



# Integrating the body and mind – Functional Medicine

As followers of Brighton and Hove Psychotherapy will know, we are passionate about the mind-body connection and how stress not only impacts on psychological and emotional health, but also on physical health. We are therefore delighted to welcome a new Associate, Tanya Borowski, who is a lead clinician in the field of Functional and Nutritional Medicine and who has written this blog to introduce her work:

Poor health can present in many different ways: inflamed joints, migraines, IBS, weight fluctuations, autoimmunity or pain, but it doesn't *just* happen. These symptoms and conditions arise from the interaction of our genes with our environment or what in functional medicine we term 'triggers'. A trigger is anything that activates a system to react, such as a food, a hormone, an infection from a virus or bacteria, or a toxin.

The foundation of my practice is to unravel the triggers that may have caused compromised health through the application of Functional Medicine, and I am utterly passionate about it.

## What is Functional Medicine?

Functional medicine views at an individual from a perspective of **health** rather than disease. Instead of "treating" a group of symptoms that have collectively been given a label, such as metabolic syndrome, or chronic fatigue, a functional medicine approach seeks to unravel the **cause or triggers** of why the symptom/s have arisen in the first place, and views the body as one integrated and connected system. A great analogy of this model is to think of our genetic code and ancestry as the one that loads the gun, but our environment, from the food we eat to the way we live our lives and exposure to stress hormones, toxins and infections are what pulls the trigger! As such, I spend time with my clients, listening to their histories and mapping their personal story to a timeline looking to identify pre-disposing factors, triggers, and events that can, under the right circumstances, create the perfect storm (or to put it another way, provide the proverbial straw that breaks the camel's back) and shift the set-point from health and wellness to symptoms and illness.

## How does Functional Medicine work?

A Functional Medicine expert is akin to a health detective, gathering all the clues of your past, such as your family history, health history, exposure to environmental toxins and stressors, social life history, traumatic events, relationships, diet, exercise and sleep habits. Armed with this information as well as the results of appropriate and sometimes further detailed laboratory testing, I seek to uncover where and why your body is not functioning optimally. I can then determine your specific treatment plan that includes: nutrition advice, botanical medicines, supplements, specialised dietary



programs such as gut healing, weight loss or liver support, stress-management techniques and exercise advice.

In Functional Medicine, there's no one-size-fits-all treatment, so even if you and a friend have the same symptoms or condition, you won't receive the same treatment plan. No two people have the same life experiences, history or genetic makeup. We are unique and individual, which is why we need a health plan that addresses these differences, and **this is Functional Medicine.**

Tanya Borowski has joined the Brighton and Hove Psychotherapy Team in offering an integrated approach to psychological and emotional health. She sees clients from The Barn in Lewes.