Dr Vivien Swanson – Keynote Speaker

Dr Vivien Swanson is a Reader in Psychology and Health Psychologist in the School of Natural Sciences, University of Stirling. She also has an NHS post as Programme Lead for Health Psychology in Scotland and leads a unique training programme for health psychologists in the NHS.

As a researcher and practitioner in health psychology Vivien is interested in applying psychological theories and methods to improving health and well-being, focus on health behaviour change and psychological well-being. Early work focused on stress and stress management and generated an interest in improving health of people with diabetes and professionals delivering diabetes care. Her interest in infant feeding and breastfeeding behaviours in different settings and contexts has raised awareness of how psychological theory can contribute to improving maternal and infant health.

Abstract

‘Mums, Dads, Babies and Toddlers: Using the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) to understand family feeding behaviours’.

Poor diet is related to poor health outcomes in very young children. For socially disadvantaged families the effect is potentially greater. The role of the parent(s) in the wider family context is crucial for promoting good nutritional health behaviours - including supporting breastfeeding from birth onwards, and encouraging toddlers to adopt a healthy diet and positive social eating behaviours, such as eating breakfast and eating together as a family in early childhood. Adopting a theoretical social-cognitive approach is helpful to understand determinants of these health behaviours, and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is the most frequently utilised model in this context. This talk will focus on research using the TPB – reflecting on the success or otherwise of efforts to understand and change infant and early childhood feeding behaviours in different social and cultural contexts.