Cannabomega we noticed more improvements in mood and anxiety levels. .

One of the areas that we continue to explore is the relationship between autoimmune diseases and mental health challenges. In an article by Dr Chang, a world renown pediatric bipolar expert at Stanford and one of the co-founders of the PANS clinic, also at Stanford, he concluded: “results continue to suggest a general relationship between autoimmune diseases and schizophrenia.”

<https://neuroimmune.org/kiki-chang-pandas-interview/>

<https://www.hcplive.com/view/autoimmune-disease-schizophrenia-and-bipolar-disorder>

This led us to explore the gut/brain connection. He did a GI Map test. Test results showed a lot of inflammation in his gut, plus leaky gut. The gut inflammation is interesting because of the gut/brain connection. Researchers are starting to look into brain inflammation as a cause of mental health issues. As a result, he takes supplements that addresses gut inflammation.

According to the Abstract from NIH Frontiers in Health published in August 2020: “The gut microbiome is rapidly becoming the focus of interest as a possible factor involved in the pathophysiology of neuropsychiatric disorders. Recent understanding of the pathophysiology of schizophrenia emphasizes the role of systemic components, including immune/inflammatory and metabolic processes, which are influenced by and interacting with the gut microbiome.

“Here we systematically review the current literature on the gut microbiome in schizophrenia-spectrum disorders and in their animal models. We found that the gut microbiome is altered in psychosis compared to healthy controls. Furthermore, we identified potential factors related to psychosis, which may contribute to the gut microbiome alterations. However, further research is needed to establish the disease-specificity and potential causal relationships between changes of the microbiome and disease pathophysiology. This can open up the possibility of manipulating the gut microbiome for improved symptom control and for the development of novel therapeutic approaches in schizophrenia and related psychotic disorders.”

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7438757/>

I hope this information helps you. Most importantly, I again stress it has been crucial for us to partner with an integrative medicine physician who we trust and who is knowledgeable in nutrient supplements. It has certainly helped our whole family. As any family member will tell you, this is a life long journey as we continue to update our supplements and check in periodically with our doctor. (*This article was written by Edwin Herzog, a board member of the Bay Area Hearing Voices Network. You can contact him through the BAHVN website: www.bayareahearingvoices.org*)

## RESOURCES

### **Beyond Possible: How the Hearing Voices Approach Transforms Lives**

The film was released in 2019 as a part of the **Hearing Voices Research & Development Fund's** efforts to increase understanding of the impact of Hearing Voices groups, and increase their accessibility across the United States. To access the film go to YouTube:

<https://www.google.com/search?q=beyond+possible%3A+how+the+hearing+voices+approach+transforms+lives>

### ***Intervoice Presentations***

Recordings of select presentations from the World Hearing Voices Congress (September 2021) are now available online! Highlights include Cindy Marty Hadge's keynote talk on meaning, purpose, and connection; Ed Herzog's presentation on how to build a local HVN network; and the joint talk by Cindy, Ed, and David Adams on the value of HVN groups for families and friends. Enjoy them all at this link:

<https://hearingvoicesnetworkireland.ie/intervoice-congress-2021/>

### **6-Session Class on Hearing Voices & Unusual Beliefs Working with Hearing Voices & Unusual Beliefs with Peter Bullimore & Company, March, 2022**

Participants in this 6-session training will learn how to better understand and support people to make meaning of their experiences with voice hearing and/or unusual beliefs or what gets called "paranoia." Attendance at all sessions is required to fully complete the training. All sessions will be held on-line, and all times listed are in Eastern USA time. Registration is required. Space is limited.

**Dates:** Monday, March 14, 10-2pm: Three Stages of Hearing Voices; Wednesday, March 16, 10-2pm: Three Stages of Unusual Beliefs/"Paranoia"; Thursday, March 17, 10-11:30am: Maastricht Interview Overview; Monday, March 21, 9-4pm: Using Maastricht for Voices; Wednesday, March 23, 9-4pm: Using Maastricht for Unusual Beliefs/"Paranoia"; Thursday, March 24, 10-2pm: How to Use What's Learned from Maastricht. To register go to [www.wilfloweralliance.org](http://www.wilfloweralliance.org)



## HEARING VOICES GROUPS

The Bay Area Hearing Voices Network offers five, online groups Monday-Thursday. **To enter the on-line support group meeting go to our website: [www.bayareahearingvoices.org](http://www.bayareahearingvoices.org) and click on the link at the bottom of the page to the Wednesday group.**

### **Monday Meetings:**

BAHVN in partnership with Berkeley Mental Health offers separate support groups for adults and family members, The 2 separate support groups meet Mondays from 6 to 8 pm.

### **Tuesday Meeting:**

BAHVN in partnership with [HealthRIGHT360 of San Francisco](#) offers an online adult support group Tuesday evenings from 6 to 8 pm led by trained facilitators with lived experience in the mental health system.

### **Wednesday Meeting:**

BAHVN, in partnership with the [Mental Health Association of San Francisco](#) (MHASF), offers an online adult support group Wednesday evenings from 6-8 pm.

### **Thursday Meetings:**

**The HVN-USA Family and Friends Group** (friends, lovers, and caretakers) are welcome too) meets online for 90 minutes every Thursday 3-4:30 pm PST. To join contact [cindy@westernmassrlc.org](mailto:cindy@westernmassrlc.org)

### **Thursday BAHVN Game Night, 5-7 pm:**

An on-line weekly night of fun and games. Game play is free of charge to BAHVN adults, TAY, and family members, All attendees are required to open an [account at boardgamearena.com](http://boardgamearena.com), where the game night will be held online. Go to the [BAHVN homepage](#) for a Zoom audio link to Game Night.

*The Bay Area Hearing Voices Network is a non-profit 501©3 organization. We seek to expand public awareness, provide community support, and refuge for those who hear voices, see visions, and experience other forms of extraordinary perception. To submit articles contact [edherzog48@gmail.com](mailto:edherzog48@gmail.com). For more information about us visit our website:[bayareahearingvoices.org](http://bayareahearingvoices.org)*