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Holistic Therapist Magazine

APR/MAY/JUN 2021

ISSUE 38

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Foreword

Spring News from Complementary Health Professionals

Hello everyone and although this newsletter is our Spring one, we are supposedly heading into summer – it's just that the weather has forgotten it throughout the month of May. It has certainly been a case of it "May" rain or it "May" hail depending on where you are in the UK! We are sure sunny days are just around the corner and we can all look forward to some natural vitamin D. For our overseas members, we are jealous of your lovely weather, especially as holidays abroad are still pretty much on hold for the time being!

We do have lots of interesting news to tell you and as always, we have been very busy behind the scenes. It is great how fast renewals and new membership applications have been coming in now that therapists are all working again and we have enjoyed speaking to many of you over the phone and helping you with queries and marketing support as you get going again. Don't forget that there is a free guide to marketing in the member's area of the CHP website. We hope that your clients are enjoying having you back to work and that your diaries are full. From speaking with you, there does appear to still be a great deal of fear out there, especially with the Indian variant spreading at the time of writing but with the news that the vaccine is effective against it coming out yesterday, that should give people who are frightened some reassurance and help them to re-engage with activities they benefit from, especially complementary therapy treatments. It also means we should see further restrictions being eased next month as planned.

We feel confident to have booked the annual conference for October this year as you may have seen on social media. We have attached the conference agenda to the email informing you about this newsletter and magazine copy. More details are below.

We are overdue for a change in passcode for the member's area of our website as this is only available to current members and as such, please make note of the change by logging in and saving it. The new code is CHP5515, effective from 7th June 2021.

COVID-19

Just to say that we are aware that the Government has updated its guidance for those living in areas where the new COVID-19

variant is spreading more rapidly and is likely that we may see more local restrictions in the future. We will of course keep you informed of national changes that occur across each country within the UK but, as you will appreciate, there are many local regions within each country, and ultimately it is your responsibility to check and adhere to any local lockdown constraints in your area. These can be accessed via <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do> and on your local council website.

Important Dates remaining for 2021

All important dates are as follows:

- 7th June – 13th June 2021** - Aromatherapy Awareness Week
21st September – 26th September 2021 - World Reflexology Week
1st October 2021 - National Massage Day
16th October 2021 – CHP Annual Conference
5th – 7th November 2021 - The European Congress for Integrative Medicine

For each of these, there are amazing business opportunities to reach out to new customers and we will do our very best to help you with our new support material. So, check into the members' area of the website often and check out notifications on our social media.

We have placed an updated poster for Aromatherapy Awareness Week in the member's area of the website, so please do use it along with the other support materials to help promote your aromatherapy practice where relevant. If you need anything emailed from the office, do drop us a line and we will be happy to help. It seems that the Massage at Work Week for 2021 has not gone ahead this year, which is quite understandable considering the situation.

CHP Annual Conference - Saturday 16th October 2021

We are so excited to have been able to go ahead and finally book the date for our annual conference and we are looking forward to seeing you there. We do have a new venue now which is a short 10-minute walk from either West Croydon or East Croydon station. These are both easily accessible from many of the

London mainline stations (around 10 minutes in length) and buses and we have put the map and details on the agenda, which is attached to your email notifying you about this newsletter.

This year, we have decided to feature Mental Health as it is such a hot topic following the lockdowns we have all endured. As we did in 2019 (wow so long ago!), we will provide a case study and each of the speakers and workshop leaders will focus their subject around that individual. This year, due to feedback from before, we will have a Q&A Panel at the end of the day for discussions on any of the subjects covered from all of the speakers.

As you will see from the agenda, we have two lectures and the rest of the conference will be via a series of workshops that are repeated in the afternoon. This way you have the option of choosing two workshops. Again, this is by popular demand as last time many of you would have liked to have chosen more than one workshop and you really liked the workshops most of all!

As in previous years, we will have a nice goodie bag for our delegates to take away with you and you will receive a CPD certificate worth 6 points/hours that is sent out in the week to 10 days after the conference. You will need to book your place as always and the booking is done via Eventbrite. You can link to it direct from our Facebook page or on the Conference Page on the CHP website. We have to ask everyone to book as we fully cater the event and we have to know numbers. Please do not just show up on the day without booking! It is free to Premier Members and anyone who has a current student membership at the time of the conference. For non-members, it is £60.00. If you are a full basic member and want to upgrade to premier, please do get in touch with the office and we can arrange this for you.





continued...



Therapy Awards 2021

As usual, your chance to win one of the prestigious awards will be up for grabs. The nomination form is on our website so you just need to give your clients and colleagues the link and they can nominate you: <https://www.complementaryhealthprofessionals.co.uk/award-nomination-form> These awards look great on your CV and also wonderful for using on your website and marketing materials. We love these awards as they really allow us to showcase the amazing work our members do.



GCMT Update

There has been another GCMT meeting since the last newsletter and we also have been in contact on the new working parties. CHP's Carole Preen is on the Regulation Working Party and it is looking at ways to regulate massage and other soft tissue therapies to prevent the plethora of poor-quality courses and training out there at present. The pandemic saw a huge number of people training in massage, aromatherapy, reflexology etc. online only and we have had a large number of people trying to obtain CHP membership with these qualifications. We have had to politely turn them away, but always giving them the information on where to train properly and what the current standards are. We will not be able to pursue statutory regulation but there are other options and we will report on the working party as we have more details.

The Crisis Working Party has produced an update relating to COVID-19 and we have put that information in the member's area for you. The Mental Health Working Party will also produce a guide for professional practice that we will be able to share with members in due course.

We also took part in the Professional Standards Authority consultation along with several of the other associations on the GCMT, sharing information between us to try and get the best outcomes for our respective members. The results were somewhat disappointing but further information should be published next month and we will keep you updated.

If you would like to know more or would like to ask any questions about Massage Therapy and Soft Tissue Therapy and the

work of the GCMT, or have any suggestions for the next Council meeting, please contact Carole at the CHP office: enquiries@complementaryhealthprofessionals.co.uk

Reiki Council Update



Dan Stephens has attended two Reiki Council meetings on behalf of CHP since the last newsletter where a new chair and vice chair were elected. The Reiki Council has been super busy consulting with practitioners and vets to create safe working guidelines for reiki for animals and there will soon be a Reiki Council verification certificate and a full training course available if this is an area you are interested in.

The Reiki Council hopes to have a new website up and running soon to bring the work of the Council to light and let the public know there are standards for reiki practice as well as more hands-on therapies.

The next Reiki Council meeting is on 17th June. If you would like to know more or would like to ask any questions about Reiki, or have any suggestions for the next Council meeting, please contact Dan on dan@complementaryhealthprofessionals.co.uk.

Research Council for Complementary Medicine (RCCM)



CHP has been invited to join as a corporate member of the Research Council for

Complementary Medicine and we have accepted. This gives us and therefore our members access to research guides on 'finding evidence', 'research methods', 'ethics' and 'funding for CAM', plus 'Information on effectiveness'. We will have access to information on CAM Guidelines, RCCM publications and links to CAM networks. The RCCM helps support research into complementary therapies and develops relationships with government bodies, including NICE, the Advertising Standards Authority and the NHS. We are delighted to be a part of this work and it also raises the status of your association. If you need access to any information, please do get in touch.

Courses

As of the 17th May, face to face training in adult education is available again and we sent our accredited training providers some guidance on re-opening. It is great that you can now go and enjoy training again and some CPD. Of course, if you are still uncomfortable with in person contact, we do accredit some great online courses and Carole and Dan have put some new additions up in their respective schools and Carole gives discounts for CHP members. Details are all available on our accredited school's page: <https://www.complementaryhealthprofessionals.co.uk/accredited-course-providers>

If you would like to teach complementary therapies, we do have a teacher training course available and we are always happy to look at accrediting new courses. Please do get in touch for our accreditation pack if this is something you are interested in.

Special Offer for Members:



Jing Advanced Massage Training is one of our accredited course providers and they have a special offer for members on their mentoring

membership, known as JAMM (Jing Advanced Massage Mentoring Membership). It is a dynamic and interactive bodywork & massage mentoring program. You get over 100 hours of content of massage techniques to help you reduce pain and increase ranges of motion for your clients, with new modules being added each month, a weekly mentoring zoom with Meg & Rachel (Jing Directors) where you can ask questions about your practice and clients, monthly special guest lecturers, and a peer mentoring support chat - plus discounts on other Jing courses. Full details can be found: <https://www.jingmassage.com/cpd/jing-advanced-massage-mentoring-membership/>

And to get a 1-month free trial use discount code: **1monthCHP** discount



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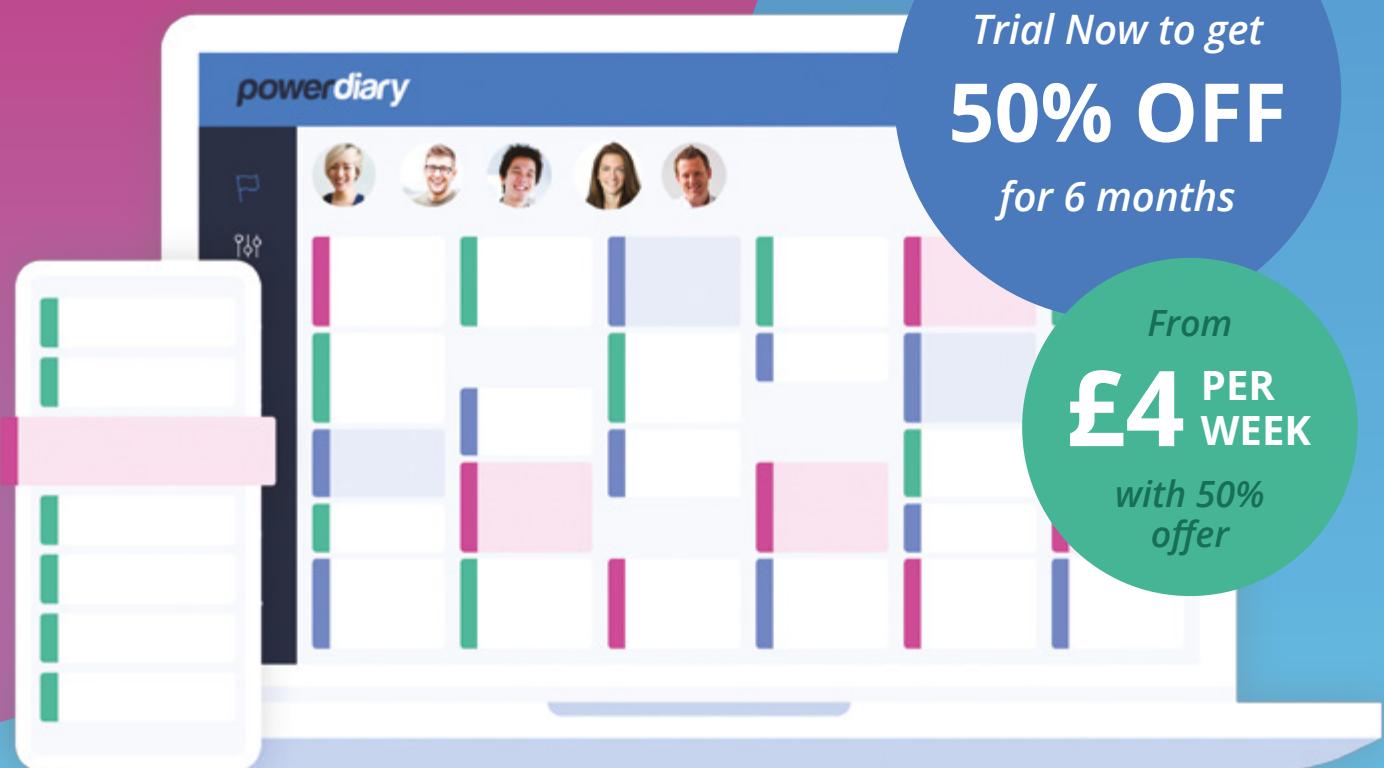
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Editor's Letter



Hello again,

It's now more than a year since I first wrote about COVID-19, outlining the impact I thought the emerging virus might have on holistic therapists and the mitigating steps that might need to be put in place to continue to practice safely. This was more than a month before the first death. Most people appreciated the online post, which was a mixture of the initial research available and sensible hygiene precautions. A few people said we were scare-mongering. I'd have been happy if they had been proved right.

I don't think many of us envisioned that such a small molecule could have such a big impact on the world. We've seen over 3 million deaths globally. We've had pandemics before, but few of those who experienced Spanish Flu in 1919 remain with us today. Other pandemics such as SARS, Zika and Ebola were regionalised and far enough away for us not to think about.

Now, we're realising the scale of the damage this virus has caused, not just in deaths or hospitalisations, but in terms of other illnesses, relationships, education, jobs and the wider economy. I know that our industry can be polarised, with some people trusting science and supporting vaccination while others do not. I respect your right to think as you choose, but for me, there are also issues about disinformation and why certain groups of people have been fed falsehoods about the effects of the vaccine. Vaccination rates are lower in disadvantaged areas, some ethnic minorities have been lead to believe that the vaccine causes paralysis or infertility. In a world of deep fakes and state and corporate sponsored misinformation, we need critical thinking capabilities. Who benefits from spreading these tales?

Critical thinking will also be needed in this next phase to help shore up business and personal resilience. It's about coming through this with integrity and maintaining your core values, deciding what you want from your life and following through with the appropriate actions. Our focus this issue, is, therefore on becoming stronger. It's about being true to yourself, those around you and your client base. It's about understanding how things have changed, what services will be increasingly in demand and how you can feel confident as you go forward. We'll be here to support you on your journey.

Stay safe, be strong.

Love, Alison and everyone at Holistic Therapist x

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Openers

The latest from the world of holistic health and beyond...

COLORADO CONSIDERS BILL TO EXPAND HOLISTIC HOME TREATMENTS FOR THE DISABLED

Colorado's Senate House Health and Human Services Committee has unanimously passed a bill that would extend the state's program of complementary medical services to individuals in the Denver metro area with spinal cord injuries (SCIs) and who are unable to transport themselves to the hospital. This program provides these individuals with at-home services such as acupuncture, massage therapy and chiropractic services. Currently, the scheme covers those in the Denver Metropolitan Area, but the new bill would ensure coverage for those living elsewhere in the state. The bill would also include those with



multiple sclerosis, a brain injury, spina bifida, muscular dystrophy or cerebral palsy.

The existing programme has already been credited with cost savings, particularly in in-patient costs and pharmaceutical costs, increased quality of life and improved health outcomes.



CHILDREN'S HEALTH: AIR POLLUTION INCREASES DISEASE RISK

A new cell-level US-based study from Stanford University suggests that childhood exposure to air pollution, such as traffic exhaust fumes, smog or smoke from wildfires – even for a single day – can lead to higher rates of heart disease and other ailments in adulthood. It confirms previous research that bad air can alter gene regulation in a way that may impact long-term health -- a finding that could change the way medical experts and parents think about the air children breathe, and inform clinical interventions for those exposed to chronic elevated air pollution.

Air pollution exposure was correlated with an increase in monocytes, white blood cells that



play a key role in the build-up of plaques in arteries and could possibly predispose children to heart disease in adulthood.

The researchers noted that nearly half of Americans and the vast majority of people around the world live in places with unhealthy air. Ref: 10.1038/s41598-021-83577-3

GENERAL MOTORS APPLIES FOR IN-CAR FOOT MASSAGE PATENT

Passengers may soon receive a foot massage while travelling should General Motors decide to introduce a new system for which they have just filed a US patent application. The system uses air pressure cushions that can be inflated in

sequences to provide relaxation, improved circulation, lowered blood pressure as well as anxiety relief. Industry experts believe that if the foot massage system were to be introduced, it is likely to be in the company's luxury models.

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TRY THIS... SPIKENARD ESSENTIAL OIL

Spikenard's uses in healing go back to ancient times, being used as a perfume, medicine and for religious purposes.

Mary of Bethany evidently spent an entire year's worth of wages to buy spikenard oil to anoint Jesus's feet before the Last Supper.

Spikenard is a Himalayan member of the valerian family which grows in Nepal, China and India and is found around 10,000 feet.

These days, it's valued for its heavy, mossy smell, anti-

fungal, anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory properties as well as its relaxing and sleep-promoting qualities.



FIRST META-ANALYSIS SHOWS PROMISE FOR YOGA, MEDITATION, MINDFULNESS IN CONCUSSION

Chronic concussion symptoms are notoriously difficult to treat. A University of Connecticut post-doctoral researcher who is also a yoga instructor has published the first meta-analysis looking at the use of yoga, meditation, and mindfulness-based interventions for the effective treatment of chronic concussion. The study which was published in the journal *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-being*, showed that there were significant reductions in the levels of depression and fatigue when mind-body treatment interventions took place. The meta-analysis found that mind-body interventions consistently provided



symptom improvement across nearly all measured outcomes. The trends were remarkable, the researchers noted, because of the variety of patients enrolled in the studies, and the known difficulty of relieving chronic concussion symptoms. Ref: DOI: 10.1111/aphw.12244

GHANA'S TRADITIONAL MEDICINES SHOW PROMISE IN LAB TRIALS

A team of researchers has reported that several traditional Ghanaian medicines appear to combat tropical diseases such as schistosomiasis, onchocerciasis and lymphatic filariasis, in laboratory testing.

Schistosomiasis is caused by the blood flukes Schistosome haematobium and S. mansoni. Onchocerciasis, or river blindness, is caused by the parasitic worm Onchocerca volvulus. Lymphatic filariasis, also called elephantiasis, is caused by the parasitic filarial worm Wuchereria bancrofti.

15 traditional medicines were sourced from the Ghana Federation of Traditional Medicines Practitioners Association and extracts prepared from dried herbs or aqueous solutions. Two extracts, NTD-B4-DCM and NTD-B7-DCM, displayed high activity against S. mansoni adult worms, decreasing the movement of the worms by 78.4% and 84.3% respectively. A different extract, NTD-B2-DCM, was the most active against adult Onchocera onchensis worms,



killing 100% of males and more than 60% of females. Eight of 26 crude extracts tested, including NTD-B4-DCM and NTD-B2-DCM, also exhibited good activity against trypanosomes -- parasites that cause other human diseases but weren't the original targets of the traditional medicines.

The lead researcher noted, "By embracing indigenous knowledge systems which have evolved over centuries, we can potentially unlock a wealth of untapped research and shape it by conducting sound scientific investigations to produce safe, efficacious and good quality remedies." Ref: 10.1371/journal.pntd.0008919

AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES LAUNCH CENTRES FOR CONTEMPLATIVE STUDIES

Melbourne and Monash universities are launching Australia's first centres for contemplative studies, backed by a \$22 million donation from tech multimillionaire Martin Hosking, founder of online marketplace Redbubble.

The centres at The University of Melbourne and Monash University will focus on specific practices including meditation and mindfulness and seek to address issues of stress, anxiety and alienation.



UK GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES CONSULTATION ON WOMEN'S HEALTH STRATEGY

The UK government has launched a call for evidence in order to better understand women's experience of the health and care system. The Women's Health Strategy will be designed to improve the health and wellbeing of women across England and place women's voices at the centre of their care.

The 6 core-themes included in the call for evidence are:

1 Placing women's voices at the centre of their health and care – how the health and care system engages with and listens to women at the individual level as well as at the system level.

2 Improving the quality and accessibility of information and education on women's health – women having access to high-quality information when they need to make a decision, increasing health literacy, as well as increasing awareness and understanding of women's health conditions among clinicians.

3 Ensuring the health and care system understands and is responsive to women's health and care needs across the life course – supporting women to maximise their health across their lives, and ensuring services are designed to maximise benefits for women.

4 Maximising women's health in the workplace – deepening our understanding of how women's health issues can affect their workforce participation and outcomes, both with regards to female-specific issues such as the menopause, but also conditions that are more prevalent in women such as musculoskeletal conditions, depression or anxiety

5 Ensuring that research, evidence and data support improvements in women's health – inclusion of women and women's health in research and data collection and how that information is used, and driving participation in clinical trials to support improvements in women's health.

6 Understanding and responding to the impacts of COVID-19 on women's health – supporting women through the unique challenges they've faced during the pandemic.

It is essential that holistic therapists feed into this process or the vital place of such treatments will be overlooked when the strategy is formulated. You can add your feedback at www.gov.uk/government/consultations/womens-health-strategy-call-for-evidence. The consultation is open until 30th May and covers England only.

AWARENESS DAYS

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

With continuing uncertainty over exhibitions and industry events, we've gathered a selection of awareness days which you can use for social media posts and marketing campaigns...

JUNE

June is the chosen awareness month for Pride, Wear It. Beat It (British Heart Foundation) and SANDS (Stillborn and Neonatal Death charity).

3-8 – Massage at Work Week and Coaching Week

5 – World Environment Day

6-13 – Bike Week

7-13 – Carers Week

8-13 – Aromatherapy Awareness Week and Diabetes Awareness Week

13 – Cupcake Day (Alzheimer's)

14-20 – Nutrition and Hydration Awareness Week

14-18 – Loneliness Awareness Week

15-20 – Men's Health Week

15 – National Bug Busting Day

17 – National Clean Air Day

17-22 – World Continence Week

17-21 – Neighbours Week

17 – Plastic Free Beauty Day

20 – Fathers' Day

21 – World Humanist Day

21-30 – World Wellbeing Week

22-27 – Children's Hospice Week

MAY

May is the awareness month for Teen self-esteem, maternal mental health, clean air, skin cancer, blood pressure measurement, walking and zombies. It's also Action on Stroke's Make May Purple and the Big Asthma Bakes Sale.

2 – World Asthma Day

4-9 – Sun Awareness Week, Red Cross Week, Deaf Awareness Week, Anaphylaxis Awareness Week

5 – International Day of the Midwife

8 – World Ovarian Cancer Day

8-16 – National Public Gardens Week

9-15 – National Doughnut Week

9 – World Fairtrade Day

10 – World Lupus Day

10-15 – Food Allergy Week

11-16 – Awareness week for ME, Coeliac Disease, Vegetarianism and Conversation

12 – World Fibromyalgia Day

16 – National Children's Day

17-23 – Dementia Action Week

18-23 – Mental Health Awareness Week

20-25 – National Epilepsy Week

21 – World Meditation Day

25 – National Wine Day

29 – World Digestive Health Day

JULY

July is Sarcoma Awareness Month, Good Care Month and Plastic Free July

1-6 – Clean Beaches Week

3 – National Bereaved Parents Day

4 – US Independence Day

5-11 – National Hygiene Week

15 – International Microvolunteering Day

6 – International Kissing Day

7 – World Chocolate Day

25 – Aug 8 – National Marine Week

WORDS OF WISDOM...

Of course fear does not automatically lead to courage. Injury does not necessarily lead to insight. Hardship will not automatically make us better. Pain can break us or make us wiser. Suffering can destroy us or make us stronger. Fear can cripple us, or it can make us more courageous. It is resilience that makes the difference.

Eric Greitens



THE RESILIENT *holistic*. therapist

CAM Coach **Mark Shields** explains why we all need emotional strength and perseverance to succeed right now...

RESEARCH confirms the two biggest emotions common in successful entrepreneurs are resilience and perseverance. The ability to be strong, to never give up despite the obstacles put in your way, and the ability to pick yourself up, dust yourself off and never give up come what may. All of this coupled with an achiever mind-set, matching beliefs and a flexible outcome focused plan form the ingredients required for success in such challenging times.

These qualities are underpinned by inner strength, personal confidence, high self-esteem and a drive to succeed which comes naturally to some and more difficult to others.

Developing an achiever mind-set

First and foremost, we need to recognise the need for change. Develop the ability to adapt and change your business to meet the new demands of clients in our ever-changing world. Pivot to running your practice online and change your market from UK to open up to international clients if your modality allows for this. Revisit your pricing structure to ensure it is aligned to your ideal client's current budget. Take an hour a day to look after your own mental health, meditating, using self-hypnosis or positive affirmations. Focus on what you do have now, what you will have in the future and not the things you haven't got or are missing now.

Inspiration - Motivation - Procrastination

How are these linked and what part do they play in the success or failure with our clients? Esther Hicks, the author of *The Law of Attraction* said, "Inspiration comes forth from within. It's what the light burning within you is about, as opposed to motivation, which is doing it because if you don't do it, there will be negative repercussions. Motivation is making me do something that I don't really want to do."

Procrastination seems to be one of the biggest problems clients experience when embracing change in their lives. There is an entire personal development industry focused almost entirely on attempting to address this problem, helping us get clear on our goals and then motivating us via all manner of coercion to achieve them. Guilt, irritation, shame, self-sabotage, stress, the fear of not reaching our potential, anger at self, beating oneself up, right path/wrong path thinking etc. all accompany the so-called "unmotivated" client.

One of two things can happen when you find yourself procrastinating or seeking to motivate yourself. You will motivate yourself with head talk and force yourself to do something that most likely does not feel particularly good. Or you can procrastinate until you feel inspired from within to do it. The first, motivation, will take substantial effort, be a fleeting addictive type high followed by a down, feeling like a pat on the back that may leave you wanting.

The second, inspiration, takes courage, will feel genuinely good and uplifting, absorbing, purposeful and of course inspired. For me, it's been a journey of many years now to learn to live from inspiration. I was a senior bank manager in a previous career. This was a wonderful time for my family. We had it all. The house on the hill, the sea view and the boat in the harbour, but sadly it did not inspire me.

I didn't procrastinate for more than a couple of months, as once my mind was made up I was ready to change my life for ever. I felt inspired to become the best Life Coach in the UK. There was an element of fear in this career change as the prestige and kudos in my bank position was what everybody seemed to want, so I had to stay

motivated with my new idea. I felt inspired and motivated to study in my spare time and took the relevant qualifications; I was itching to see my first client. It just felt better when I thought about life coaching, so I took a deep breath and amicably left the bank. In less than a week I was running my own life coaching practice.

An internationally acclaimed coach and personal friend told me, "For goodness' sake, Mark, live the dream - you only live once!" I was both motivated and enormously inspired by this statement and his advice helped me leave the safe zone of banking, which was all I had known for 20 years, and the desire to become a famous life coach became my first choice.

Job security is one of the biggest worries during this health crisis, with many people even more fearful of losing their job than contracting the virus.

The desire to inspire and motivate people to live the dream within the boundaries of their own goals and dreams was enormously satisfying. Again, I find myself, as will you, moving into new areas with new inspirations.

Perhaps you are bashing your head against what you 'should do' ... outdated ideas and projects that are motivated by living up to some ideal set by someone else, or perhaps doing what you feel you should or ought to be doing in the hope of fantasy rewards at the end of

the 'hard slog'. It takes courage to live free and in the flow of your own calling - but the reward is extraordinary. I believe that the word inspiration originally meant to be filled with life, passion, and emotional and physical balance and wellbeing, achieving great results in your own life and the lives of your patients and clients.

This shows the fundamental differences between inspiration and motivation and also how a lack of motivation is fuelled by procrastination. As practitioners, we need to be able to identify our client's levels of procrastination and resistance to change and find ways to inspire them which in turn will motivate them to take action. As a rule of thumb inspiration is found on the inside, while motivation comes from the outside.

The experience of working from inspiration

Working from inspiration will lead you to succeed. But how will you know if you've achieved a state of working from inspiration? The best way is to ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you feel a strong sense of purpose and clarity?
- Do you start the day with intent, eager and excited to face the challenges that lie ahead?
- Do you believe in your potential and the value of your contribution and the value you add to your clients' lives?
- Do you know that you have something unique to offer your clients and are open to discover new ways to continue adding value to your client's lives?
- Do you take the time to be reflective about your life path and practice and how you are developing as a practitioner?

Next time you feel inspired by a new idea or perhaps a fresh role model in your life, somebody you meet by chance, or you have a certain gut feeling that won't go away, embrace these new feelings well and use the experience to its full advantage. Nothing happens by chance; everything in life happens for a reason, so don't allow yourself to procrastinate and simply exist. Seek out the inspiration and motivation you need to lead a full and exciting life as a practitioner, follow your star, live your dream and see where it takes you. ■



Find out more about Mark and his courses at <https://courses.thecamcoach.com>



STAYING STRONG

Elizabeth Ashley explores personal resilience...

STRONG. Now there's a word with many different interpretations. It could mean, physically, mentally, or emotionally. Perhaps one of the few useful things COVID has done is turned the notion of being emotionally strong on its head. Hopefully, the changing collective consciousness about how it feels to be put under pressure will also burst the festering boil that was mental health. One thing's for certain, even if the vaccine has put some distance between us and the virus, there is another crisis most certainly now hitting the NHS.

My daughter is a paramedic. After 12 months of living out this nightmare on her own, in Sheffield, finally the doctor has drawn a line. Despite her cries

of indignation, she has been signed off on long term sick, completely shattered by trauma.

The problem being, of course that the strain of COVID, the sheer number of cases, the colossal amount of overtime required to plug the gaps because of people self-isolating...all of that was piled onto what was already a terrifyingly traumatic job.

These coming days, I predict, will be extremely hard for my daughter. That she should rest, for her, is cognitive dissonance. It goes against everything she has come to believe. Every synapse in her body is screaming for respite, but through necessity she has trained it that it must not. She will not be the only one in this state. Indeed, I know that she is not. It's not just keyworkers, either is it?

Everyone you speak to is lonely. Perhaps lonelier after this second lockdown, because in the first whole families were locked together in the sun. Now, after these endless weeks, just looking out of the window at grey skies and rain, I think most people are feeling the strain.

I've felt it myself, locked up trying to run a business and home schooling. My research into the ancient Greek Melissae priestesses became incredibly confusing when my son was reading me his English homework. I started to feel like Pegasus, Theseus, and Medusa were narrating my life. I was terrified I was suffering psychosis. It was far from comforting when, on asking hubby if I seemed mad, without a shade of irony he replied: "You seem the same to me..." I'm still not really sure how to take that!

So, where is strong in all this? What does personal resilience look like?

Is it continuing to struggle, way after your body complains, or is it asking for help? Certainly, within the constructs of the NHS, I can't see any other outcome apart from crisis. How can any of them feel loyal to their service and ask for help?

Thank goodness that the complementary practitioners are well rested. Physically rested, maybe, but the financial stress on us all, the mental and emotional pressure...well. We don't need to go there, do we?

Despite that, I would suggest every practitioner here has some wonder up their sleeve. Something that might help get someone back on their feet. Massage, obviously, for those weary bodies. Talking therapies, even energy work.

If I might be so bold, I'd love to offer up an aromatherapy perspective. Perhaps this might be something to help people if they are still locked up at home.

Oxytocin is the neurotransmitter the body makes when it senses a feeling of bonding.

It has many functions. It surges through the body when a woman is labour, then triggers the maternal milk to come in. It's involved, strangely, in osteoporosis, where deficiencies cause the bones to become brittle. It's triggered when we hold hands, or when we hug someone. Sometimes, it's referred to as the love chemical.

We don't need to be scientists to see this country may be experiencing an oxytocin famine.

The effects of enhancing oxytocin are boundless. People report feeling less anxiety, stress, and pain. Mood improves and we feel greater feelings of well-being. We'd expect this

from massage and from sex of course, but recent research has shown there is something far more accessible at our finger tips. Oddly, it is fragrance.

Research released in March 2020 showed that spending just five minutes a day smelling essential oils raised levels of oxytocin. Bizarrely, this research came about because it had already been proven that low levels of oxytocin in post-menopausal women played a vital role in osteoporosis and loss of muscle mass.

In the trial, the women were given, what I would consider to be hormonal oils - choices of lavender, neroli, jasmine absolute, roman chamomile, clary sage, and Indian sandalwood to inhale for twenty minutes, after having inhaled a control blank substance for twenty minutes prior.

Research released in March 2020 showed that spending just five minutes a day smelling essential oils raised levels of oxytocin.

Levels were assessed in four different readings of saliva, and in each case the essential oils had made the oxytocin higher. Beautiful stress relieving oils, so easy to use, but there is a bigger thing at play here, isn't there?

The gardens are starting to colour up and you can smell spring in the air. Nature took from us and now she is giving back. Just a walk in the forest or take a few moments to sniff a flower may be that small trigger the body needs to rest and restore. Perhaps the never ending hand washing needs to start integrating rose soap?

As complementary practitioners our job has always been to support the NHS, and whilst we have always been rather good at it, some sectors have one a very good job of ignoring us. I'm not sure they have the potency to do that anymore. Certainly, they have their own sickness epidemic looming.

We will be needed to pick up the slack.

Resilience means stepping up when needed, and your country never needed you more. But more than that, resilience means knowing yourself, always thinking of others but simultaneously always



checking in with yourself to make sure you are okay first.

If you need help now, there's nothing to be ashamed of. Please, talk to your doctor or therapist. If you are well, if you genuinely do feel strong, take a deep breath, step outside and start thinking about what small thing you can do to repair our planet, its trees, its animals, but more than anything else right now, your fellow people. Welcome to the Age of Aquarius – now the healers rise. ■

Reference

The Effects of Essential Oil on Salivary Oxytocin Concentration in Postmenopausal Women | Wataru Tarumi , Kazuyuki Shinohara 1J Altern Complement Med; 2020 Mar;26(3):226-230.



ELIZABETH ASHLEY is a clinical aromatherapist with nearly thirty years professional experience. She is the best-selling Secret Healer aromatherapy manuals and the Tongue of The Trees Essential Oil Oracle Cards.

From the recipes left over from her family business, she has created a video database of how to make and use safely called The Recipe Hub, which you can find, alongside others of her courses including The Prosperous Therapist Course. You can find these at www.thesecrethealer.co.uk/courses



HOW TO FIND THE CLIENTS YOU ARE **COMFORTABLE** *working with*

Kathy Scott shares how to find clients that work for you...

YOU pick up the phone and it's a client cancelling their appointment. You put the phone down and breathe a huge sigh of relief. Sounds awful doesn't it? I expect many of us have felt like this for a variety of reasons. Perhaps you are already exhausted after what has been a long day or it may

be a client you are not comfortable with.

When we first start in business, we grab any enquiries we can as we are worried about not having enough clients to make the business viable. We take on clients who mess us around by turning up late but still expect the full one hour session, those who cancel at the last minute for no good reason or who just do not turn up. We accept those who are after a cheap deal and will haggle until you accept a fee at a much lower rate leading to you feel resentment towards them.

Sometimes we are our own worst enemy, especially after we first qualify as a therapist. We get the bug for learning and sign up for all manner of courses. I took a pregnancy massage course and a holistic facial massage course. I was never comfortable massaging pregnant clients, it made me nervous for some reason. As for facial massage, I had visions of poking someone's eye out if my fingers slipped.

HOW DO WE OVERCOME THESE OBSTACLES AND FIND THOSE CLIENTS WE TRULY WANT TO WORK WITH?

Think of the type of treatments you enjoy and would like to specialise in. It will make it easier to choose your ongoing training to enhance those specific skills whether that's in massage or another holistic modality. Next, create a client profile, sometimes called an avatar. This is an imaginary person but who fits the qualities you want in a client. This is someone you look forward to seeing, you are comfortable with the treatments you are providing and your client appreciates and values your service.

WHAT DOES YOUR IDEAL CLIENT LOOK LIKE AND WHERE DO YOU FIND THEM?

If anyone asked me who is my ideal client and what do they look like, I would get flummoxed and just say well, everybody is my ideal client because massage benefits everyone. Deep down I still think that but for profiling, it pays to be more specific.

If you are already running your holistic business think about the clients you have:

- Who do you see on a weekly, fortnightly, or monthly basis, or who just rings now and again out of the blue?
- What type of treatment do they have and how much do you charge them?



Think about the clients who bring you the most income and see if there are any common traits.

- Do they all have similar personalities that resonate with you?
- Is it the same type of massage or other holistic treatment?
- Are they of similar backgrounds, same gender, age group, etc.?
- Are you comfortable working with them?

If you calculate how much you charge and how many treatments they have in a year, you can work out their average financial value to your business. This will help you think about who your ideal client is and paint a picture of them in your mind. I know financial value isn't everything but it is a good base on which to start.

The client avatar helps to bring your ideal client to life, you give him or her a name, you describe their age range, what they do for a living what are the positives and negatives in their life. This way, they feel like a real person and encourages you to think about how your particular style or type of massage can help them and why you want to help them.

For example, this is a client avatar I would create for a person whose lifestyle leaves them highly stressed and in need of some relaxation time to call their own and how your massage can help.

"Meet Jodie. 35 years old and a full-time teacher. She has two young children aged 3 and 5 years and she is married to Dave who works full-time."

What are her issues?

- She has a demanding work schedule and finds it difficult to find time for herself
- She works around childcare arrangements
- She finds it difficult to relax, feels tired, stressed and her body aches. She cannot get a good night's sleep.

How would your massage help Jodie?

- Difficult to find time for herself
- If you are a mobile therapist, explain she would not need to find time to visit a salon as you go to Jodie's home.
- If you do work from a salon or home, let her know you have flexible working arrangements to see her outside of school hours when her husband can look after the children
- Difficult to relax and to sleep well
- Advise Jodie of the benefits of having a regular massage e.g. help her to feel calm, concentrate on her breathing, and just letting go.
- The physical benefits of a massage will also help relieve her muscle tension, aches, and pains due to her over-busy schedule, poor posture, and constantly trying to juggle a mountain of responsibilities.
- Help with alleviating her stress-related headaches.

Now that you know Jodie is an ideal client, you can address her particular lifestyle issues and she can picture herself in what you are describing. She will think "that's me, I need this". You want your potential client to know you feel their pain.



You may, of course, have more than one client avatar and it would not stop you from working with people who need a massage for different reasons, but it helps you reach your preferred clients. It also means you concentrate on their specific issues when putting together your promotional literature.

Having identified your ideal client, where do you find them? The first thing to think about is your promotional material. Clients may not know what type of massage they need, remember you are the expert. It is easy to forget those who aren't involved in holistic therapy, or someone who hasn't had a treatment before, may not know what they need. Sometimes you have to tell them. They won't necessarily know that deep tissue massage or sports massage helps with the release of tight shoulder muscles, for example. Think about how you would word your message so it specifically relates to your clients. Don't just list your qualifications and treatments, build a picture first of who you are talking to, and then you can set out the different types of treatments. Explain how Indian Head massage is good for alleviating stress-related headaches and relaxation, how deep tissue massage targets persistent muscle aches and pains due to overuse at the gym/poor posture/office work. Adapt this to your own treatments and modalities.

If you can get across the message that a particular treatment is not a once in a blue moon guilty pleasure but rather something your client needs for his or her health and wellbeing on a long term basis, you are more likely to stand out from your competitors and put yourself out there as an expert in your field. You will have a better

chance of securing your ideal client.

Many therapists worry that there is too much competition particularly if you practice in a large town or city. Get your message right and you will be noticed. It also means you do not have to make price a competitive reason for getting work over and above other holistic therapists in your area. Do not get into a price war and try to be cheaper than anyone else. What you offer is more important to attract your ideal client.

We've talked about what we are looking for in a client but we also need to be respectful as to how our clients feel. Particularly now, following the pandemic, clients may be apprehensive about being touched again after such a long time and with the worries of transmission of Coronavirus. How can you alleviate those fears?

The best way is to provide your clients with the information they need so there are no surprises. Tell them what is expected when they arrive for their appointment, and what they can expect from you.

Draw up a Risk Assessment which you can email to them or talk it through, covering matters such as:

- Specific Covid-19 measures e.g. taking their temperature when they arrive at your clinic, enhanced hygiene measures you have put in place, ventilation of the room, PPE you will be wearing, etc.
- Do they need to wait outside until

you call them in?

- How social distancing will be implemented i.e. distance between you and the client during the consultation, facilities for washing hands, washing of towels, and cleaning the room between clients.
- Will you wear gloves during the treatment?
- Will the client be required to wear a face mask?
- Providing a specific Covid-19 medical questionnaire beforehand for the client to complete.
- Giving the client, before any appointment, the opportunity to talk through with you, their concerns and how you will address them.

Hopefully, now the vaccination programme is being rolled out, many of the concerns will be alleviated although, of course, not everyone may want to have the vaccine. You need to consider how you feel about that too.

We all know the power of touch, and many people during the lockdown periods said the thing they missed the most was not being able to hug people. We need that physical connection for our wellbeing, it reduces stress and anxiety, and so treatments carried out in a safe environment should be welcomed.

No one can deny the year 2020 and the first part of 2021 was extremely difficult for everyone involved in close contact services. However, there now seems to be a positivity that business and life, in general, are progressing towards some kind of normality. Whether you are just starting as a therapist or have been practising for many years, mental health and physical wellbeing are intrinsically linked and I have no doubt you will be in great demand. ■



KATHY SCOTT has been a massage therapist for 12 years and runs her own corporate massage business Hands On At Work. She has also written a book Rubbing Shoulders With The Best – Growing A Massage Business Without The Stress. Find out more at www.rubbingshoulderswiththebest.co.uk



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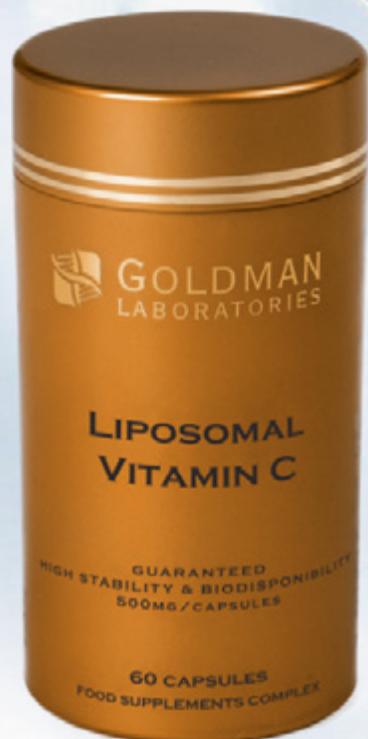
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Skilful COMPASSION

Compassion is an essential skill for any holistic therapist. Gayle MacDonald and Carolyn Tague share their thoughts on developing it further...

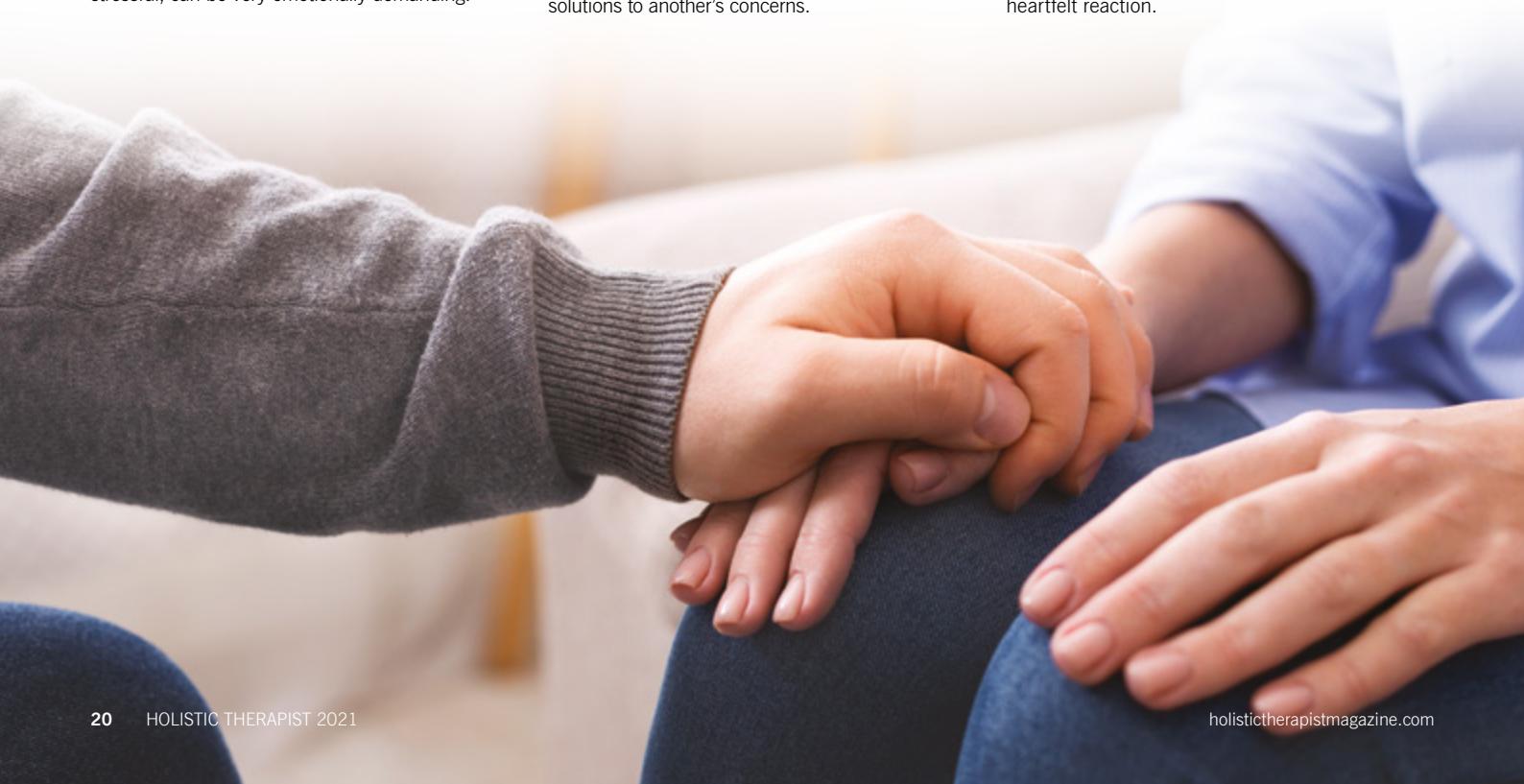
PEOPLE in health care disciplines, whether that's mainstream medicine or holistic care, are generally thought to be compassionate by nature. Experience and research show, however, that compassion can also be taught and therefore is a skill that can be improved, regardless of the starting point. Working with seriously ill patients, in environments that are often hectic and stressful, can be very emotionally demanding.

Being skilful in expressions of compassion serves patients or clients, their families, staff members and practitioners themselves by allowing for true human emotions without overstepping professional boundaries or scope of practice. It bears repeating that these skills may inform personal relationships, but the agreements between family and friends are different in important ways. The Spectrum of Caring guidelines below are for the presenting psychosocial needs of a client within a given session of touch therapy.

If authentic communication is the outward behaviour that builds therapeutic relationships, skilful compassion is the internal counterpart. Where is one's heart and mind in any given client interaction? Is there judgment of any kind regarding why the patient is in the hospital or practice room? Is the mind busy solving all the person's problems? Skilful compassion is the inner balance of being fully present and not ever assuming one has solutions to another's concerns.

Skilful compassion is offered through listening for and acknowledging the emotional aspects of what a patient shares and holding space for whatever is expressed without attempting to fix it. For many bodyworkers, this is the appropriate limit to the conversation – holding space is enough. Simply acknowledging the conversation in some way before proceeding to the hands-on work, and again at the close of the session is a good rule of thumb and helps build a therapeutic relationship. For example, a comment such as, "Thank you for sharing some of your story with me," shows gratitude and conveys that the patient was heard.

Internally however, the therapist is wise to stay curious without judgment. Recognise any emotional response is one's own and not the patient's. When patients significantly trigger the practitioner's own emotions, it is best to keep a balance between professional knowledge and heartfelt reaction.



The ideal outward expressions of healthy therapeutic relationships are excellence in treatment, authentic communications and skilful compassion, which form the Spectrum of Caring. This is like a GPS tracking device for the practitioner's internal terrain.

Sympathy

Sympathy means the provider has an understanding and recognition of the client's difficult situation, and will feel relatively distant from the client.

Empathy

On the opposite end of the spectrum is the response labelled "Empathy." When in empathy, the therapist recognizes and understands the problematic situation but also feels it more deeply. There is an emotional and sometimes visceral experience in the practitioner. For some, there is a kind of meshing or melding with the emotions of the client.

Compassion

While both sympathy and empathy provide a quality of holding space and are certainly expressions of care, there is yet a third, middle way that has the potential to be of better service to the patient and to sustain the clinician. The middle way, to overtly borrow from the Buddhist tradition, is the response of compassion. Definitions and translations can confuse the core meaning: here, consider the definition of compassion as the response of understanding, recognising, and feeling another's difficulties and emotional states. Compassion stays fully present to all that is, without feeling within one's self the need to fix or change the other person. Compassion is a practice of acceptance with an awareness that healing is always a potential. Compassion is neither being on the side-lines nor a superhero. It opens the space to facilitate a client's own discovery of what they need, in any given moment. Compassion allows for feelings of brokenness or rawness but also the sense of freedom in being seen and acknowledged: in a word, accepted. It is a space that understands to the core that transformation, if not cure, is possible no matter the circumstances. As doctor Wayne Jonas says, "Healing emerges in the space between people – in the collective mind – and its benefits can go either way".

Examples of skilful compassion in client – practitioner conversation

"I can sense the frustration you are experiencing and I can feel that this is a tough situation for you." Eye contact and pausing are helpful here.

"I can really understand that this is also an emotional time for you. Do you feel like you have the support you need?" Have a list of the resources to which you can refer clients. In a hospital, these would include chaplains, social workers, case managers and of course the nurses. In private practice, they may include GPs, mental health organisations or support charities.



Skilful compassion in diversity, equity and inclusion

A holistic practice should serve all people in need equally. It is the responsibility of every provider, regardless of discipline, to educate one's self and continually engage in self-reflection around issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Aptitude for successfully engaging any and every person who is on the referral list is a core skill in building therapeutic relationships with clients. The beauty of building these skills is that they are often both "good medicine" for the patient, and increase the fulfilment experience of the therapist.

Typically, recognising the impact of culture on

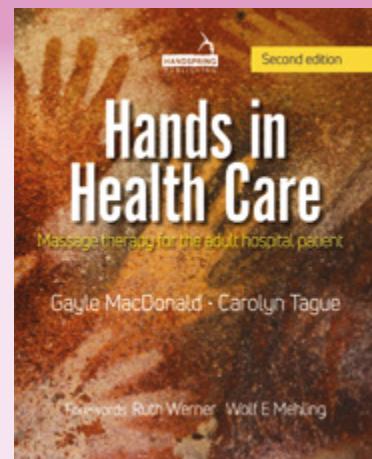
an individual depends very much upon which culture that person identifies with. The daily impacts of a society's culture are a given to those in underrepresented minority groups and are often completely invisible to those in privileged or majority groups. The conversation about bias between groups is not usually easy, but it is imperative for therapeutic relationships.

As Dr. Linda Clever explains, "Everyone has attitudes. They live in you and tend to persist unchecked unless you take charge... Grounded in emotion, attitudes show up in your body language, words, and behaviours. Attitudes are your outlooks at the same time that they mirror you."

It is imperative in the building of therapeutic relationships and practicing skilful compassion that practitioners examine their own biases, assumptions, prejudices, and attitudes. Behaviour follows thought. Health disparity, with its unfortunate foundation in prejudice and socioeconomic inequities, is a dedicated field of study within public health. Inward examination and re-examination of one's attitudes throughout one's professional career is required for those who seek to build truly therapeutic relationships. ■



For This article is based on an extract from *Hands in Health Care*, Second edition by Gayle MacDonald and Carolyn Tague. The book is published by Hardspring Publishing and can be purchased from their website at or from online retailers. It can also be ordered via your local bookshop.





SETTING NEW PRIORITIES FOR LIFE & WORK

*Now's the perfect time to think about what you truly want from life. **Richard Docwra** shares his approach to finding your perfect balance...*

ACH of us needs to make the most of our brief period of existence by approaching life in a thoughtful and well-informed way. We need to stand back from the pressures and detail of our daily lives and see them within the bigger picture - including where we are, what we are as creatures and why we're here.

As we emerge from lockdown, battered and bruised, changed people in a changed world,

now seems like a perfect time to pull back and re-examine what we want for ourselves, putting our lives and circumstances into context. Seeing our situation within the context of history, the universe and other people's lives can help us to feel less anxious about our present situation, and understand the options before us more clearly.

Having stepped back to see your life within the big picture, we can then begin to explore some of the big questions of life, including how to find

meaning, how to behave and how to get the most out of life.

Again, now seems like the right moment to consider these things, not just for ourselves as individuals, but for the businesses we run and the people we are serving with these businesses. For many of us, it's more than just 'the right moment' - it's a necessity, as the pandemic has changed our businesses and our lives, as well as those of our clients and customers. We not only need to remind ourselves of our priorities - we need to adapt to the changed landscape we live within.

A good initial question to ask in this process is, 'What gives me meaning in life?' As far as we know, there is no preordained meaning to our lives - we create meaning for ourselves. Many of the things that give us meaning are actually quite simple and sitting right in front of our eyes - for example, human relationships. We often find ourselves unable to see these things though, and can find ourselves wandering through life without a sense of meaning or struggling to find it whilst desperately seeking it.

One of the few positives that some people have been able to salvage from the pandemic has been to give them a clearer idea of the things that give them real meaning in their lives. From my own perspective, these have included things I have



missed enormously during the lockdown period, such as social contact, travel and adventure, as well as things I have worried about, such as family and friends, and things that have brought me pleasure and fulfilment during this difficult time, such as being out in nature and exercising.

We not only need to remind ourselves of our priorities - we need to adapt to the changed landscape we live within.

So, let's use this situation in which we have a greater focus on what matters to us to consider how we can prioritise these things more in our lives as we emerge from lockdown. Let's use this opportunity to do some life editing - increasing the nourishing things and reducing the less important stuff.

The pandemic has also led many of us to encounter serious illness and death at much greater proximity than we might have experienced before. This could remind us that life is finite, and that we should make the most of the remaining time we have to live.

This will include prioritising the things that give us greater meaning, but it should also prompt us to give greater time and attention to appreciating the very fact that we are alive.

Many of us tend to be so busy and absorbed in the pressure and rush of everyday living that we rarely, if ever, take time to step back from our lives and appreciate the remarkable fact that we are alive and what this really means. Doing this regularly can be one of the great pleasures of life, and can contribute to a greater sense of meaning.

We should also remember to savour the experience of being alive, as well as our individual experiences. This doesn't have to just mean peaceful reflection, as we can appreciate both the busier and quieter aspects of life. For example, it can be satisfying to reflect on the enjoyment we are feeling when we are in the middle of busy, social experiences with other people, such as parties or your fourth client session of the day. Taking a few seconds to do this occasionally can enable us to 'check in' with ourselves during these experiences and fully appreciate them.



Appreciating the finitude and experience of life like this could also prompt us to approach the task of living with a greater sense of wonder and curiosity and revitalise the way we see the world.

This isn't just an opportunity to set new priorities and rethink how we live our own lives. We can use it to take a fresh look at our work and businesses. Is the work that we're doing truly reflecting the things that really give us meaning in life? Is it really enabling us to live our values in the most effective way possible? Let's take this time to pause and reflect on how we can make our work even more consistent with what matters to us.

It's not just a question of what we do in our work. We can also reconsider how we do it. Most of us have had to adapt our methods of working in order to avoid direct contact with others, including through digital communications. This has been out of necessity, but we may want to retain some of the tools and techniques we've used during this time as lockdown eases, as they could make our work more economical, enjoyable or effective.

***It's not just a question of what we do in our work.
We can also reconsider how we do it..***

On a broader level, many of us will have already challenged the modern idea of work and all the baggage it carries with it, including the idea of the 8-hour day, the 5-day week and what activities constitute 'work'. The pandemic has shaken up and blurred the distinction between leisure and work even more.

Perhaps your experience of juggling these things over recent months has given you a new sense of the balance you want to strike between the different activities in your life that enable you to provide the resources you and your loved ones need, whilst doing the other creative, productive and rewarding activities you want to do, as well as resting and relaxing. In other words, helping you move away from the dreaded 'work/life balance' and instead simply towards life balance. ■



RICHARD DOCWRA is a writer, coach and consultant. His new book 'Life - and how to think about it' is out now. It shows you how to navigate life in a thoughtful and well-informed way. Find out more by visiting www.richarddocwra.com for details of his books, podcasts and other publications.



TRUSTING *our bodies in the* HEALING PROCESS

Caroline Barrow shares the craniosacral approach...

We have been brought up on the idea that germs are bad, are the cause of many illnesses and should be avoided at all costs. Germ theory then tends to suggest that a variety of substances should be utilised to kill off said germs so that the absence of them will keep us healthy and safe. However, what is returning to the table is the counter idea of terrain theory. That as long as our internal terrain is in good working order, our homeostatic checks and balances will kick in, our immune system will do its thing and we will be able to live happily alongside the germs that surround our every waking - and sleeping - moments!

Think of it this way; if the water in your goldfish bowl looks mucky and the goldfish gets sick what do you do? Medicate the goldfish or clean the water?

It is great to see this view of health emerging again. It ties in neatly with the paradigm I have worked with for many years as a craniosacral therapist – that we are simply helping clear out our inner terrain. To explore, heal and release all sorts of ‘insults’ that have impacted our body-mind-spirit to the point that they could be muddying the waters. This could be physical, emotional, mental or spiritual. How do we know where to start and what needs doing?

Both Dr John Upledger, the physician and osteopath who developed CranioSacral Therapy and Andrew Taylor Still, the original developer of osteopathy, held that a key to working with a person is the ability to acknowledge and access the 'inner physician'. This is the part within each and every one of us that knows how to bring back balance. It knows what is being held onto in the body-mind-spirit, what needs to be released and, importantly, the best way for it to release. Typically, if we were to try and plan this out – as a client or as a therapist – this body wisdom would leave us for dust in what it is able to achieve!

So, if we can accept that there is a deeper part of us that 'knows' then the question becomes how do we access it. Clearly, when we have issues in our bodies and health, it is because we haven't been able to heal something. This may be because it's too big a thing or things happened that we didn't have the tools to deal with, or because we were not able to allow ourselves the time to delve into the healing process at the time. Our 'inner physicians' can do great jobs in patching us up so we can carry on, but sometimes the compensations we are able to make just become too many and we need some help. Not because we don't have the innate ability to heal but perhaps because we haven't been utilising the skill enough as we've gone along.

Think of it this way; if the water in your goldfish bowl looks mucky and the goldfish gets sick what do you do? Medicate the goldfish or clean the water?

So are we willing to take a punt on trusting our bodies? Do we believe that they have something to say and that they know answers to our questions? In fact, do we even know the questions? Sometimes the place to start is simply by listening. The clues are usually there in the pains, illnesses, issues that are in our awareness. We can start to ask these parts of us, in our imagination, what they know about the way they are feeling or the problem they are experiencing, allowing that part of our body to have a voice and allowing ourselves to hear its answers. Even more powerful

is the idea of becoming that part of us that we feel has something to say – in our embodying of that aspect of us we have a chance to really take responsibility and own the emotion, experience or response that is held within those tissues. As we hear aspects of the problem from this viewpoint we can often gain an even deeper understanding of what needs to happen to effect change.

When a therapist is skilled in facilitating conversation and dialogue between a client and their own body, really allowing the answers to come from within the client's self, then the client will start to trust themselves a little more... and become more and more interested in what else they might know about themselves! They become more empowered to take responsibility and to act on the information they have received from within.

As Dr Upledger was branching into this way of working more and more, he was astounded by how much people could find out about themselves. He always stayed hands on while he invited people to explore what they felt and saw, and by following the tissue was able to feel when someone had reached a place where the tissue relaxed and changed. As people connected with their bodies he found they could envisage cell shapes, chemical processes or the shapes of body structures that their mind knew little about but their inner physician could describe and make changes to. He realised more and more that his 'knowledge' as a doctor, while it had its place, could not reach the depths that our inner wisdoms can when we really give them their voice.

Sometimes it is a memory that drifts into awareness and all of a sudden a client will realise that a fall or a slip or a childhood event, long forgotten, is still held in the matrix of our tissues. Years later, we suddenly realise that the knee problems we have are connected to something that happened in a different time. When there is created space to tell the story we can move deeper, from, 'I fell off my bike when I was eight', into the stuff that got hidden in the shadow: 'if I was home late my father would be furious'. As we work with this in whatever way the body

deems is needed – client led not therapist directed – and change in the experience of the symptom is later noted, we gradually develop more trust in this process. A deeper trust in our body's ability to heal.

Sometimes it is a memory that drifts into awareness and all of a sudden a client will realise that a fall or a slip or a childhood event, long forgotten, is still held in the matrix of our tissues.

Like many of us in the last year or more I have had some big life events to navigate and I have been deeply grateful for the understanding that my body-mind-spirit has its own wisdom. I have done my best to listen and learned more ways to keep cleaning the water in my fishbowl!

This is not always quick and rarely happens overnight (except when it does!), but is usually the start of a journey that leads us into greater healing, a greater sense of flow and a deeper respect for the inner parts of us that do have something to say if we learn to trust and to listen.

I encourage you to ask. ■



CAROLINE runs the Upledger

Institute UK and the College of Body Science, which teaches advanced anatomy and physiology for CAM therapists. She has a degree in Biomedical Science and co-authored the book 'The Inner Power of Stillness'. You can contact her on 0800 690 6966 or by visiting www.upledger.co.uk or www.collegeofbodyscience.com



START YOUR OWN SCHOOL

Magdalena Vonk discovered a passion for teaching others about massage. Here, she shares what to consider if you want to become a tutor or set up your own training school...

LIKE most of us when we're embarking in a new business project, I turned to the internet for guidance. I wanted a down to earth article which would help me understand how to set up a massage training school. I didn't find what I was looking for, so I thought I would use this column to help those of you considering a move into teaching holistic therapies or running your own school.

Becoming a tutor

When I was ready to explore opportunity of running my own massage training centre, I already had some experience of running CPD massage courses. I was

hired by a local holistic college to write and then run courses for the public. Initially, I taught people how to provide basic massage therapy treatment for their family members. I loved it. I became passionate about educating people on the beauty of massage. I wanted to spread the word about the benefits of the treatments, and I wanted to teach people how to do it. This was a great start to teaching because there was very little cost. Most of my expenses and accreditation cost was covered by the college.

To teach adults you will require a teaching qualification. The level of the teaching qualification depends on the accrediting body and the minimum is Level

3 Certificate in Education and Training (AET). Previously this qualification was known as PTLLS. Level 3 courses can be completed online at your own pace or during a few days' classroom-based training. ABT or The Guild of Holistic Therapists will accredit your courses if you have level 3. However, if you are looking at becoming a tutor recognised by the Massage Training Institute, their requirements are higher and you will have to hold the minimum a Level 4 Certificate in Education and Training, or a Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLLS): City & Guilds 7304 or equivalent.

Requirements to become a tutor

If you want to become a tutor, you'll need to hold a massage qualification – or one for your own modality - preferably recognised by the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC). Most of the organisations require of you

to have been in practice as a massage therapist for at least two years, some may require longer period of time. Accrediting organisation may require you to have teaching experience. This may be in your own practice and must relevant to massage therapy e.g., teaching massage to the public or non-massage related teaching. MTI will count experience as an assistant on massage trainings providing you did some supervised teaching.

Applying for accreditation

Most complementary therapies are not regulated by the government. This means that there are no laws in place to protect the public from unqualified or incompetent therapists. The UK government has suggested that therapists should self-regulate and join one of various professional associations. This means that, in theory, you do not have to be accredited to run a course. However, students of non-accredited courses will struggle to get insurance or join one of the professional bodies. In order to provide high level of training and help to build the reputation of massage therapy as a form of treatment it is important that the training and accreditations are completed in an appropriate way.

Questions to ask yourself before applying for accreditation

- 1.** Why do you want to run a therapy school?
- 2.** Do you think that you are a good teacher? (Not all good/great therapists are going to be good teachers.)
- 3.** Do you like to share knowledge with others?
- 4.** Remember, as a teacher you are teaching your potential competition. What are your feelings about that?
- 5.** Do you have enough experience and knowledge to teach others?

6. Can you get some experience by teaching courses at local schools or colleges?

Professional Organisations and Accrediting Body

There are several professional bodies have set themselves up with a view to self-regulating the profession. It is important that you choose the one that you and your students will belong to carefully. Some of the organisations that support massage therapists are:

Association of Biodynamic Massage Therapists

International Association of Infant Massage

Institute of Sport and Remedial Massage

Massage Training Institute

National Association of Massage and Manipulative Therapists

Sports Massage Association

The Guild of Holistic Therapists (multidisciplinary body)

Remember to account for the cost of memberships and insurance when you are budgeting and pricing your course.

Costs of accreditation

Depending on the accrediting body, you will find that the cost of accreditation vary. ABT charge a one off fee for your first ten courses. The Guild of Holistic Therapists has an annual fee of £295 plus VAT. The FHT is more expensive at £450 plus VAT for first course, plus additional renewal fees and inspection fees. Whichever accrediting body you choose, you will have initial costs of set up as well as some annual renewal costs. Make sure that you account for them when you are budgeting.

When you are choosing the organisation make sure that you talk to them first and



that they answer all your questions in a way that makes sense to you. If you choose a professional organisation and a different course accrediting body, make sure that they work with each other and that your accreditation will be approved by chosen by your professional body.

Choose the organisation that best suits your current and future needs. Decisions about accreditation should not be made quickly and I suggest that you do a thorough research before committing to one. The

accreditation is not only about the stamp on your certificates and fee that you pay, it is also about the support that you will be able to receive from the organisation. Is your organisation active on social media, do they send regular updates during the lockdown, do you see them fighting for better rights for therapists?

Choose the company that will have your back when things go wrong and that will support you to grow your business not only their own.

Insurance

It is essential that your students are insured while training with you. Make sure that they have a list of insurance providers or, as it is in case of The Guild of Holistic Therapists, that they complete their insurance set up online prior your practical session. ■



MAGDALENA VONK is a therapist and tutor in Cheltenham.

Her passion is helping other therapists to get as much as possible out of their businesses. If you have any questions related to running a massage therapy business email her at magdalena@wellnessinmotion.co.uk.



BOUNCING BACK TO BUSINESS

*The Federation of Holistic Therapists' **Karen Young** looks at some simple ways to help you return to therapy work with a spring in your step...*

GETTING back to work will, for many of us, be almost like starting from scratch, so there are many things to consider as we reopen our doors.

GET YOURSELF SEEN

When you're given the green light, let everyone know that you are open for business (or will be very soon). Clients need to know that you are running a safe practice and are on hand to help. As well as contacting your existing clients, use this as an opportunity to reach out to more of your ideal clients – where do they congregate, in person and online, and can you use these 'meeting points' as a way to share top tips that are relevant to their needs and will put you on their radar? If you've upped your presence on social media during the lockdowns, be sure to keep this up – little and often is key.

FOCUS ON YOUR CLIENTS' NEEDS

Whether you are reaching out to clients in print, online or in person, focus on how your treatments can help them, rather than the treatment itself. For example, as the pandemic has heightened stress and anxiety in many people, so talk about how your treatments can help to reduce stress, restore a sense of wellbeing and improve sleep and energy levels. Use awareness weeks and months as a way to promote the benefits your treatments have to offer.

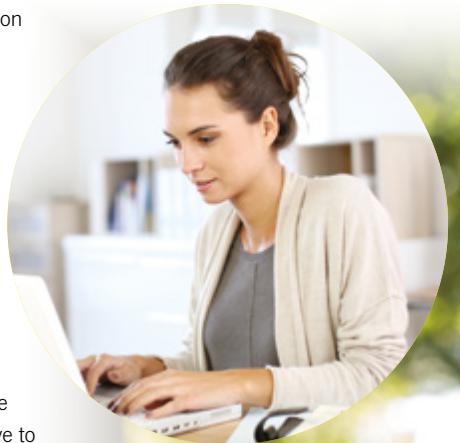
SELF-CARE TIPS

Good healthcare is about supporting a person to look after their own health. If you don't already, then offer your clients tips on how to look after themselves between treatments. Not only is

it empowering, it's great 'added value' to the service you already provide. A client who feels truly cared for is also more likely to recommend you to others and personal recommendation is one of the most powerful marketing tools in our industry – our most recent annual survey showed that 90% of FHT members receive clients this way.

WORKING COLLABORATIVELY

Rather than view other therapists as competitors, have you thought about collaborating with one or two to increase your reach to others? Perhaps you and another therapist you have met at an FHT local group both target clients with similar needs but specialise in different therapies. Obviously you would want to ensure they have the same values and professional standards as you, and drawing up a working agreement before you join forces would be prudent, but it could be just the ticket to help your business grow.



FUTURE-PROOF YOUR BUSINESS

Looking to add a new string to your bow? Why not consider adding a modality to your therapy toolkit that isn't hands-on? This will help future-proof your business should we find ourselves in further lockdowns or other situations that limit your ability to support clients in person. Mindfulness, nutritional therapy and talking therapies can all be done remotely, via online video platforms or telephone.

TAKE SOME ME-TIME

Finally, while it's important to find ways to grow your business, it's equally important to recognise we all need time to ourselves. As a therapist, be sure to lead by example and schedule in some 'me time'. Take good care of yourself, because your health matters just as much as your clients. ■



The FHT offers a range of membership benefits to holistic therapists and runs the largest independently Accredited Register for complementary healthcare therapists. For more information visit www.fht.org.uk



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HOLISTIC10



Growing Stronger

*The Holistic Room's **Ran Janda** has been speaking with practitioners about how the pandemic has impacted their ability to practice. Many of the conversations revealed struggles, and at the same time have inspired us...*

THE pandemic has caused losses, created new opportunities and forced some of us to pivot into different directions completely. New therapies that can be practised remotely have been learned, some have completely left the industry in order to find something more pandemic proof, while others have decided to take early retirement. The majority have moved their practice online or are waiting for some normality to return.

Learnings

One common theme from every story was the need to go within and find the strength to make tough decisions and figure out how to navigate this unique experience we all find ourselves in.

Most of the practitioners we spoke with have made or are making fundamental shifts in their professional and personal lives to adapt to our new reality. The inspiration we consistently received from these conversations is that in the most extreme challenges, strength and resilience can guide us and make us more compassionate human beings.

The Importance of Resilience

Resilience helps us to navigate challenges in our life and 2020 required a bucket load of resilience from us all. Our dominant thoughts and feelings over the past year act as a measure of resilience. Resilient people view difficult events as a challenge, with the knowledge that it will pass and so will not prevent them from moving forward. They are able to learn the lessons from these challenges and use them as opportunities for growth.

They are committed to their lives, their purpose, their relationships and the people they care about. They have goals which are compelling enough for them to take action and keep moving forward. They are also aware of what they have control over and focus on where they can have the most impact.

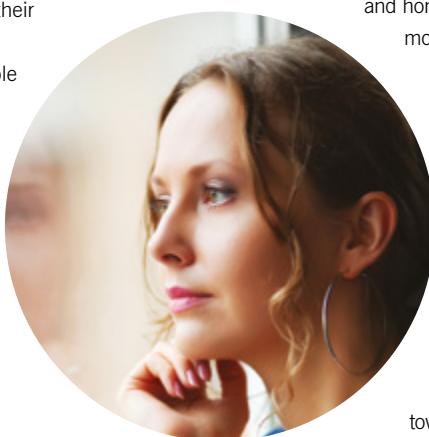
Ways to Build Resilience

Resilience is not something you either have or don't have. Resilience can be learned and should be worked on as a journey, not as a goal to achieve. Here are some ways to develop more resilience through awareness-based tools and exercises which will benefit you both personally and in your practice.

Become more aware of your thoughts, don't let negative thoughts take hold of your life. One way to keep a regular check on where your mind and thoughts are throughout the day, is to set the alarm on your phone to go off every hour and then just spend a few minutes checking in with yourself. How do you feel? What were you thinking? Switch any negative thoughts to more positive ones.

When you make mistakes, acknowledge them and figure out what you have learned from the situation. Use the learnings to make positive changes in your life. The more you do this, the more it will change how you frame negative situations and bad events in the future.

Choose your response. You can't always control bad situations, but you can always choose how you respond in every situation you find yourself in. Do you want to react with panic



and fear, or would you prefer to remain calm and logical to find a solution? Being able to maintain perspective is a strong attribute in resilient people.

You're probably sick of hearing the word "self-care" but taking care of your mind and body allows you to better cope with the challenges you face. Self-care doesn't need to be complicated, nor does it need to take up a lot of time. It can be as simple as spending 15 minutes each morning observing

your breath. It all starts with self-awareness and honouring what you need in that moment. Being able to relax and

be present first thing in the morning, can really help set the tone for the rest of the day.

Set some goals that move you toward your desires. The goals should be achievable and excite you when you think about them. Then start taking action steps towards your goals. Focus on the progress along the way to help keep you motivated.

Believe in your abilities and build your self-confidence. Foster the belief that if you keep working on your goals that you will eventually succeed. When you have a strong sense of self, it gives you the strength to keep moving forward and to take the risks to get ahead, despite perhaps feeling some apprehension or fear.

Become more aware of your thoughts, don't let negative thoughts take hold of your life

Power up your network. The strength of our network has most likely become apparent to most of us over the past year. Did it feel strong and stable? Or did it feel weak and lacking? If it was the latter, find new connections or reconnect with old ones you may have lost touch with. People who have strong relationships and connections are more resistant to stress and are happier as they have a strong support network to fall back on should they need it.

Adopt a flexible mindset. Major global life events can and will happen. Things that we

have no control over are always changing and well-made plans don't always pan out how we envisioned them. Being able to quickly adapt to what life throws at us builds our resilience muscle and allows us to manage challenges with greater ease.

The practice of gratitude is a proven method for enhancing resilience. When you regularly focus on and appreciate the positive aspects of your life, you build resilience over time. Every night before you go to bed, either write down or say to yourself at least 5 things that you are grateful for.

Use your imagination and visualise what you want. Get specific and detailed about envisioning what you want to achieve in your life and in your practice. Want more clients? Visualise a full diary with plenty of clients needing your service!

Navigating Future Challenges

Small daily habits can work wonders in building resilience. It takes work, but the more persistent you are, the more you will be able to navigate future hurdles with more ease.

Now that light at the end of the tunnel is in sight, it's a great time to assess where you are in life and with your practice. What do you want to achieve? Whether this is back to where you were before the pandemic hit, or somewhere completely different. Now is the time to start setting new goals and taking inspired action towards them.

Write a list of what you want to achieve in the next 12 months, make space for this exercise and set goals that excite you. Take action each day, even if it's something small that takes five minutes. Every moment you spend on your goals, is one more step to realising them. Always celebrate the small wins along the way, as life is a journey, not a destination. ■



RAN JANDA is the founder of

Holistic Room. HTM readers

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Expires May 31st 2021.



GETTING TO GRIPS WITH GUT HEALTH *and wellbeing*

Two of the biggest health issues that we face are mental health and gut health. Therapists who can offer treatment and counselling around the areas of nutrition, gut health, obesity, anxiety and depression will all find their services in increasing demand. We explore the connection between the mind and gut health and evaluate the market potential...

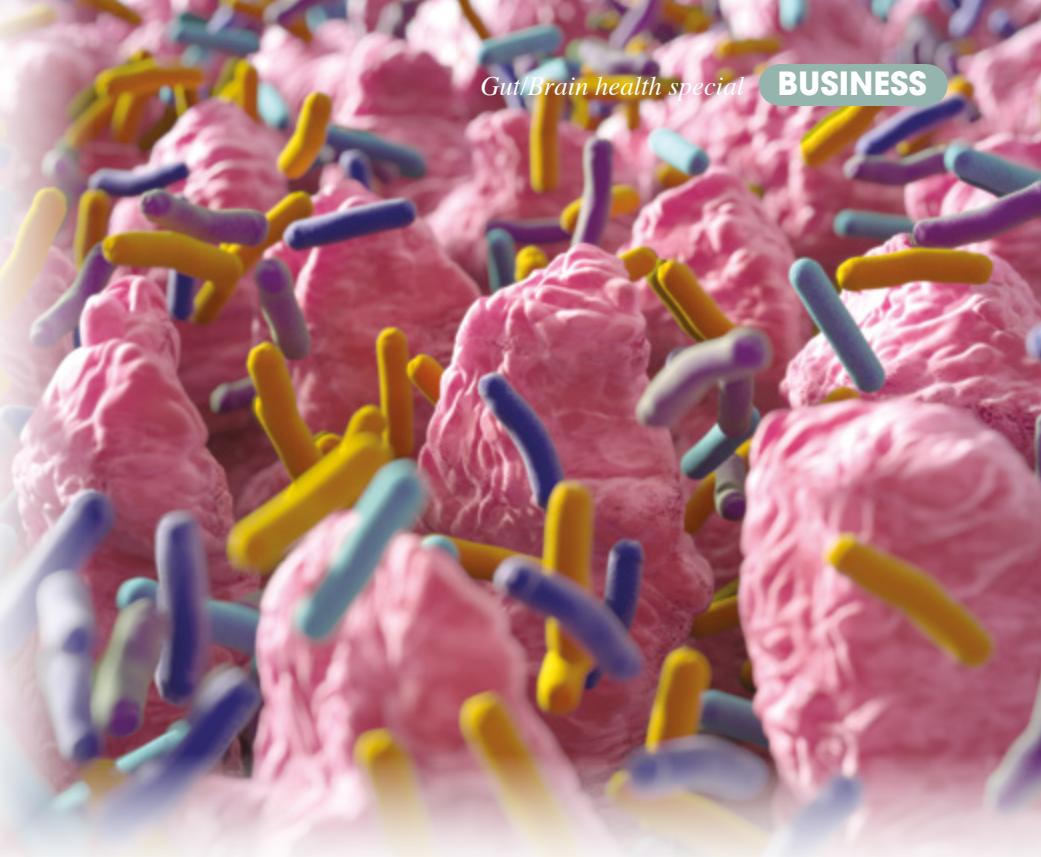
ALMOST all traditional systems of medicine, whether that's Ayurveda, TCM, folk medicine from the Appalachian mountains of the USA, tribal healing traditions from Africa or South America, medical herbalism or ancient medical practice from Greek or Roman times, recognise that there's a fundamental connection between what we eat and our health. As Hippocrates noted over 2000 years ago, "Our food should be our medicine, and our medicine should be our food", so the idea that food and health are connected are nothing new.

Allopathic medicine, with its focus on symptoms and cures rather than causes and health, shifted the focus towards nutritional deficit diseases with the discoveries that rickets was a vitamin D deficiency or that scurvy could be cured with lime juice. Factor in a move toward diets based round processed foods that value cheap fillers, hidden fats and sugars and convenience rather than freshness and nutritional value and it's not surprising that we have a huge problem with obesity, digestive disorders and, increasingly, associated mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression. What we now know, that traditional forms of medicine had no idea about, is that it is not only the food we eat but also the nature and composition of the huge range of micro-organisms in our digestive tracts that underpin both our physical health and our mental wellbeing. For the majority of people, spending a year in lockdown has meant that emotional eating, constant little treats, lack of exercise and isolation have worsened the situation, resulting in increased levels of anxiety and depression as well as gastrointestinal issues. One recent survey suggested that 37% of UK respondents reported that their energy levels are the lowest they have ever been as they suffer from chronic lethargy and almost half said they could not reduce their sugar intake without experiencing a crash in energy levels.

The scale of the problem

The most up to date UK statistics on the number affected by digestive issues and associated mental health problems come from the Love Your Gut report in 2018. Key findings of importance to holistic therapists include:

- Of the 48% of people who are currently experiencing a chronic digestive problem or have done in the past, nearly one in four (24%) did not see a GP about the symptoms.
- One of the key reasons people are delaying seeing a doctor is embarrassment – indeed close to half of those in the UK (46%) and Ireland (47%) who put off seeking medical help for more than a month do so for this reason.



- There is a clear need to develop and encourage greater public awareness and understanding of gut health issues. It also shows that there is a need to help boost people's confidence in discussing digestive health, so a greater number are empowered to, and know when to, seek professional medical help. 7% of respondents said they feel uncomfortable discussing their gut health with a GP or other medical professional. 8% had the same feeling about talking to their friends or colleagues.
- 69% of the population have experienced some sort of persistent gut complaint at some point in their lives.
- The most common gut health problems experienced in 2018 were bloating and constipation, compared to constipation and diarrhoea in 2017.
- One in five of those in the UK and Ireland have experienced frequent feelings of boating.
- Nearly one in ten (7% of those in the UK and 10% in Ireland) have

experienced frequent feelings of sickness and nausea.

- Reported rates for specific gut health conditions were Constipation 44% Diarrhoea 40% Heartburn 36%. Just a quarter of respondents stated that they had sought medical advice yet over 40% ignored it. Of those who ignored their symptoms, nearly three-quarters (74%) did so because they did not believe it was anything serious. 60% thought it was associated with diet and they could solve the problem themselves, and just over half (52%) thought it was due to stress. 45% said they didn't seek help because they felt worried or embarrassed about having an investigation. Women felt more embarrassed than men. Embarrassment about discussing gut health varies across the UK. Those in the North East are least concerned, with just 3% feeling uncomfortable talking to a GP and those in Scotland are the most embarrassed - with 17% nervous to discuss gut health. Around one in 20 (6%) of those in London and the South East (5%) feel embarrassed talking to their GP.



- One in three of the 2018 respondents said they would feel more comfortable talking about gut health if doctors and nurses were to use less medical jargon. 28% of women and 33% of men said this would help.
- The impact on people's lives can be extensive. In 2018, nearly one in five (17%) people have had to take time off work due to their symptoms and over a quarter (27%) avoided going out.
- Nearly one in 10 people (9%) reported suffering depression as a result of gut problems.
- The 2018 research revealed that those aged 65+ experienced the lowest levels of gut health issues, except for frequent heart burn. Just 1% of people aged 65 and over said they have experienced sudden and persistent loss of appetite compared to 13% of those aged 18-24. Overall, those most likely to report they experience gut health complaints were younger adults in the 18-24 and 25-34 age groups. Amongst these, frequent feelings of bloating are the most common ailment with 41% of 18 to 24-year-olds suffering and 36% of

25 to 34-year-olds. This was also the symptom suffered most commonly by both men and women, with 25% of men and 39% women reporting that they had experienced this. The next most common gut health problems reported by men were indigestion (23%) and flatulence (22%) and for women these were constipation (32%) and diarrhoea (24%).

These facts and figures may seem like a lot to digest, but it's clear that they represent a huge potential market for holistic therapists who can offer advice and treatments, from nutritional therapy through to NLP or hypnotism to change relationships with eating, to abdominal massage or colonic hydrotherapy to support gut health.

The gut microbiome

If the range of pre-packaged foods, snacks and ingredients available to us has grown exponentially over the past two decades, then so has our general understanding of how our gut microbiome interacts with our food to provide the energy and micronutrients we need to support every aspect of our physical health and mental wellbeing. What's not always so clear is how the trillions of microbes that make up each bespoke community

of bacteria, viruses, protozoa and fungi in a gastrointestinal tract is intimately connected to various fundamental aspects of our lives, from our immunity to our metabolism and mental health. It may be wrong to think of ourselves as individual entities when each of us is an incredibly complex symbiotic society.

Research is moving fast, with several new papers published every week, but the subject is, in many respects, as vast as exploring space, the ocean depths or searching for new species in the rainforests of the Amazonian Basin. So far, we know that those in good health tend to have a more diverse microbiome landscape, while many digestive and mental issues show a marked correlation with a less diverse microbiome. The relative balance between different bacterial species – often simplified to good bacteria and bad bacteria – also has an impact on many health problems, given that there are many species competing for limited nutrient resources. This constant stream of new discoveries, such as the discovery in February of over 140,000 viral species living in the human gut, more than half of which have never been seen before, means that the field is constantly changing as we come to realise just how fundamental the role the gut and its inhabitants is in human health and wellbeing.

The big question is whether we can manipulate the microbiome, in terms of diversity and species balance, in order to bring about positive changes in both physical health and mental wellbeing. Is our psychological outlook and our health, at a fundamental level, capable of improvement through nutrition and supplementation? Well, the global probiotic market was estimated at \$54.21 billion in 2020, with growth projected at 6.9% to 2025, taking the projected market value to \$77.09 billion, so it's clear that the supplements and dairy business both believe that consumers believe this to be the case.

Old traditions are the foundations of modern cures in areas such as faecal matter transplantation. The idea of using faeces in medicine is nothing new. In Ancient Egypt, crocodile dung pessaries were used to control fertility, while Æschines of Athens was said to cure quinsy, carcinoma, and affections of the tonsillar glands and uvula with the ashes of burnt excrement. Even today, animal dung

of various types is used in some traditional systems of medicine. Transferring this idea to clinical and laboratory tests, faecal microbiota transplantation has been shown to eradicate repeated *Clostridium difficile* infections, improve cognitive function in patients with hepatic encephalopathy, temporarily improve insulin dependence in some men, and improve some of the symptoms of autism in children even two years after transplantation has taken place. More research will be needed if we are to understand the environment that the microbes are in and what is needed to facilitate a stable healthy gut microbiome composition.

A healthy gut microbiome is about more than just the balance of bacteria. A recent paper from a team at Weill Cornell Medicine demonstrated that common gut micro-fungi teach the immune system how to respond to their more dangerous relatives. Breakdowns in this process can leave people susceptible to deadly fungal infections.

The new discovery stemmed from work on inflammatory bowel disease, which often causes patients to carry larger than normal populations of fungi in their guts. These patients often develop strong antibody responses against mannan, a molecule common to a wide range of fungal species. However, the researchers noticed that healthy controls in these studies also had some level of anti-fungal antibodies. In patients with suppressed immune systems, such as organ transplant recipients and some cancer patients, fungi in the gut can invade the bloodstream and cause life-threatening infections. The team replicated this process by treating mice with immunosuppressive drugs. When a *Candida* species colonises the gut of these mice, the fungus moves into the bloodstream, causing a fatal infection. Treating the mice with purified anti-fungal antibodies from donor animals protected the immunosuppressed mice from these infections.

The gut microbiome, nutrition and mental health

We've known for a considerable time that what we eat, in both quantitative and qualitative terms, has an impact on our physical health, even though the growing levels of lifestyle diseases suggests that we choose to ignore this evidence. Pre-pandemic, about one sixth of the

NHS budget was being spent on diabetes. Given that Type II Diabetes accounts for around 90% of cases in the UK and there are many research studies that show that weight loss through exercise and healthier eating can put the disease into remission, it may make sense to focus efforts on good nutrition, on prevention rather than cure.

Similarly, obesity is one of the most severe health issues we face. Current figures for England suggest that 28.0% of adults in England are obese and a further 36.2% are overweight but not obese. Obesity is usually defined as having a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or above. BMI between 25 and 30 is classified as overweight. Men are more likely than women to be overweight or obese (68.2% of men, 60.4% of women). People aged 45-74 are most likely to be overweight or obese. In the most deprived areas in England, prevalence of excess weight (overweight or obese) is 9 percentage points higher than the least deprived areas. 9.9% of reception age children (age 4-5) are obese, with a further 13.1% overweight. At age 10-11 (year 6), 21.0% are obese and 14.1% overweight. A Swedish study published in 2020 showed that children with obesity have a three times higher risk of mortality in early adulthood compared with children in the general population and are

more likely to suffer from anxiety and depression. This is a problem that will not be solved overnight.

Obesity is not simply a physical problem, given that what we eat dictates, to a large extent, the composition of our gut microbiomes. Those with Type II Diabetes or obesity suffer higher levels of depression and anxiety. Studies show that the composition of our gut microbiome contributes to these mental illnesses. In 2018, a Harvard Medical School mouse study showed that mice with a genetic predisposition to becoming obese when put on a high-fat diet, showed significantly more signs of anxiety, depression and obsessive behaviour than animals on standard diets. Significantly, these behaviours were reversed or improved when antibiotics that will change the gut microbiome were given alongside the high fat diet. The lead researcher noted, "As endocrinologists, we often hear people say that they feel differently when they've eaten different foods. What this study says is that many things in your diet might affect the way your brain functions, but one of those things is the way diet changes the gut bacteria or microbes. Your diet isn't always necessarily just making your blood sugar higher or lower; it's also changing a lot of signals coming from gut microbes and these signals make it all the way to the brain."





The researchers concluded that the behavioural changes being caused by the microbiome by transferring gut bacteria from the experimental obese-prone mice to mice who were germ-free – having no bacteria of their own. The animals who received bacteria from mice on a high-fat diet showed began to show increased levels of activity associated with anxiety and obsessive behaviour. However, those who received microbes from mice on a high-fat diet plus antibiotics did not, even though they did not receive the antibiotics themselves.

Further research projects showed that the microbiome was exerting an effect on both the hypothalamus, which helps to control whole body metabolism and the nucleus accumbens, which is important in mood and behaviour. In common with other tissues in the body, these brain structures became insulin resistant in mice on high-fat diets. This response to the high fat is partly, and in some cases almost completely, reversed by putting the animals by antibiotics. Again, the response is transferrable when you

transfer the gut microbiome from mice on a high-fat diet to germ-free mice. So, the insulin resistance in the brain is mediated at least in part by factors coming from the microbiome. Furthermore, there was a link between the microbiome alterations to the production of certain neurotransmitters -- the chemicals that transfer signals across the brain. Current research is focussing on identifying specific populations of bacteria involved in these processes, and the molecules that the bacteria produce.

What we eat, and how this is dealt with by our individual gut microbiomes may impact our mental wellbeing and associated behaviours in unexpected ways.

Increasingly, scientists are working to confirm connections between the gut microbiome and mental illnesses such as autism, schizophrenia, Alzheimer's and depression. In 2020, an international team of researchers from Switzerland and Italy confirmed the correlation, in humans, between an imbalance in the gut microbiota and the development of amyloid plaques in the brain, which are at the origin of the neurodegenerative disorders characteristic of Alzheimer's disease.

What we eat, and how this is dealt with by our individual gut microbiomes may impact our mental wellbeing and associated behaviours in unexpected ways. A study published by a team from Ohio State University in December 2020 showed that in children with autism, repetitive behaviours and gastrointestinal problems may be connected and linked to the gut microflora. The study found that increased severity of other autism symptoms was also associated with more severe constipation, stomach pain and other gut difficulties, but no correlation was discovered between social and communication difficulties and gastrointestinal symptoms.

While new studies are being published every week, it's clear that we currently have remarkably little precise knowledge of how our gut microbiome influences our mental wellbeing. Our micro-flora communities are individual and mutable, changing with our nutritional intake and use of drugs such as antibiotics. What's clear is that the food we eat can influence the health and composition of our gut microflora for good or for ill. This, in turn, seems to have a considerable impact on a great many physical and mental illnesses. As such, the gut microbiome acts as an intermediary bridging physical and mental health. Studies increasingly suggest that it may be possible to manage the microbiome through a variety of techniques ranging from nutrition to supplementation and bacterial transplantation. This offers an entire new frontier in health and wellbeing that could see a paradigm shift not only towards individualised medicine, but also to an increasing focus on preventative holistic measures, an integrated approach to diseases and a return to a multi-faceted approach in treating those with physical and mental illness. In short, the synthesis of person-centred traditional healing approaches with scientific research. ■

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THE IMPACT *of the gut microbiota on* MENTAL WELLBEING



Rebecca Edwards shares the latest discoveries on how the gut microbiome impacts our mental wellbeing...

THE gut-brain axis is a multi-faceted bidirectional system of communication between the brain and the gut. Its definition has been expanded to include not only the links between the enteric and central nervous systems, but endocrine pathways such as the HPA-axis, cytokine communication between immune cells and the living mediators of these pathways: the gut microbiota. Through considerable and complicated cross-talk, these biological systems make up the gut-brain axis.

The gut microbiota influences the epithelial, neural and immune tissues of the gastrointestinal tract, and has a direct connection to the brain. It is one of the most important and complex components of the gut-brain axis, with several proposed methods of communication.

Immune system modulation

As a majority of the immune system is concentrated in the gastrointestinal tract, the interactions between immune cells and the gut microbiome influences systemic immune system function, cytokine production and the inflammatory response. This modulation of the immune system is mediated by microbial metabolites and through systemic circulation will influence immune signalling and inflammation in the brain.

Indeed, reductions in the diversity of the gut microbiota have been shown to skew the systemic immune system towards pro-inflammatory cytokine production and both increase neuroinflammation and make extreme inflammatory reactions in the CNS more likely. Strong links between depressive- and anxiety-like behaviour and neuroinflammation created by gut dysbiosis have been demonstrated in animal studies.

Vagus nerve stimulation

Bioactive metabolites from the gut microbiome can also stimulate the vagus nerve and directly modulate brain activity through endocrine and neurotransmitter modulation.

For example, in animal studies, the vagus nerve was shown to be the major mediator of GABA receptor modulation and reduction of stress-induced corticosterone and anxiety- and depression-like behaviours in response to the presence of beneficial live bacteria in the gut.

Short-chain fatty acids and neuro-immuno-endocrine regulation

Arguably the most important metabolites of the gut microbiome, short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs), including acetate, propionate and butyrate, are produced in the colon by bacterial fermentation of non-digestible dietary fibres and resistant starch.

SCFAs possess the ability to both modulate the immune system and cross the blood brain to exert neuroprotective effects against inflammation as well as neurotrophic effects.

For example, SCFAs help to reinforce the blood brain barrier and act on microglial cells (the primary immune cells of the CNS) to reduce the production of proinflammatory cytokines, thus exerting neuroprotective effects.

Supporting the integrity of the blood brain barrier is important for protecting against excessive microglial activation and neuroinflammation by reducing the translocation of harmful microbial metabolites, such as bacterial exotoxins. SCFAs have also been shown to upregulate brain-derived neurotrophic factor and increase neurogenesis and neural proliferation.

The neural effects of SCFAs are linked to (but are not limited to) regulating the circadian rhythm and improving sleep, modulating ghrelin signalling and improving appetite control, assisting long-term memory consolidation, improving social behaviours, and reducing depressive-like behaviours. Indeed, patients with depression have been found to have lower faecal SCFA concentration than in healthy controls.

Modulating the gut-brain axis with strains of live bacteria

Our growing understanding of the gut-brain axis has led to a number of human studies investigating the effect of strains of live bacteria on psychological health. For example, a double-blind, randomised, placebo-controlled clinical trial investigated the psychological impact of four strains of beneficial bacteria, including *Lactobacillus plantarum* LP01, *Lactobacillus*

ramnosus LR06, *Bifidobacterium longum* 04, and *Lactobacillus fermentum* LF16. Published in the *Frontiers in Psychiatry* in 2019, this combination of strains demonstrated the ability to support healthy mood balance and improve sleep quality in otherwise healthy adults.

A new therapeutic target

Clearly, the impact of the gut microbiota on mental wellbeing of humans is an important consideration and is now providing us with new targets for supporting psychological health. As a living dynamic ecosystem of bacteria, viruses and fungi, the composition of the gut microbiota is in constant flux and is influenced by the individual host's environment. Daily decisions made by the host change the environment, which inadvertently favours the growth of particular microbes and shifts the nature of the gut microbiome's interaction with the brain.

The quality and quantity of bacteria present in an individual's gut microbiota determines the extent of immune activation they cause and the type of bioactive metabolites they are producing, which alters their impact on the central nervous system. It is now becoming clear that a healthy gut microbiota benefits cognition and brain activity and a dysbiotic gut microbiome that is in poor condition could have the opposite effect.

Modulating the gut-brain axis

Optimising the gut microbiota is a new strategy to affect the quality of mood, cognitive function, and even sleep, in everyday people who may be facing challenges in these areas. Introducing strains of live bacteria known to affect the gut-brain axis in favourable ways is an easy and accessible way to begin this process, which can be further supported by dietary and lifestyle choices.

Reducing unnecessary intake of microbiome disruptors is also an important consideration. For example, artificial sweeteners have been shown to derange the microbiome, alcohol acts as an antiseptic, and even some 'natural' plant-derived antimicrobials such as oregano oil or citrus seed extract can be very disruptive to the delicate ecosystem of microorganisms in the gut when used incorrectly.

Eating a high fibre diet with a diverse range of fruit and vegetables covering the full colour spectrum is also important for supporting a rich and diverse gut microbiome. The diversity of plant foods in an individual's diet directly reflects the diversity of beneficial bacteria found in our gut due to the provision of a variety of prebiotic dietary fibres and prebiotic-like polyphenols. Providing

sufficient substrates for microbial fermentation ensures a healthy production of SCFAs that are important for a gut-brain axis that supports psychological health.

The changeable nature of the gut microbiome reflects the changeable nature of the messages it can send to the brain, and represents a new target that can be moulded to support better functioning of the brain and promote a healthy nervous system. ■

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REBECCA EDWARDS is a leading naturopathic clinician, international lecturer and writer. Having lectured at the College of Naturopathic Medicine, she is currently the Director of Education at ActivatedProbiotics.com.au. Find out more about probiotics for gut/brain health at <https://activatedprobiotics.com.au/probiotics/lift-probiotic/>

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JOURNEYS:

Sarah Richardson

When the pandemic restrictions came into play, I knew women would feel alone



Spiritual midwife and founder of the Sisterhood of the Rose **Sarah Richardson** shares her journey so far so far...

I grew up in Dublin, Ireland in the 90s. From a young age, I was always highly connected to spirit and energy. To numb my sensitivity I began drinking, taking drugs and rebelling! I found myself pregnant at age 19, in an extremely abusive relationship. At the time, I'd just begun my studies to become a Midwife, and at the time my spiritual connection was growing stronger and stronger as I was numbing it more and more.

I felt called to midwifery. I'd always been fascinated with the topic of birth and death growing up. There was something mystical and magical about both these times. I would ask questions that people couldn't seem to answer. My soul was lit up working in the Labour & Delivery ward. I felt most connected to my soul and spirit when I was with a woman birthing her baby.

In those beautiful labour rooms, I witnessed many things, from the soul of a new life entering the room at birth and the room filling with joy, to supporting the parents of a baby whose soul has not chosen to stay, and the grief that comes with that. What I felt was missing from Midwifery and the medical system was the holistic approach to a time in a woman's life that is most sacred. Combining mind,

body and spirit.

Pregnancy and childbirth is a powerful time in a woman's life. The transition from woman to mother involves pushing past her deepest fears and reclaiming her primal power. It is an initiation and a highly spiritual and sacred rite of passage. However this is not what I was witnessing. I knew I had to leave the medical system to go forward and support women the way I felt women needed and deserved. In a holistic way - combining my medical and mystical wisdom.

When the pandemic restrictions came into play, I knew women would feel alone. Connection is vital for us as human beings and social distancing was causing a lot of emotional pain. I created the Sisterhood of the Rose Community which is an online community for spiritual women to gather, learn and heal and be supported. The Sisters have become a tribe and it is ever expanding.

We gather multiple times each month with incredible masterclasses, teachings and workshops on all things spirituality, healing and womb wisdom. We work closely with the lunar cycle and astrology as well as the sacred plant medicine cacao.

My work has always passionately been around the topic of womb wisdom - including the menstrual cycle and conscious conception so I have also created a new method of manifesting our dream lives working with our menstrual cycle - 'Wo-Manifesting!' This is a powerful technique that has allowed me to create heaven on earth!

Over the next few years, I would like to see the Sisterhood of the Rose expand, creating a large tribe and community around the world, and guiding groups around the world to different sacred sites to receive healings.

If there's one thing I've come to realise, it's that we are powerful creators. We can literally create the miracle that is life in the form of a baby, so we can create any kind of life we wish for. It's in our hands! ■



You can find out more about Sarah, her work, upcoming events and the Sisterhood of the Rose at www.sarahrichardson.ie or follow her on Instagram at [@sarahrichardson.ie](https://www.instagram.com/sarahrichardson_ie).



REGAINING SELF-CONFIDENCE

Roisin Ni Chleirigh offers some ideas on coping with your anxieties and building your self-confidence...

OVER the past year, many of us have to reposition our businesses and reconnect back to our start-up phase. This is going to take a lot of self-determination and strength of character to pivot our business in these extraordinary times. We can do it. We just need to believe in ourselves and our product or service. We do this by connecting to our self-confidence, confidence in our skills and abilities and letting go of the negative ego.

How does a lack of self-confidence hold us back in both business and life?

Self-confidence is the foundation stone of accomplishment. It underpins who we are as human beings. How we interpret the world we live in. Why we do what we do. I have never met a successful person who lacks self-belief. If we don't believe in ourselves and have confidence in our own abilities, how can the general public trust us and invest in our holistic businesses?

Lack of self-confidence holds us back from valuing our skills and services, under-pricing ourselves within the market, and undervaluing our time and specific expertise. It affects our ability to promote and sell our products or services to our target clientele and to bring in the cash flow and revenue we need to be a financially viable.

First, we need to have clarity in understanding the difference between self-confidence, confidence and the Ego.

Self-confidence is knowing and understanding who you are, how you will react under any circumstances or situations which may appear in your life and responding with poise, showing your best self in your reactions.

Confidence is the ability to perform specific skills, especially learned skills. The more often we perform a Swedish massage for example, the more we become confident in our ability to perform the task.

Self-confidence can also be a learned skill. We're all born with self-confidence. Babies are confident. As therapists, we need to be both self-confident and confident within our abilities to perform our work well.

So how do we become a confident person? We connect our self-confident mind-set to be confident in all what we do. When we do this, the physiology of our body changes, we walk taller, with purpose and with the spring in our steps. Self-confident people are gracious, helpful and above all well-mannered.

Ego is arrogance and pretending to know everything about everything and being a fireside expert on the world, *I am right you are wrong*, masks a lack of self-confidence. The ego can be a defence mechanism too.

Why do we choose to follow limiting patterns of thought and behaviour?

Our mind-set consists of how and why we think the way we do, driving us forward or holding us back. How we interpret who we are can be limited by our upbringing or the way we feel those around us perceive us. Sometimes we choose to follow limiting patterns of thoughts and behaviours because that is all we know. Maybe we allow other people's opinions of us tell us who we are, and what we should think, feel and how to behave to achieve outcomes in life. Negative limiting patterns are self-sabotaging and hold us back from achieving our goals and dreams.

How can we build self-confidence?

The most wonderful thing in life is that anyone can change their lives, and live a fulfilled life of success no matter what success means to you as a person or small local business owner.

Our mind-set is our thoughts, through the way we speak to ourselves from the language of the words we use, the tone of our voice and speed of our self-talk, all of these have an impact on our spoken words, our emotions, which impact our behaviours and therefore our actions and outcomes in life.

Let's look at the quality and power of language you use. If we use the word *trying* for example, this seems to me to show a lack of belief and an assumption of failure. I use the phrase, *I'll give it a go*. When I say this, it changes my physiology, my perception and my emotional response and behaviour to the outcome. Become aware of your thought behaviours and know that you can change your thoughts and use the power of the language of your thoughts to empower your self-confidence.

Negative limiting patterns are self-sabotaging and hold us back from achieving our goals and dreams.



Self-confidence takes practice. I grew up as a confident young woman in Derry, in Africa and the Middle East. After my divorce, I found myself raising two young children alone, with all of the physical, emotional and financial challenges this entails. I became like a shadow of the person I once was. Rebuilding my self-confidence and my self-esteem, began with small steps and tiny

achievements. I took short courses to re-educate myself, so I could provide for my children. I enrolled in a Swedish massage and Anatomy and Physiology course and then other holistic modalities.

I studied life and business and NLP Coaching. For me NLP was key, understanding the way the language of my thoughts impacted my self-talk had on my emotions, behaviours, actions and therefore my outcomes in life. Although I'm an undiagnosed dyslexic and can't spell to save my life, I returned to education to study Media and Public Relations. I joined a local creative writing group to help give me the confidence to even want to write assignments for my Honours Degree exams.

I have a speech impediment and went to speech therapy for nearly 25 years, I overcame this issue and learned to speak slower, listening to my initiation. Since 2017, I've present two local radio shows. To begin with I sounded like a scared mouse.

Many women find they lose their confidence and identity during the midlife years. The pandemic has closed us off from many of our usual sources of support. Hormones play havoc within our self-esteem, many midlife women suffer moments of self-doubt for no apparent reason. Insomnia, memory loss and brain fog that comes with hormonal changes to our bodies can cause exhaustion and become overwhelming emotional for no apparent purpose.

This can be a time of personal healing and empowerment. Many women find their voices and return to education, entrepreneurship, or change their careers.

Sometimes, in life we just have to give ourselves permission to be self-confident and believe in ourselves and in our ability to overcome life's challenges and know, that no matter what, we have all the resources we need within ourselves. We need to accept and believe in ourselves, in who we are, even when no one else does. We need to live our lives for ourselves. With the understanding of what self-confidence is and how to improve our self-confidence we can concentrate on confidently reopening our businesses to our clients. ■



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 <https://confidentwomenireland.ie>



Discovering Glutathione

Jordi Mascio of Goldman Laboratories explains why many of us would benefit from more glutathione...

GLUTATHIONE is a peptide made up of three amino acid units produced by the liver as well as by brain cells. It primarily performs anti-oxidant and anti-aging actions in the body by reducing the oxidative damage to body cells. It is essential for breakdown of nutrients, regulation of immune responses, offers protection against oxidative stress and helps control energy expenditure in the body particularly for muscle energy regulation. It has the ability to exist in reduced (GSH) and oxidized forms (GSSG) in the

body. The ratio (GSH/GSSH) of the two forms is an indicator of cell's redox status. Healthy cells are rich in reduced form (GSH) of glutathione.

Under stress conditions, the ratio favors the oxidised form (GSSG) in the cells as there is increased energy usage. Glutathione acts as a shield for cells to protect them from inflammation and the reactive free radicals produced by toxins in the body which are produced as a result of normal metabolic activity or as environmental toxins.

It neutralises the reactive ability of toxins in the body particularly the toxic metal ions such as mercury and lead. Glutathione offers cells protection from oxidants through salvaging vitamins C and E. Glutathione must be sufficiently available in the body as it is critical for the maintenance of optimum health and shielding the body from the harms of toxins and poisons.

What if Glutathione is depleted in the body?

With aging and under the influence of repetitive exposure to oxidizing toxins and chemicals, the body's cells decrease the production of this essential anti-aging peptide, which leads to a slower metabolism and increase in toxins that promote neurodegeneration of brain cells (as in Alzheimer's disease), decreased immunity (autoimmune diseases as arthritis), risk of long-term age-related diseases (such as cataracts, glaucoma oxidation and aging in the body).

The activity of Glutathione in detoxifying and acting as an anti-oxidant is an indicator of life-span of a person.

Studies show that depleted levels of glutathione have been associated with fatigue as the energy producing cell mitochondria become damaged and start accumulating inside the cell causing toxicity. Mitochondria provide about 90% of energy requirements of body.

Glutathione has a role in the formation of genetic material and building blocks of cell macromolecules, supporting healthy immune function, forming sperm cells and aiding in fertility, breaking down free radicals, enzymes functionality and acting as cofactor in various metabolic reactions. It also restores vitamins C and E, thus lowering the risk of cancer, as well as transporting mercury out of the neuronal cells, helping the liver and gallbladder in metabolism and storage of fats and supporting steady cell death. Its depletion can lower the normal working capacity of the body and affect multiple body functions.

One can boost the levels of glutathione in the body by reducing the oxidative stress. This can include simple measures such as taking a good night sleep of at least 7hrs, managing stress, limiting alcohol intake, boosting immunity by means of vitamins particularly A, D and C, supplementation with milk thistle, Folate, B6, B12, Curcumin, N-acetyl cysteine and superoxide dismutase, and eating more whole foods, almonds, dark leafy greens, unprocessed meat, garlic, broccoli, asparagus, avocados, spinach and bell peppers. It has been noted that people who practice meditation have a 20% higher level of glutathione in their bodies due to following a stress-free lifestyle.

Testing for glutathione depletion

GGT (gamma-glutamyl transferase) is an indicator of measure of glutathione depletion as it is increased in comparison to the 'need' for glutathione. It can be tested for using a blood sample. Increase in GGT is linked to many diseases such as diabetes, metabolic syndrome,

coronary artery disease, cancer, fatty liver disease, and hypertension. The normal GGT levels is considered to lie between GGT 30-40. Someone with GGT levels of 40-50 is considered to have 20 times higher risk of diabetes.

The anti-oxidant effects of Glutathione

A special characteristic of glutathione lies in the sulfur atom, which itself has detoxification properties and has been used as a detoxifier for thousands of years, contained within the amino acid cysteine.

Sulfur atom's peculiar chemical structure attracts free radicals thus scavenging them and quenching their reactive thirst. Oxidative stress itself can make cells stronger to the effects of reactive species over time. However, free radicals can induce damage to vital parts of a cell such as genetic material, proteins,

DNA and cell membranes through an electron capture action called oxidation. Cells can become fragile and lose their permeability and become unable to function normally which in some cases results in premature cell death or necrosis. Production of reactive oxygen species (ROS) in excess induces tissue injury which proceeds to widespread inflammation. By binding to and eradicating oxidative species, glutathione can decrease oxidative stress on the body and consequently improve inflammation.

The detoxifying role of Glutathione

Glutathione helps to cleanse and neutralize poisons and toxins formed in the liver, lungs, intestines and kidneys as a byproduct of normal metabolism. Toxins in the body are stored in the fat. Glutathione binds to toxins thus nullifying their toxic potential and helps in the detoxification and elimination of toxins, solvents, pesticides, polycyclic aromatic and heavy metals that are transported to or stored in the fatty tissue. It is especially concentrated in the liver where it plays a major role in phase II detoxification reactions, the stage in which glutathione binds to toxic molecules to prepare them to be removed from the body.



The role of Glutathione in muscle metabolism

Physical exercise decreases the reduced form (GSH) and increases the oxidized form of glutathione. Prolonged exercise decreases total cell glutathione content over time. An upsurge in oxidized glutathione (GSSH) after prolonged high intensity exercise with a contrary concurrent decrease in reduced glutathione (GSH) is notable after exercise.

Blood glutathione increases during prolonged exercise and carbohydrate supplementation may prevent blood GSH increase possibly due to inhibition of hepatic hormones, which stimulate GSH activity. Aging related loss of muscle mass and strength is an important risk factor for accelerating rates of physical disability. Glutathione is a key participant in building muscle mass and strength as it helps to preserve the muscle protein synthesis pathway.

Many elderly individuals are prescribed physical therapy programs. Glutathione supplementation may help enhance the intended outcomes of these programs. It enhances performance of muscle cells making them stronger to withstand exercise load and supports in faster muscle recovery. Muscle building requires the body to slow down giving your muscles time to recover and for lactic acid to diffuse from cells.

Glutathione can increase the number of mitochondria in the muscle cells, stop lactic acid from accumulating in muscles after exercise and can postpone fatigue accompanying with exercise. Glutathione possesses the ability of GSH to stabilize and slowly release Nitric Oxide (NO) and improves its effectiveness in exercise related dilation of blood vessels thereby supplying more blood to the muscles and by protecting NO from oxidative damage. Moreover, faster muscle repair is seen with the supplementation of glutathione in an exercise regimen. ■



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Selenium & CoQ10 *for a stronger* IMMUNE SYSTEM

Natalie Schmidt and Dr. Edmund Schmidt examine the role this neglected trace element plays in strengthening the immune system...

THE importance of selenium was only discovered in 1957 – before then, this trace element was actually considered harmful. However, the exact opposite is true: there are 21 selenoproteins based on this element which are essential for the human body. Selenoproteins are protein compounds with selenium in their active site. They counteract the oxidative stress that damages our cells. Our body's cells are not only at risk from infections, but also from free radicals: reactive compounds, often containing oxygen, that can massively disrupt cell functions and cause cell death. Our immune system is significantly affected, since the complex immune cells are highly susceptible to radical degradation.

Glutathione peroxidases are very effective at capturing free radicals, but

they need selenium to function – four atoms in the active site of each enzyme. Selenium is therefore vital for our body's cellular defence against free radicals and to build a strong immune system.

Currently, the main focus is on the effect of selenium on SARS-CoV-2. For the virus to 'latch onto' a human cell, the spike proteins on the virus surface have to attach to the respective cell. Selenium reacts with sulphydryl groups in the virus centre and inactivates them. This causes the virus surface spikes to lose their ability to attach to the cells of the human body. Similar effects have previously been reported for Ebola infections (1). Within our own patient group, we see significantly milder progressions of COVID-19 in those who regularly supplemented selenium.

In addition to its antioxidative function, selenium helps build a strong immune

system in numerous other ways. For instance, it increases the production rate of natural killer cells. As the name implies, these defence cells on the frontline of our immune system eliminate intruders such as viruses and bacteria. Selenium, along with vitamins D and E and some plant substances, also improves the performance of T lymphocytes, another type of immediate defence cells against infectants in our body. Moreover, selenium prevents the formation of high-molecule polymer parafibrin. This substance causes microclots and embolisms, especially in COVID-19 patients. These complications can often be seen in the disease's final stage and can cause death(2).

Since the development of cancers is strongly related to the immune system, it is only logical that selenium plays an important role in cancer prevention. The



link between good selenium levels and lower risks of cancer has been proven time and again. A good example is the work of Jiang et al. which shows the effect in breast cancer(3).

Selenium also converts harmful protein sulphhydryl groups attacking the immune system into inactive disulphide compounds(4). Adding up these direct impacts with the effects of selenium within glutathione peroxidases and other selenoproteins shows how multi-faceted the effects of selenium in our organism are. Unfortunately, most of the population does not receive enough selenium for all vital functions from food alone.

In Austria and Germany, the daily average intake of selenium is only 30 µg, England averages 40–50 µg per day. The ideal amount, however, lies between 100 and 200 µg selenium daily. Supplements are therefore advisable to reach a sufficient regular selenium intake. Organic supplements such as SelenoPrecise by Pharma Nord, are usually resorbed better and can be stored in the body. They are the first choice for prevention and daily use. Inorganic compounds, such as selenite and selenate, are ingested faster, but not resorbed well. Inorganic selenium is suitable for intravenous application if a fast effect is needed in circumstances such as the treatment of infections or tumours.

CoQ10

CoQ10, or ubiquinone, is a vitaminoid, i.e. a vitamin-like substance. Up until about age 35, the human body produces CoQ10 in sufficient quantities. Afterwards, or in case of illness even before, the production of CoQ10 continually decreases. CoQ10 is an important factor in our body's energy production. Energy is generated within the mitochondria, which form part of each of the 80 trillion cells of our body. The more energy an organ needs, the

more mitochondria are in its cells. Within the mitochondria, energy is produced via mitochondria electron transport chains. CoQ10 is one of the molecules transferring electrons.

The highly active mitochondria are extremely susceptible to oxidative stress and infections. Oxidative stress, for instance as part of an infection, can massively interrupt the cells' energy supply. Immune cells may lose all function. CoQ10 is therefore crucial to a working immune system, as it optimises energy yield, protects mitochondria in all cells from oxidative stress and supports vitamin E in capturing radicals at the mitochondrial cell walls. People above the age of 35, as well as younger people with chronic illnesses, should take in 100 to 200 mg CoQ10 per day. Patients with cardiovascular or autoimmune diseases should take in 300 mg daily. Actual daily intake via food is only around 5 mg. Supplements are therefore highly advisable. A Spanish study showed that oxidised CoQ10, found in supplements like Q10 Bio-Qinon Gold 100 mg by Pharma Nord, is best resorbed by the human organism. It should be noted that CoQ10 is resorbed through our lymphatic system, which takes about 6 to 8 hours. Advertisements promising instant effects are therefore false.

CoQ10 affects the activity of vitamin K antagonist-type anticoagulants. Patients in treatment with such medications (e.g. Phenprocoumon, Marcumar) should have their coagulation checked more often when starting to take CoQ10.

Many medications, especially statin-type cholesterol-lowering drugs, disrupt or block the body's production of CoQ10. The immune system suffers greatly from this, since its cells depend on a sufficient energy supply. Especially the elderly, whose ubiquinone production is already decreased, are often prescribed

many different medications. The resulting significant energy deficit explains older people's susceptibility to illnesses and infections. A large-scale scientific study with 400 healthy Swedish people aged 70+ (Kisel10 study) showed that supplementing selenium and CoQ10 alone can cut mortality rates over a four year and a ten year time span in half. ■

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www.energie-lebensberatung.de
or www.ensign-ohg.de



FAST

USING EFT TO COMBAT

STRESS AND TRAUMA IN THE

Healthcare Sector

Wendy Power Stoten shares her plans for FAST, an organisation which provides free EFT treatment for health professionals suffering from the stresses of the pandemic...

My first career was as a business skills and language trainer, with frequent travel. When I married, moved to Cornwall and had a baby, that job didn't fit any more. A visiting friend from London told me of this amazing therapy called EFT. An hour later EFT was mentioned on the radio and the next day, I picked up a magazine and EFT was there again. I always act on threes, so the rest is history.

When the pandemic started, I became aware

of the huge amount of stress and trauma being experienced by frontline healthcare workers and formed FAST – Frontline Assistance for Stress and Trauma. We now have over thirty EFT practitioners involved, mainly in the UK, but also in Dubai and New Zealand. The initial challenge was responding to an overwhelming need as quickly as possible, whilst making sure we developed and put in place the best, most effective way of delivery. Luckily, I have a wonderful friend whose technical and computer skills were invaluable in setting up a

solid and secure structure. Attracting a team of advanced EFT practitioners was the easiest part. So many were wanting an opportunity to help in the best way they could and make a difference. They are a truly wonderful team and I'm so grateful to each and every one. In February, FAST became a Community Interest Company, thanks to help from our amazing team members, Mark Bristow and Gill Crane. FAST is run on an entirely voluntary basis, funded only by donations, and anyone asking for help is put in touch with a practitioner within 24 hours.

EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques), also known as Tapping, is a holistic therapy involving fingertip tapping on acupuncture points on the body. Scientific research has shown this can significantly reduce the stress hormone cortisol.

One of the greatest benefits of EFT is that effective results can be equally achieved on line as face to face. Perhaps the biggest plus is the speed with which clients learn EFT as a self-help tool. They realise they can dial down stress and anxieties by tapping with their own fingertips.

Although it may feel that the pandemic is starting to recede, healthcare and emergency workers are left badly traumatised. We are finding that frontline staff are facing layer upon layer of stress. The trauma is off the scale. We're looking at an epidemic of PTSD, with mental health problems linked to their COVID experiences lasting many years. As an organisation, now twelve months old, we feel that our real work is only just beginning.

"In early April 2020 I helped a nurse struggling with COVID stress. I realised that EFT could be enormously helpful for anyone on the COVID frontline because it is simple to learn and highly effective. I got flooded with requests for help, so I quickly started a pilot project, FAST, creating a network of practitioners experienced in working with trauma, offering 4 free online sessions to any health or emergency worker who needed them.

NHS mental health services are so overstretched at the moment, with long waits for an appointment. We have had 100% positive feedback from everyone we placed with a practitioner.

One of the first people to be helped by FAST was Nikki Brown, a theatre nurse in Cornwall, who felt overwhelmed with fear as the pandemic developed. "As a nurse already living with anxiety issues, working throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has proved challenging," said Nikki. "I got help from a FAST practitioner, and her support and training during the first lockdown was vital in enabling me to be proactive in taking control of my feelings when needed. EFT tapping really worked for me. Eleven months down the line now and I am still finding it an invaluable tool. I can't recommend it or the FAST team enough."

Practitioners around the country have given their services for free, among them Ginny Cunningham, based in Conwy, Wales. "The level of trauma that we are seeing is shocking. These healthcare workers are at the end of their tether, they are desperate and running on empty. And they are just so incredibly grateful for the help that EFT can offer. Some of them come to us

so traumatised they can hardly speak. By gently tapping with them we can start releasing those traumas straight away. We help them to take back some control, so they feel they can cope again, enough to go back to work. It is surprising how quickly they can start to feel better."

We hope that FAST can offer extended sessions for those with PTSD. If left untreated, PTSD usually gets worse, impacting that person and those around them emotionally, physically and often financially. It is vital that FAST now becomes a sustainable, long-term community interest initiative, and we are looking for benefactors and sponsors to help us go forward.

EFT International, the professional body for the practice of EFT, is in full support of FAST. Chairperson Jacqui Footman, commented, "The emerging evidence base for the use of EFT in the treatment of PTSD shows huge promise. Our organisation is working in the UK as a stakeholder for the NG116 PTSD Guideline with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), which has found EFT to be clinically effective and cost-effective for PTSD and has requested more scientific research. EFT has already been shown to be helpful for war veterans suffering from PTSD. In addition to the randomised controlled trials and meta-analyses considered by NICE, there is also plenty of anecdotal and practitioner-based evidence to support EFT's use as a first line of treatment for trauma. In these difficult times, as so

many frontline workers face growing trauma, we are keen to help spread the message that tapping can help anyone who may be struggling with stress."

What's next for FAST?

A year in and we are realising this is just the start. It's clear that COVID brings a massive PTSD fallout. This is often complex and ongoing because people are still in the jobs that triggered the traumatic experience. We need to extend our offer from four free sessions to more where PTSD symptoms are involved.

With our successful, recorded and proven track record, and as a newly formed CIC, we are hoping to attract benefactors and sponsors who appreciate the voluntary service we have all given to date, and want to help us make FAST sustainable. Monetising FAST will allow us to fulfil our wish to continue to offer four free sessions to those healthcare workers who wouldn't otherwise be able to access such support, such as care home workers.

It is FAST's ultimate mission to raise awareness, acknowledgement, acceptance and use of EFT as one of the most effective tools to solve the UK's mental health crisis that was already in existence but has grown exponentially due to the pandemic. ■



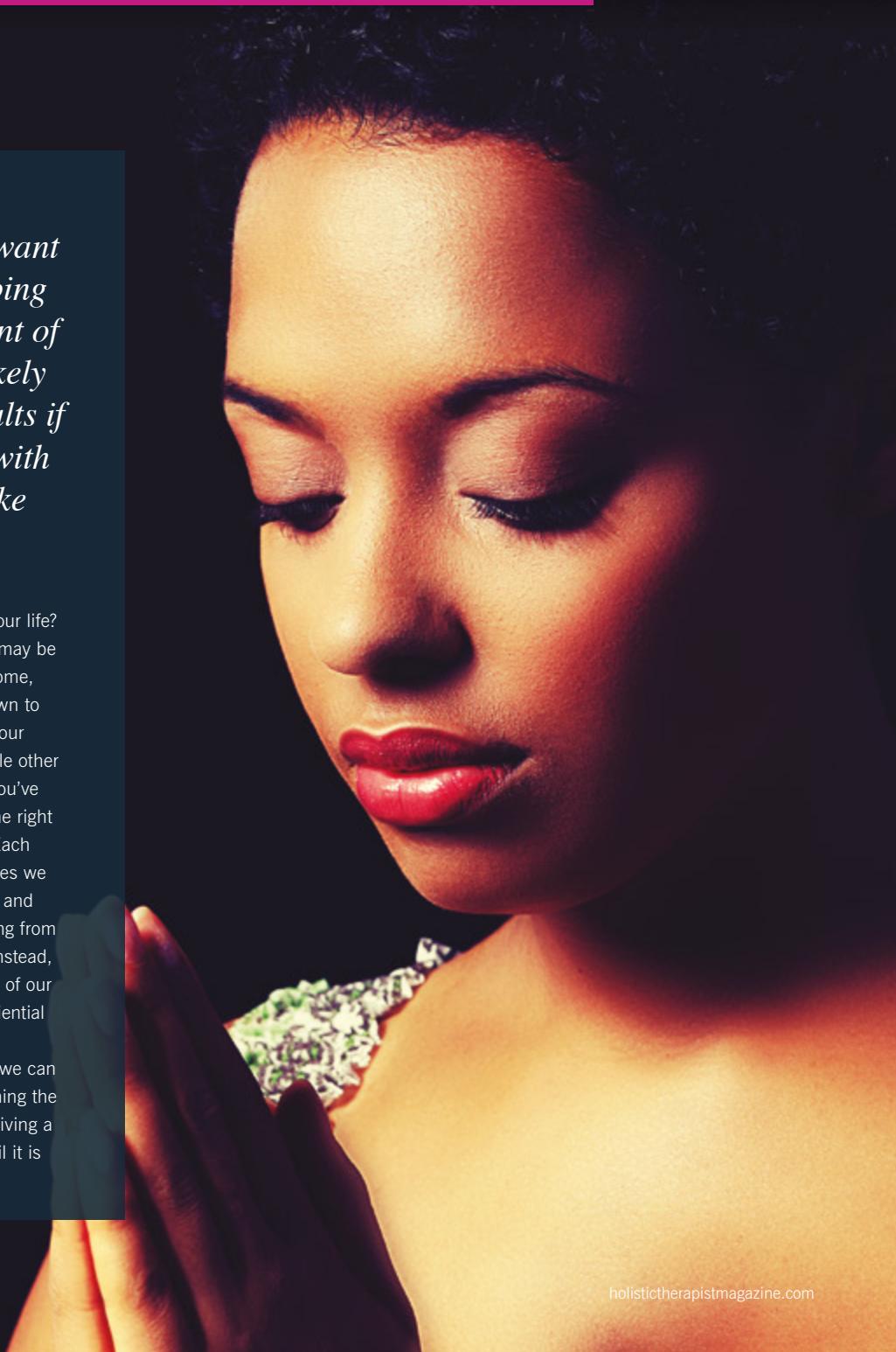
For further information, please visit
www.fasttraumasupport.org.uk.

Manifesting FOR BEGINERS

Manifesting is a way of attracting what you most want into your life through keeping your desires at the forefront of your mind. You're more likely to experience positive results if you back up your desires with supporting actions that take you nearer to your goal...

WHAT do you want in your life? Some of your desires may be material – buying a home, some space of your own to meditate, setting up your own business or being financially stable - while other desires may be more experiential – perhaps you've always wanted to travel, learn to paint, find the right life partner, run a marathon or form a band. Each of us has our own set of desires, but sometimes we don't voice them. If we talk about our dreams and ambitions, they become more concrete, moving from our daydream world and onto our to-do list. Instead, we convince ourselves that we are not worthy of our desires, that we don't deserve material, experiential and romantic abundance.

Yet, in writing or talking about our desires, we can help to manifest them, to move towards attaining the things and experiences we want, rather than living a life where we put our dreams on one side until it is too late.



Getting started

The first stage is to decide what you want. This can be difficult to put into words, particularly if you are not used to putting yourself first. One approach is to create a vision board using words and images that appeal. You might place it by your bed or on the wall by your desk. As your desires are fulfilled, or new desires crop up, you can add to or remove them from your board.

Once you have chosen a desire that you'd like to fulfil, then you need to set a focussed intention. I would like to lose 20lbs in time for my summer holiday is a clear intention. I want to lose a bit of weight is not. I would like to

of focussing your will and attention on opportunities that might otherwise be overlooked. For example, if your desire is a promotion at work, you may find opportunities come in the form of volunteering to take part in a management training course, or temporarily filling the role during someone's maternity leave, thus changing the way you are perceived at work. Even small things like dressing for the job you want can make a difference.

Part of the manifestation process is about making yourself ready to receive what you desire in your life. That can involve clearing your mental blocks and baggage to allow room for your

about yourself in a new way, whether that's as a person who has climbed the highest mountain in the UK or as a desirable romantic prospect and this takes practice to become reality.

You can't use the 3-6-9 technique to make someone else behave in a certain way. That person has free will and you should respect this. Nor should you manifest in a negative way, desiring others to fall ill, split up or fall into poverty.

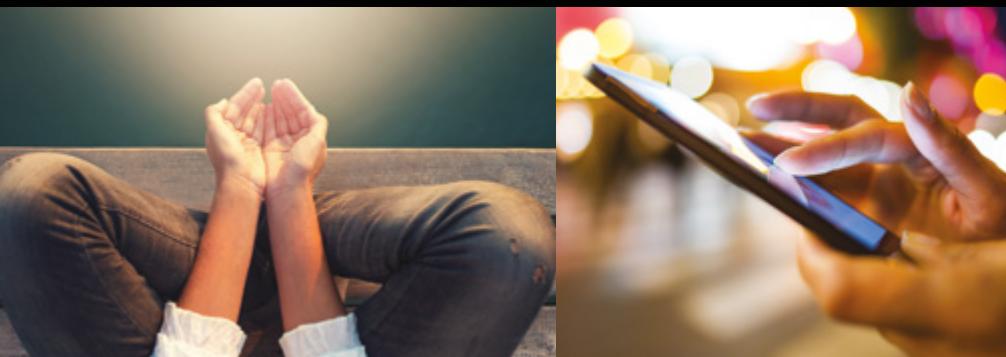
Setting appropriate reminders in your phone will make it easier to keep up with your 3-6-9 routine.

Setting appropriate reminders in your phone will make it easier to keep up with your 3-6-9 routine. Making these fun can also give your positive energy and intent a boost. Choose a motivating reminder that reinforces that your desired outcome has already happened. So, if you want to become a singer, say, your reminders might be things like, "Congratulations, your album has just been nominated for the Mercury Music Award!" or "Ed Sheeran called to see if you'd be his support act."

Take the time to explore different aspects of your goal in more depth. Let's say that your manifestation goal is to receive £100 by the end of the month. You might find yourself thinking about places where you could have money you've forgotten about, like handbags or the pockets of coats and jackets you haven't worn all year. In the afternoon, you might think about what this money will mean to you and in the evening, you might realise that you could raise money by selling some things you no longer have any use for on eBay or your local Facebook sales group. You can achieve your goal, but perhaps not in the way you expected.

Opportunities and ideas to help you manifest your desires will come to you more easily when you stick to the 3-6-9 method. You'll soon begin to spot signs that positive outcomes are on the way. Some people find feathers while others notice that patterns of colours, numbers or words start to crop up in unexpected contexts. ■

Try manifesting today, you have so much to gain.



have an extra £1000 in my bank account is a clear intention. I would like to be rich is not. You can use the SMART format that you use to set business goals to define your intentions.

One approach is to start by manifesting a small goal that is relatively easy to achieve. This can help you gain confidence and familiarity with the technique before you tackle bigger manifestations.

Once you have chosen the desire you want to focus on, set a positive affirmation that frames this as if it has already taken place. Examples might include, "I am so happy that X has invited me for dinner!" or "I am thrilled that I have been promoted at work." Using emotion as part of the affirmation commits you to achieving your desires.

Once you have framed your affirmation, then you will write it down three times every morning, six times every afternoon and nine times in the evening. Many people buy a special notebook for their written manifestations as this sets them apart from your day to day jottings. Repeat this 3-6-9 pattern every day for between 33 and 45 days, focussing on your affirmation as you do so. Look for signs that your desires are starting to manifest.

Manifesting is, on some levels, a matter

manifestation to take place. You need to open yourself to your desires and help them happen. For example, if your desire is a romantic partner, then you need to make emotional and physical space to let this happen. If your bed is littered with soft toys gifted by ex-boyfriends, you will need to ask yourself if you are really ready to welcome a new love into your life. Similarly, going out and buying a new swimsuit will bolster your receptivity and help you pick up opportunities that will make that beach holiday a reality. Guided visualisations can also help you manifest more easily. Feel the warmth as you sit by the pool gazing over the incredible clear azure of the Caribbean as little rivulets of condensation run down the outside of your chilled cocktail glass.

Smoothing the path

Manifesting sounds simple, but there are several obstacles to be overcome if you are to master the technique. As well as setting a clear intention, it's better to focus on one desire at a time. This means you are more attuned to potential opportunities that will help you reach your goal.

The key thing is to keep doing your 3-6-9 writing every day. You're going to be thinking



FINDING STRENGTH WITHIN YOURSELF

After what seems like a lifetime of restrictions on social, economic, educational and practical life, we have been left at times scarred and unsure about our futures. How do we as a collective and individuals find the strength within to come out of lockdown with a sense of self and direction?

Jade Saffer offers her ideas...

In moving forwards, past this difficult time we all have shared, it's helpful to look back and consider what we have learned about ourselves, our wants and needs. What is important to us? What do we value most? For myself, I have realised the importance in having a support network of friends and family and creating time to do things that I enjoy. Learning to focus on good physical health has also become my priority. Once we have a good idea of what makes us happy and feel good about ourselves we then have a structure of how we move forwards coming out of lockdown.

Whatever has happened to us individually, leaving it in the past can only help propel us into the future that we so desperately crave, which will undoubtedly impact the energy of the collective

The most deeply affected of us may have a whole life to rebuild. Some have lost loved ones. Others find themselves without jobs, facing financial insecurity, and have had their life plans put on hold as well as a whole host of other problems that have happened as a result of the pandemic. Finding the strength to start again or to move on from pain and misfortune is such

a monumental task, especially when the future is still so uncertain. All is not lost though. The feeling of being trapped or not being able to live life as we had before can be suffocating, knowing that we will soon be able to have a breath of fresh air both metaphorically and physically can feel liberating and exciting.

Whatever has happened to us individually, leaving it in the past can only help propel us into the future that we so desperately crave, which will undoubtedly impact the energy of the collective. If we think to the future; being able to hold the people dearest to us, get back to working on



our passions, exploring the world and enjoy all the little things that we possibly took for granted; these things are what will give us the strength to rebuild and move on.

The pandemic has been destructive in so many ways but has also given us time to pause and re-evaluate our lives before and what we want for our future, which was not always possible in our fast-paced world. There is so much beauty to be seen and shared in this next stage, with an appreciation like never before. We have lost, cried and longed for so much. Adjusting to this new world with our current values and desires in mind will help us better navigate towards the life we love with a new sense of self, hope and direction. ■



JADE SAFFER

s a Holistic Teen Coach, providing 1-1 mentoring

and therapy for young people aged 11-25. She also offers parental support and facilitates workshops in schools. Her vision is to provide each young person she works with a desire for personal and professional excellence through education,

communication and therapy. Jade can be contacted via her website

www.theholisticteencoach.com or on 07596 822957.

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OOOHHH! THAT'S NEW!

Our pick of the latest green beauty products to help you get your glow back...

▼ PMD Clean PRO Jade

Leading beauty device brand PMD has just launched a new gemstone cleansing device called the PMD Clean PRO Jade which promises to leave your complexion clearer, rejuvenated and glowing.

One side has deep-cleansing silicone bristles, vibrating 7000 times a minute to gently clean and stimulate collagen production. The reverse side has heated Jade crystal to open the pores and help your skincare products sink deeper into the skin. The jade acts as a calming agent and can be used hot or cold. It's pretty much like a facialist in a box.

Jade retains the cold for a long period, helping restrict the capillary blood flow and the vibrations help shift toxins from the skin through the lymphatic system, enhancing circulation and reducing puffiness, inflammation and signs of irritation. It costs £165 and is available from

⌚ <https://uk.pmdbauty.com/>

► Avant 8 Hour Radiance Renewal Sleep Mask and Hydra-Bright Collagen Eye-Restoring Pads

Avant offer an upscale premium range of over 50 products in their cruelty-free PETA certified vegan friendly collection. Their 8 hour Radiance Renewal Sleeping Mask includes Shea Butter, Rice Bran and Panthenol.

Shea Butter is rich in antioxidants, high in vitamins A and E and works as an emollient to keep your skin supple. It also helps tighten the skin, and lessen the appearance of wrinkles and fine lines.

Rice Bran aims to deeply hydrate and restore your skin's natural glow, using Vitamin E and fatty acids. Panthenol helps restore damaged skin whilst helping reduce irritation and inflammation. It's £85 from ⌚ www.avant-skincare.com

Also from Avant, the Hydra-Bright Collagen Eye-Restoring Pads are simple and comforting to use. They are designed to smooth, intensely hydrate and minimise the appearance of fine lines, dark circles and puffiness. Each pad is infused with collagen, hyaluronic acid and aloe vera. £58 from ⌚ www.avant-skincare.com.



◀ Nourish London Protect Skincare Essentials

If you fancy an all in one approach, then Nourish London PROTECT Skincare Essentials Kit, £29.00 may be the way to go. This one is ideal for dry skin, but they also do kits for relaxation, radiance and anti-aging. The range is powered with a special blend of phyto-active ingredients with superior antioxidant benefits, which quenches the skin, stimulates collagen replenishment and helps protect the skin from the elements. It comes in a sweet fair trade organic cotton bag that's handmade by Freeset. The range was created by Dr Pauline Hili, one of the UK's leading organic skincare experts, and is certified organic, vegan, ethically sourced and cruelty-free. The kit contains a Protect Refreshing Cleanser (50ml), Protect Cooling Toning Mist (50ml), Protect Replenishing Peptide Serum (15ml) and Protect Hydrating Moisturiser (15ml). Perfect for keeping in your desk drawer for a quick refresh. Find the entire line at ⌚ www.nourishskinrange.com.



▼ Grown Alchemist

If you find that getting back to work is drying out your hands, try Australian brand Grown Alchemist's new, non-greasy hand cream. It's formulated with anti-bacterial and soothing ingredients to deeply hydrate hands and cuticles, while leaving them softly scented with cedarwood and ylang ylang. It's available in May.

Active ingredients include an anti-bacterial Tea-Tree extract and Bisabolol which comes from Candeia Oil. Both protect hands from germs and the impacts of environmental stressors that lead to premature aging. The cedarwood has hydrating qualities while the ylang ylang is loaded with flavonoids which fight free radicals. You can find it at ⌚ grownalchemist.com, John Lewis, Harrods, Net-a-porter, or Feel Unique.

Rebel RECIPES

Niki Webster shares some nutritious vegan recipes from her latest cook book. All three are packed full of goodness and they taste great too...



LEMONY SPICED LENTIL AND CHICKPEA SOUP WITH CORIANDER DRESSING **Serves 8**

My chickpea soup is packed full of gorgeous spices, tomatoes and nourishing lentils, all the flavours of my favourite dal. I remember the first time I tasted dal. I was in sixth form and we all decided to take a trip to the local curry house. It was also my first Balti experience. Not long after that I went to India and my mind was blown with all the incredible vegetarian delights. I like to make a big batch and portion it up for quick lunches, served with flatbreads for scooping.

Ingredients

2 tablespoons olive oil
2 onions, chopped
3 garlic cloves, sliced
A thumb-sized piece of ginger, peeled and grated
1 teaspoon black mustard seeds
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 teaspoon ground coriander
½ teaspoon dried chilli flakes
4–5 curry leaves
250g red split lentils, rinsed and drained
400g can of chopped tomatoes
400g can of chickpeas, rinsed and drained
100g spinach, or kale with tough stalks removed
Juice of ½ lemon
2–3 tablespoons coconut yoghurt or coconut cream, optional
Fresh coriander leaves
Sea salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper

For the coriander dressing
Juice of ½ lemon
25g coriander
1 tablespoon tahini
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

Method

- Heat the olive oil in a large pan and sauté the onions, over a low heat, for 10 minutes, until softening. Add in the garlic, ginger, spices and curry leaves. Fry for a further few minutes. Add the lentils along with 1.25 litres of water. Stir in the tomatoes and bring to a boil over a medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer the soup for 20 minutes.
- Finally, add in the chickpeas and spinach and squeeze in the lemon juice. If using, dollop in the coconut yoghurt. Season with salt and pepper.
- Make the dressing by adding the ingredients along with 50ml of water to a mini food processor and blitzing until creamy.
- Serve the soup with generous amounts of dressing and some fresh coriander to garnish.



CAULIFLOWER STEAKS WITH CREAMY POLENTA AND GREEN LENTIL RAGU **Serves 4**

As soon I as developed this recipe I became somewhat obsessed with it and ate it about four times in two weeks. It's since become a regular feature. There's something so comforting and moreish about the combination of super creamy polenta, rich and earthy green lentils and chunky cauliflower steaks. Tip: I like to double the amount of lentil ragu and serve leftovers with pasta.

Ingredients -

1 small cauliflower, sliced into 2.5cm thick steaks
A drizzle of olive oil
Sea salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper

For the lentil ragu

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 large onion, finely chopped
4 garlic cloves, sliced
100g dark green or puy lentils, rinsed thoroughly
1½ teaspoons vegan bouillon
Juice of ½ lemon
1 tablespoon balsamic glaze

For the polenta

100g instant polenta
2 tablespoons coconut yoghurt or coconut cream
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1½ teaspoons sea salt flakes
100ml plant-based milk of choice
A pinch of ground white pepper
1 thyme sprig, leaves picked
2 tablespoons nutritional yeast flakes
2 teaspoons vegan Worcestershire sauce

Toppings

A drizzle of balsamic glaze
Dried chilli flakes

Method -

- Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C Fan/Gas Mark 4.
- Arrange the cauliflower steaks in a single layer in a large roasting tray. Toss with olive oil and sea salt. Roast in the oven for 20 minutes, then give them a turn. Continue to roast for a further 20 minutes, or until the cauliflower is cooked and golden brown. Remove from the oven.
- Meanwhile, prepare the lentil ragu. In a saucepan, heat the oil and fry the onion over a medium-low heat for 10 minutes until soft and beginning to brown. Add in the garlic and fry for a further minute. Add the lentils, the bouillon and 500ml of water. Stir well to combine. Turn up the heat and bring to the boil, then continue to boil for 10 minutes.

● Turn the heat to low, cover the pan with a lid and simmer for 15 minutes. Finally, add in the lemon juice and balsamic glaze, drizzle with olive oil and season well. Stir to combine.

● Next, make the polenta. If using instant polenta, heat 400ml of water in a saucepan and bring to the boil. Slowly add the polenta in a steady stream. Stir continuously for 1 minute. Turn off the heat. Allow to cool a little.

● Add the polenta, yoghurt, oil, salt, milk, pepper, thyme, yeast and Worcestershire sauce to a food processor or blender and blitz into a smooth and creamy consistency.

● To serve, pour the creamy polenta into bowls or onto plates. Then spoon on the lentils and top with the cauliflower steaks. Add a drizzle of balsamic glaze, and a pinch each of sea salt flakes and chilli flakes.



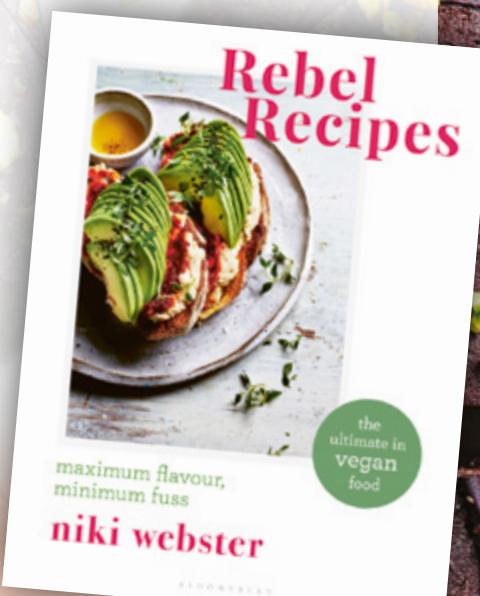
CHOCOLATE, PEANUT BUTTER AND CHICKPEA FRIDGE BARS **Serves 8-10**

Ingredients

400g can of chickpeas, drained
250g medjool dates, pitted
4 tablespoons crunchy peanut butter
5 tablespoons raw cacao
3 tablespoons melted coconut oil
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 tablespoons cacao nibs
2 tablespoons chopped hazelnuts, plus extra to scatter
40g vegan chocolate
Sea salt flakes

Method -

- Put the chickpeas, dates, peanut butter, cacao, coconut oil, vanilla and a generous pinch of sea salt into a food processor or high-speed blender. Blitz until you get a smooth mix. Now add the cacao nibs and hazelnuts, and pulse once to mix.
- Line a 17 x 22cm baking tray with baking parchment then spoon the mix into the tray. Smooth out to the edges.
- Gently melt the chocolate in a small bowl suspended over a small saucepan of boiling water.
- Drizzle the melted chocolate over the mixture in the tray, then scatter with some chopped hazelnuts and sprinkle over a little salt. Refrigerate for at least 4 hours, or overnight, to firm up.
- Remove from the tray and cut into squares. The bars are best kept in the fridge where they will keep for 3-4 days, or store in the freezer for up to a few weeks.



These recipes come from

Rebel Recipes by Niki

Webster which is published by Bloomsbury Absolute at £26. The photography is by Kris Kirkham. You can find the book at online booksellers or order via your local bookshop.

WELEDA: 100 YEARS OF CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE

100 years ago, Weleda became the world's first natural cosmetics company, pioneering organic farming methods and cultivation and setting standards for ethical business practices. Today, Weleda is the world's No.1 producer of certified natural skincare and holistic healthcare products, supplying 55 countries across five continents...

WELEDA has subsidiaries in 20 countries, manufacturing in 8 of those including the UK, employing over 2,500 people, and managing approximately 248 square km worldwide organically. In Weleda's own biodynamic gardens, over 120 plants are cultivated for harvest. The resulting plant tinctures form the basis of the many products in the range. Weleda also sustains more than 50 long-term fair trade farming partnerships around the world to produce additional organic ingredients.

Behind many natural brands there's a highly individual company philosophy, and this is certainly the case with Weleda. When it comes to being green, ethical and sustainable, Weleda has shown true commitment for a century. First founded in Switzerland in 1921, Weleda was established in the UK in 1925 and the original range included several products that are still going strong



today, such as Weleda's famous Arnica Massage Balm and the iconic Skin Food moisturiser, which have become Weleda classics.

The company name derives from the title the ancient Celtic tribes in Germany and elsewhere gave to their healers: 'Weleda'. These wise women were hugely respected for their understanding of herbs and nature. They were considered priestesses and, like village elders, they were often asked for their counsel and advice and revered for their experience and wisdom.

A more modern day 'Weleda' was the company's founder, Dr Ita Wegman, who trained in massage and physiotherapy in the early 1900s and then went on to study medicine and specialise in women's health and gynaecology at

Zurich University at a time when there were very few women doctors. She established the Ita Wegman Clinic in Switzerland, and Weleda remains partially owned by this non-profit organisation today. She had a particular vision for health and wellbeing: a truly holistic approach, using natural products and developing holistic treatments that took into account mind, body and spirit. This ethos continues to shape

Weleda's range today.

Her co-founder, scientist and philosopher Rudolph Steiner, was a man ahead of his time. He established biodynamic agriculture and is credited with contributing significantly to the modern organic farming movement. This organic principle and respect for both people and planet underpins Weleda, and the company's original mission statement, 'in harmony with nature and

the human being', continues to be used and indeed to resonate. Weleda has been a pioneer of sustainability right from the start; sustainability is both Weleda's heritage and future.

Sustainable, genuinely natural, top quality ingredients are at the heart of Weleda, providing a strong sense of identity and direction. The quality begins with the plants grown in Weleda's own Demeter-certified herb gardens. The gardeners work with nature's rhythms and nurture the plants at every stage, from planting the first seed from Weleda's own seed bank through to harvesting the crop by hand.

Every one of Weleda's natural and organic cosmetics is certified by NATRUE – no other seal worldwide is more demanding in terms of quality. Products are formulated using natural ingredients, without mineral oils or petrochemical derivatives, without silicones, synthetic fragrances, artificial additives or GMOs. Raw materials are carefully processed; because growing quality plants is only half the story – it's the processing that makes the difference in preserving the plant's natural effectiveness.

Weleda is famous for procuring the best raw materials, from producers around the world with whom they nurture close and trusting partnerships. This ensures that Weleda can trace every plant oil, dried flower or essential oil all the way back to its source.

Today, Weleda is one of just two beauty brands worldwide (and the first in Europe) to obtain the new UEBT certification for 'Sourcing with Respect'. The Union for Ethical Bio Trade is a non-profit organisation that provides a globally recognised standard for sustainable sourcing and



the use of raw materials. In order for a brand to be certified, the UEBT looks at its entire sourcing system to verify that biodiversity is conserved, ingredients are sourced sustainably, and that all partners along the supply chain are treated equitably and paid fairly.

For Weleda's Centenary year the company is bringing the beauty and diversity of its gardens to life through an immersive, interactive and multimedia digital experience: The Open Garden, a smartphone-accessible multimedia platform.

The inspirational and educational platform invites the user to follow the signposts and

explore the gardens, delving deep underground or buzzing around with the bees, discovering plants and their properties along the way. Visitors can explore a 360-degree view of Weleda's Romanian arnica fields, surround themselves with bird song from Brazil or journey through fields of lavender in Moldova. To discover the plant ingredients and products that best suit each of us, a quiz helps participants discover their botanical match. It is even possible, using augmented reality, to virtually plant some of Weleda's key botanicals, bringing the Weleda garden, people and products a step closer.

There is no better place to experience Weleda's philosophy than in its gardens where the deep-rooted connections between people and nature can be discovered. Why not explore Weleda's Open Garden at <https://opengarden.weleda.co.uk>. ■



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RESEARCH ROUND UP

INTERESTING NEW RESEARCH OF INTEREST TO HOLISTIC THERAPISTS AND THEIR CLIENTS...

MICROBIOME: 140,000 VIRUS SPECIES FOUND IN HUMAN GUT

We may have heard quite enough about viruses over the past year, but scientists from the Wellcome Sanger Institute and EMBL's European Bioinformatics Institute have performed an analysis of over 28,000 gut microbiome samples. They discovered over 140,000 different viral species living in the human gut. More than half of these species had never been observed before.

Dr Alexandre Almeida, Postdoctoral Fellow at EMBL-EBI and the Wellcome Sanger Institute, commented, "It's important to remember that not all viruses are harmful, but represent an integral component of the gut ecosystem. For one thing, most of the viruses we found have DNA as their genetic material, which is different from the pathogens most people know, such as SARS-CoV-2 or Zika, which are RNA viruses. Secondly, these samples came mainly from healthy individuals who didn't share any specific diseases. It's fascinating to see how many unknown species live in our gut, and to try and unravel the link between them and human health." Ref: 10.1016/j.cell.2021.01.029

NUTRITION: 2 FRUITS, 3 VEG ADDS UP TO LONGER LIFE

The American Heart Association has analysed studies which represent almost two million adults and show that eating about five daily servings of fruits and vegetables, in which 2 are fruits and 3 are vegetables, appears to be the optimal amount for a longer life. Eating more than this did not appear to confer additional benefits.

The UK Health Survey for England suggested that in 2018 – the latest year for which figures are available - only 28% of adults were eating

the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables per day – and the average was 3.7 portions per day. Fewer men than women meet the five-a-day guideline, and young people aged 16 to 24 are also less likely than other adults to get their five-a-day. In 2018, 18% of children aged 5 to 15 ate five standard portions of fruit and vegetables per day.

Compared to those who consumed two servings of fruit and vegetables per day, participants who consumed five servings a day of fruits and vegetable had a 13% lower risk of death from all causes; a 12% lower risk of death from cardiovascular disease, including heart disease and stroke; a 10% lower risk of death from cancer; and a 35% lower risk of death from respiratory disease, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Starchy vegetables, such as peas and corn,

fruit juices and potatoes were not associated with reduced risk of death from all causes or specific chronic diseases. Green leafy vegetables, including spinach, lettuce and kale, and fruit and vegetables rich in beta carotene and vitamin C, such as citrus fruits, berries and carrots, showed benefits. Ref: 10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.120.048996

BACTERIAL TOXIN IS FOUND IN URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are one of the most prevalent forms of bacterial infections in the world, with an estimated 150 million cases each year. More than 60% of women suffer a diagnosed UTI in their lifetimes, with many more going undiagnosed. Treatment is most commonly a course of antibiotics, which wipes out the gut microflora and contributes to the problem of





antibiotic overuse and the evolution of antibiotic-resistant micro-organisms.

According to a new study from the University of Toulouse, patients with urinary tract infections caused by Uropathogenic E. coli produce a DNA-damaging bacterial toxin called colibactin, which is suspected of being involved in cancer. Colibactin has been shown – in mouse studies – to cause extensive DNA damage in bladder cells. The researchers hope that further studies will result in therapeutic approaches aimed at modulating the composition of the intestinal microbiota in those with urinary tract infections.

Ref: 10.1371/journal.ppat.1009310

GUT HEALTH AND MOOD GENETICALLY ENTWINED

Scientists from the University of Queensland researchers have established a link between major depression and stomach ulcers, using genetic data from almost 500,000 people based in the UK. It's thought that between 5-10% of adults in Westernised countries suffer from peptic ulcers.

This study uncovered that those with major depression had an increased risk of gastrointestinal disorders. As medication has reduced the incident rate of peptic ulcers, the

researchers stressed that the importance of other risk factors including lifestyle and psychological factors now needed to be re-emphasised.

Ref: 10.1038/s41467-021-21280-7

THE GUT MYCOBIOME INFLUENCES THE METABOLISM OF PROCESSED FOODS

The majority of research work on the human microbiome has focussed on bacteria, but there are many other microbes which cohabit our digestive tract including viruses, protists, archaea and fungi.

New research using mice has shown that the mycobiome – the name coined for the communities of moulds, yeasts and other micro-fungi that live in the intestines – form an active interface between the host and their food. A joint team from the Universities of Alabama and Tennessee discovered that exposure to a typical Western processed diet, rich in purified carbohydrates, led to persistent differences in fungal communities that significantly associated with differential deposition of body mass in male mice, as compared to mice fed a standardised diet.

Variations of fungi from two genera, *Thermomyces* and *Saccharomyces*, were strongly associated with metabolic disturbance and weight gain. This suggests that there are complex interkingdom interactions between bacteria and fungi which both collectively shape, and potentially contribute to, host homeostasis. The implication for human microbiome studies, which often examine only bacteria and sample only fecal communities, is that the mycobiome may have unappreciated effects on microbiome-associated outcomes. *Ref: 10.1038/s42003-021-01820-z*

GUT FUNGI NOT ASSOCIATED WITH PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Parkinson's disease is the fastest growing neurological condition in the world. It is the second most common age-related neurodegenerative disorder and affects about 3% of the population by the age of 65 and up to 5%

of individuals over 85 years of age.

Previous studies have shown that the bacterial gut microbiome is strongly associated with Parkinson's disease, but a new study from the University of British Columbia has discovered that gut fungi are not a contributing factor, thereby refuting the need for any potential anti-fungal treatments of the gut in Parkinson's patients.

The study looked at faecal samples from 95 people with Parkinson's disease and 57 control subjects each also taking a two hour study appointment. Analysis determined that the fungal microbiome in PD did not essentially differ from that of matched controls, and there were no strong associations between gut fungi and PD symptoms.

Fungi were very sparse among participants' fecal microbiomes. After filtering, 106 of the 152 participants (64/95 PD and 42/57 control) remained for downstream compositional analysis; the remainder had virtually no detectable fungal genomic content. Most of the genera identified were environmental or dietary in origin.

Saccharomyces was by far the most dominant fungal genus detected. Although these investigations did not reveal any significant role for gut fungi in Parkinson's disease interestingly, lower overall fungal abundance (relative to bacteria) in the gut samples of those with Parkinson's were observed, which might reflect a less hospitable environment of the gut of sufferers. *Ref: 10.3233/JPD-202237*



SANOMENTOLOGY: *the healing power* OF DREAMS

Martin Rothery is the founder and creator of Sanomentology. Here he provides an introduction to this increasingly popular therapy...

What is Sanomentology?

The Sanomentology programme relies heavily on the power of dreams; not the random muddle of thoughts and mixed-up perceptions of sleep, but guided, instigated and controlled dreams.

The ability to dream is the most powerful process we possess. When it comes to healing our minds and bodies, the simplest solutions are often the most effective. Sanomentology is a therapy that harnesses one of the most powerful innate processes our minds are capable of. Our dreams

are the conduit through which our physical bodies are connected with our minds. There is no denying that our dreams also connect us with our spiritual side; whether we recognise it or not. When we dream, our subconscious takes control. There has always been debate among scientists, spiritualists, and everyone else about what it means to dream and the significance of dreams. However, there has never been any doubt that dreams have healing power, enabling us to resolve internal issues and conflicts.

Since the days of Ancient Greece, philosophers and theologians have sought to harness the power of dreams. The modern practice of lucid dreaming is anchored in understanding the unique power and possibilities that our dreams hold.

Some of the biggest life changing inventions and discoveries were made due to this innate power; the sewing machine, DNA, the periodic table, Einstein's theory of relativity, Google, the list could go on. This is something that evolution has developed to help us, and other animals to make sense and deal with the world around us.

The problem today is the world is changing much faster than evolution can cope with. In times when we lived in caves, we had a limited sense of purpose. Mankind had to look out for a small group of people in his tribe, and think about the basic needs. Dreams back then would have been focused and clear, dealing with the limited issues that were current.

Nowadays, people worry and fear too much. We are driven by the media and the world around us to fear, worry and stress over too much. The constant bombardment from social media and other platforms, and the sheer bustling activity of the world overloads our senses and in turn our amygdala. Television, films, video games and the like further this cataclysmic overload, the amygdala does not realise that zombies are not real, so it suddenly (in evolutionary terms) has a lot more perceived danger to filter and sort. It is not built for that level of information, so dreams become randomised, chaotic, confusing, and muddled. The amygdala cannot do its job properly, and this leads to an increase in anxiety, fear, illness, and other maladies.

This overload of information creates change in the brain, the Reticular Activating System and other elements start to raise the awareness of danger and threat, increasing the information that the amygdala has to filter, and we suddenly have a vicious cycle.

And this is where the magic of Sanomentology lies. The protocols and processes all utilise this ancient ability that we all possess. It uses the power of the dream.

Rather than letting the dream run randomly as happens usually, Sanomentology carefully guides them, setting the scene and filtering out the unnecessary elements to allow the dream to resolve each issue systematically and



methodically as it needs. The client's dreams are their own, and run in the best way to suit them safely, but the muddled and confusing overload is removed.

With this process, a person can be guided to heal, think clearly, resolve problems, and build their future in ways that are natural, effective and fast. Physical, mental and spiritual issues and problems can be resolved and cleared quickly. And as this happens, the amygdala clears out, allowing it to continue its job with clarity and purpose.

This is dream architecture, with each one carefully crafted, designed and managed depending on the issue at hand. By taking control of the dreams, and working with clients in a content-free manner, they have worked successfully and consistently with people suffering from issues, such as chronic pain, anxiety, depression, addictions, PTSD, weight management and much more.

They have also helped clients move forward in life with clarity of thought, helped solve problems, boost confidence and belief in themselves, and enhanced learning and processing of information.

The processes within Sanomentology are completely content free, with the key healing processes being created within the client's dream, making it faster, more versatile, and more effective than many standard hypnotherapy techniques and models, with many of the current practitioners favouring their new learnings over their previous way of working. Many issues can be resolved in as little as a single half hour session with little or no prior planning or discussion.

Contraindications

The program is made up of many individual elements, each one taking the client deeper into their own subconscious mind, and moving across the physical, mental and spiritual planes depending on the nature and severity of the issue. Consideration must be taken on the physical and mental condition of the client. The lighter protocols are perfectly safe in all circumstances, whereas caution must be exercised with the deeper ones if dealing with clients who are pregnant, have epilepsy or diabetes, or have conditions such as bi-polar disorder.

Certain pain conditions must be checked before commencing with our therapies, conditions such as migraines, organ pains and the like. Once the all clear is given by a doctor or consultant, then therapy can go ahead.

Sanomentology training

The Sanomentology program is continuously being updated and evolved, with new protocols, theories and ideas being added regularly. To ensure that trainees get the most out of the program, and to allow them to develop along with the program, we offer a unique training opportunity.

Sanomentology is proving to be one of the fastest and most effective therapeutic and self-development programmes of its kind, and as the team grows, it will continue to change lives exponentially.

When a new practitioner signs up, they become lifetime members. They can then attend training as often and whenever they like, they can access all new material and training as it is developed, and also become members of a private support network where they can seek advice on client issues, practice with other team members, and have therapy themselves to ensure they are constantly at the top of their game.

All training is offered via zoom globally, in person at our training facilities in Chesterfield, Derbyshire, and via recordings. The current training time is 15 days, and we have regular training groups throughout the year, usually running one day a week for 15 weeks. ■

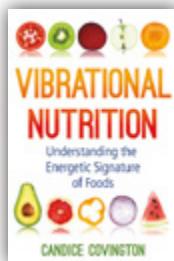


Find out more by visiting
www.sanomentology.com or
 searching for Sanomentology: Dream
 Architects on Facebook.

Spring Books

A new season brings a raft of new titles and new ideas. Here's our pick of the latest titles...

Vibrational Nutrition

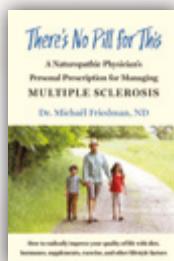


Candice Covington has produced a useful hands-on guide to the vibrational signatures of the food we eat and how they affect our behaviours, emotions, and

spirit. Many people have a complex or difficult relationship with food. We eat the wrong things for our bodies, driven by our emotions or unbalanced hormones.

Covington believes that the food choices we make affect the energy body and our emotional, mental, and spiritual states. She details the energetic and spiritual qualities of more than 400 common foods, drinks, and seasonings and its effects, provides recipes and shares how to choose the nutrition we need for mind, body and spirit on an intuitive level.

There's no pill for this

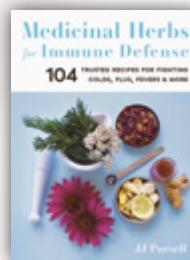


Neuropath Dr. Michael Friedman was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis more than a decade ago. Since then, he has

focused on finding a cure for MS and sharing information and techniques to help those with MS improve their day to day lives. This includes dietary changes, supplements to support a healthy microbiome and hormone therapies that can reduce neuroinflammation and possibly promote neurorestoration as well as mindfulness, exercise, sleep routines, time management, stress management, and more.

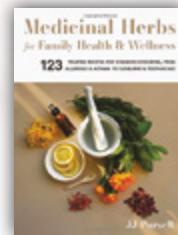
In the book's conclusion, Dr. Friedman reflects on what this complicated chronic disease has taught him, and continues to teach him, about the value of humility and about what is truly important in life.

Medicinal Herbs for Immune Defense



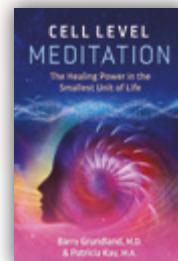
The first of a pair of new titles from naturopathic physician JJ Pursell, this is a compendium of over 100 herbal recipes that support immune defence. There are natural antivirals and safe solutions for common concerns like the flu and the common cold as well as ideas to help support and build up the immune system. We liked the section on building your own home apothecary as well as the variety of recipes which span capsules, salves, teas and tinctures. The book is attractive, easy to use and well-illustrated. The section on key herbs is particularly strong.

Medicinal Herbs for Family Health and Wellness



The companion volume to JJ Pursell's work on immune support, this one shares medicinal herbal treatments for whole family health. All recipes are tailored to the needs of women, men, kids, babies, and the elderly. There's everything from cures for cradle cap to courage drops and treatments to soothe constipation.

Cell Level Meditation



Cell Level Meditation focuses awareness on the smallest unit of life for the purpose of healing. Using the timeless technique of combining awareness with the breath, you move into the cells and become them. By meditating with your cells, you can awaken to the vast potential within yourself, move to greater levels of self-awareness, and enact healing all the way down to the cellular level, according to authors Patricia Kay, MA, and Barry Grundland, MD. I found this an interesting concept because an aunt taught me how to mentally travel through my body to the site of pain, generally a nettle sting or scraped knee and block the pain during childhood.

The sample meditations prove a useful guide to help you connect with specific cells, such as your liver or lung cells. The authors suggest using Cell Level Meditation technique to follow your intuition and discover the cells that are inviting you in.

Rubbing Shoulders with the Best



Author Kathy Scott has provided us with an article in this issue, but we'd be recommending this book anyway. It's a great focussed guide to building the

massage business you want through finding the right clients and operating in a stress-free fashion. It's a primer in self-worth and gaining the self-confidence to be an amazing practitioner and business person.

Kathy's been a massage therapist for 12 years and runs her own corporate massage business. The knowledge she's gained has allowed her to specialise and create work for other therapists, so she understands the challenges facing individual holistic therapists and the industry as a whole.

Hands in Health Care

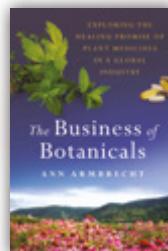


While this should be a must read for any massage therapist working in a health care setting, whether that's a hospice or a hospital, this book has plenty to offer the therapist in private practice too.

The second edition focuses solely on the adult patient and has new chapters on

aromatherapy massage, end-of-life care, cultural sensitivity and understanding the therapeutic relationship between patient and practitioner. It also incorporates new sections on addiction and neurological disorders, as well as the most recent research from around the world. The new edition is highly illustrated with full colour photographs and drawings, including many new illustrations. Massage therapist and author, Gayle MacDonald and co-author, Carolyn Tague are both well-known and highly respected in the field of hospital massage therapy and have contributed a feature in this issue of Holistic Therapist Magazine. As a result, the book is crammed full of practical advice and backed by scientific research, as well as having useful overviews of illnesses that benefit from massage treatment and a guide to medical devices that may be encountered.

The Business of Botanicals

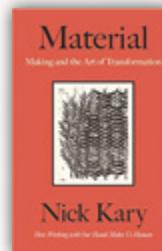


It's funny, but when we think of herbs and other botanicals, we tend to think of them in connection with small-scale, individual enterprise, but this is not the case. Ann Armbrecht provides an eye-opening guide to where botanical ingredients come from and how they are processed before arriving in a health food store, deli, medical herbalists or even the supermarket. In doing so, she casts a light on the inner workings of a complicated industry and raises questions about the ethical and ecological issues of mass production of medicines derived from these healing plants. Many of these are

imperilled in the wild, particularly those used in Ayurveda and Traditional Tibetan Medicine.

This is the first book to explore the interconnected web of the global herb industry and its many stakeholders and is an invaluable resource for conscious consumers who want to better understand the social and environmental impacts of the products they buy. Definitely a worthwhile read.

Material Making and the art of transformation



Many of us work with our hands, whether that's professionally or as hobbies. Making is an essential part of who we are as human beings.

Nick Kary's *Material* is a rich celebration of what it means to imagine and create, what it means to be a maker and what it means to create in a world where consumers are disconnected from the creative and material process. It's the sort of book that makes you reconsider consumerism and reignites an interest in the hand-made object, whether that's art, pottery, furniture or jewellery. ■



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*National Pollen and Aerobiology Research Unit, 2012. *134 of 166 respondents: Allergy UK Survey, 2015.

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THE HEALING POWER OF FLOWERS

The Victorians developed an entire language of meanings for flowers. Some we still understand today, with the millions of red roses sold on Valentine's Day symbolising true love, but there are many others that we've forgotten. Claire Bowen and Éva Németh suggest that we can add meaning and healing to our practice rooms through carefully chosen flowers. Here, they share two flowers for success...

FLOWERING plants have long been a means of communication, particularly secret communication, known as floriography. Pity the poor girl who received a bouquet containing striped carnations for refusal. Plants have been used as symbols for thousands of years.

The Language of Nicotiana

This pretty and delicate flower is a relative of the tobacco plant. Easy to admire for its star-shaped, tubular flowers alone, it was held sacred by some Native American tribes. They believed that smoking the nicotiana plant allowed them to communicate effectively with spirits, while others thought that throwing nicotiana into the water at the beginning of a water journey would appease the water spirit and ensure safe travels. So, nicotiana is an appropriate flower to give to someone embarking on a new journey or project to wish them luck for a successful venture.

FLOWERING PERIOD: June to September

CARE: Trim ends regularly and refresh water daily.

PRESENTATION: Nicotiana adds an ideal floaty element to both arrangements and bouquets, but it is fragile, so be careful when handling the stems and heads.

Nicotiana can be toxic, particularly to dogs.

The Language of Sunflowers

The sunflower is perhaps the boldest and cheeriest of all the flowers with its big, open face and petals standing proud on a tall, thick stem. Traditionally yellow in colour, more recent varieties have included subtle brown colours and even shades of red.

According to Ancient Greek legend, a nymph named Clytie fell in love with the sun god Apollo. Although Clytie was beautiful, Apollo did not love or acknowledge her. After nine days of hopeless devotion, the nymph transformed herself into a sunflower and constantly turned towards the sun so she could see her beloved Apollo in his bright and beautiful chariot.

When planted in the ground, and absorbing as much sun as possible, the sunflower rises high above all other flowers, showing its lofty ambitions and desire to succeed. Some can grow as high as three metres tall, so it is no surprise that this flower is associated with ambition, good luck, lofty thoughts, opportunity, pride, strength and wealth. It is the perfect token to give to someone who is starting out on a new venture or taking exams – someone who likes the bold and beautiful!

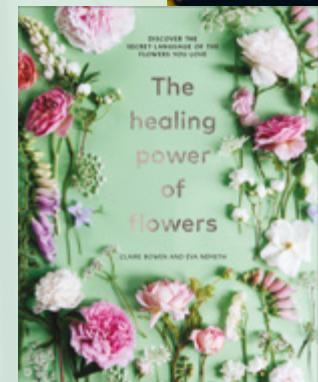
FLOWERING PERIOD: July to September

Care: Sunflowers last particularly well, providing you trim the ends regularly and refresh water daily.

PRESENTATION: It depends on which size and variety you use, but generally larger sunflowers look best bunched together in a large glass vase or similar.



The Healing Power of Flowers is published by Ebury Press and is available from online or can be ordered from your local book shop. It contains sections on flowers for joy, calm, love, success, consolation and celebration as well as foliage, and how to choose flowers sustainably.





AMULETS: *Protective TALISMANS*

Amulets have been used to provide the wearer with comfort and protection from harm and evil intent for centuries...

SINCE the earliest known civilisations, people have sought protection from physical harm and negative impacts and sought to bring abundance, good luck and wealth into their lives. Often these desires for protection or enhanced well-being and status have materialised in the form of amulets, which are found in ancient civilisations, folklore and modern religions alike. The need for wearable protection has shaped the creation and production of jewellery since the very first archaeological records of adornment objects.

In pre-literate civilisations, objects like feathers, animal and human bones, and attractive stones were held to

offer protective qualities. By the time of the Ancient Egyptians, amulets not only included natural found objects, but also man-made representations of gods and supernatural beings produced in wood, clay or carved into gems. At this stage, amuletic forms expanded to include rings as well as pendants and other forms of adornment and were often used to offer protection to the dead as well as the living. This is why we often find amulets in association with grave goods. Amulets also indicated relative wealth and status in society, depending on the materials used and quality of craftsmanship as well as providing protection.

Just as a Christian might wear a St. Christopher medal when travelling, so the ancient civilisations used amulets to protect at particularly dangerous or momentous life stages. Pregnant women in Ancient Egypt would wear amulets depicting their goddess of childbirth, Taweret, while children were protected with an amulet of Bes, the lion-headed dwarf god. Going by the quantities of scarab, Eye of Horus, Pillar of Djel and other amulets that survive from this period, it may be that amulets afforded protection to all but the lowest rungs of society.

The Romans, too, used amulets for protection, particularly as magic and healing were less distinctly defined than current practice. They adopted the use of magical gemstones from the Greeks, with Mars often being carved on red jasper, Jupiter on chalcedony, Sol on the sunny yellow of heliotrope, and Bacchus on amethyst, which was said to protect the wearer from drunkenness. Jewish amulets of a similar period resemble tiny scroll cases, as divine images were forbidden. Sometimes, Roman amulets took the form of small boxes, often made of metal, which contained materials, such as sulphur powder, which were believed to repel evil. Small statues also held amuletic powers. Caligula's father, Germanicus, died when his protective statue of Hecate was removed from under his pillow.

Given the high rate of child mortality, it is unsurprising that Roman children wore amulets from shortly after birth. The bulla was a lead pendant worn by free-born boys. Richer families had gold bullae. This was often worn with phallic symbols and carried at the neck in a cloth pouch. Girls wore the lunula until the eve of her marriage when it would be put aside with her toys and girlish clothing.

Towards the end of the Roman period, amulets changed form, with metal tubular forms becoming popular in Persia, Turkey, Syria and the Middle East. The tubes often contained thin, rolled up metal sheets that were scratched using a sharp tool to create protective spells and incantations often using the names of their gods.

During the Middle Ages, the use of talismans expanded from the wearable amulet into symbols, such as holy books, crosses or statues that were placed above or in the beds of those who were ill, and also to purely medicinal amulets. Some of the protective symbols used remain current today. The evil eye, the Hamsa or Hand of Miriam protect from evil intent, while religious protective symbols such as the cross, Star of David, Om symbol and even chakra mandalas all perform a similar dual role of declaring belonging or social status and being protected. The crucifix was considered to ward off demons and has long been portrayed as a vampire repellent in horror films. Other Christian iconography that might be considered talismanic includes Catholic Religious medals, portable icons from the orthodox faith and the Chi-Rho fish symbol used by early Christians. This has now evolved so that it is most commonly seen as a car bumper sticker, presumably providing

protection from bad drivers and road rage.

Islam too has its tradition of amulets. A 2012 survey of Muslims showed that 20-26% of Muslims across Africa, Asia and South East Europe wore one or more amulets, while a third to two thirds believed that the Evil Eye exists and up to 40% had some form of object to protect against it. Since images are forbidden in most Muslim cultures, many amulets contain texts from prayers or scriptures

An amulet embodies spiritual seeking for guidance and safety. Historically, this has been sought from Gods or sanctified beings, but there are also secular amulets which are often go with attracting positive things such as wealth, love or luck into the life of the wearer, rather than protection from evil or negative experiences. Such amuletic devices are found in nearly all cultures. We are all familiar with the four-leaf clover, the lucky rabbit's foot or the horse-shoe worn in the form of a charm on a bracelet. Indeed, the charm bracelet may be considered as a multiple amulet. Other forms may be less familiar to us, for example, in England, carrying an acorn was believed to protect from illness or speed up the healing process. Some Polish people carry a few scales from the carp eaten for Christmas dinner in their wallets to ensure good

fortune, while many Italians wear a cornicello, a horn shaped pendant which counters the evil eye and keeps marriages happy

Protective Gems

Just as raw gemstone crystals are associated with different protective, balancing and attractive properties in crystal healing, so cut gems play an important role in Vedic Astrology. Gems have long been carved and incorporated into amuletic jewellery, such as the intaglio rings of the classical period. Some stones are said to offer healing properties, while others confer luck or material good fortune. This association between stone type and birth also exists in the western tradition, with birthstones allocated to each month or zodiac sign.

Precious stones associated with Vedic Astrology include, diamond, ruby, emerald and blue and yellow sapphires. Red coral, Hessonite garnets, Turquoise, Onyx, Agate, Laboradorite, Amber, Lapis Lazuli and several forms of quartz, as well as stones demonstrating cat's eye diffraction are also used.

The principal beneficial stone is associated with the ascendant of birth, though there are normally two or three stones from which the astrologer makes a choice depending on other factors in the birth chart. ■

ASCENDANT	STONES	ASCENDANT	STONES
Aries	red coral, ruby, yellow sapphire	Libra	diamond, blue sapphire, emerald
Taurus	diamond, blue sapphire, emerald	Scorpio	red coral, yellow sapphire, natural pearl
Gemini	emerald, diamond, sapphire, blue sapphire	Sagittarius	yellow sapphire, red coral, ruby
Cancer	pearl, red coral, yellow sapphire	Capricorn	blue sapphire, diamond, emerald
Leo	ruby, yellow sapphire, red coral.	Aquarius	blue sapphire, emerald, diamond
Virgo	emerald, blue sapphire, diamond	Pisces	yellow sapphire, natural pearl, red coral

Back PAGES

All the stuff we wanted to tell you about but didn't have room for elsewhere...

WELEDA SCOOPS UP 8 AWARDS

The Beauty Shortlist Awards 2021 have been announced, and Weleda has scooped eight new awards including Eco Brand of The Year. The company were cited for their ambitious centenary project to plant a million trees. The company also received awards for their Skin Food Body Butter, Arnica Sports Shower Gel, Skin Food Original, Pomegranate Firming Facial Oil, Pine Reviving Bath Milk and Harmony Shower.

The Beauty Shortlist Awards are independent and global, attracting product entries from almost forty countries.



FHT ANNOUNCES VIRTUAL CONGRESS

The FHT has announced that their annual training congress will be hosted virtually, allowing attendees to learn from leading experts in the therapy industry from home. The 2021 FHT Virtual Congress is a two-day event, taking place on 13-14 June, featuring expert speakers, insightful seminars and show discounts to enjoy in the comfort of your own home.

The 'access anytime' format of the event allows you the flexibility to dip into the pre-recorded seminars at a time of the day that suits you. Seminar topics include Relaxation, meditation and mindfulness for therapists, growing your business online, Working in palliative and cancer care, Foundations in exercise rehabilitation, myofascial release, making your own products, massage and microbes, hypnotic

and language skills. You can find out more and book tickets via fht.org.uk/virtualcongress. Tickets are £25 for FHT student members, £30 for members and £45 for non-FHT members.

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If getting back to work leaves you with aching hands, try acupressure to reduce the pain. Use the thumb and index finger from your opposite hand to apply firm pressure for 30-seconds to the webbing between your thumb and index finger. This will stimulate the LI 4 (Large intestine 4) acupressure point known for easing aches and pains.

Alternatively, it may be worth trying a massage tool or two to save your hands.



US FDA IN KRATOM CRACKDOWN

The US Food and Drink Authority (FDA) has issued an import alert for kratom, which allows FDA agents to detain the controversial supplement at US borders. The substance has been red listed, meaning it can be detained without physical examination. Kratom, Mitragyna speciosa, is used to treat chronic pain and other conditions. As many as 15 million Americans are thought to use kratom.



The move has angered the American Kratom Association (AKA), which stated that the FDA has no authority to stop kratom raw materials from coming into the country by wholesalers, or non-adulterated, uncontaminated kratom sold as food with no health or dietary ingredient claims.

Over the last several years, FDA has raised safety concerns about kratom as it affects the same opioid brain receptors as morphine and appears to have properties that expose users to the risks of addiction, abuse and dependence.

HEALERS NETWORK TAKE HOLISTIC FAIRS ONLINE

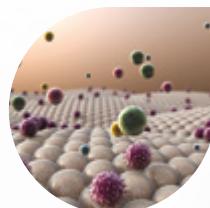


The Healers Network, a US based organisation, has taken their Holistic Health and Wellness Psychic Fair to a global audience by running the event on Zoom. Peter Marks, an astrologer, numerologist, radio host, co-author, and intuitive who took part commented, "The turnout was better than what we had anticipated. We have finally gone international. We were very busy, we had people joining the expo from literally all over the world. The amazing thing is when people came to me, my detailed information was validated by other readers. Everything was in alignment,

the lectures and the demonstrations that we did yesterday were packed and everything went with synchronicity. I am proud of everybody since this was a group effort. The people that I worked with were extremely happy with the results. Everybody was in a total state of awe with the turnout." The next fair is scheduled for April 17, 2021.

LONG COVID SHOULD BE TREATED HOLISTICALLY - NIHR REPORT

People with long-term effects from Covid-19, known as Long Covid, should be treated with a focus on delivering "holistic" care rather than symptom-by-symptom management, according to the latest report from the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). A literature review of over 300 papers suggests that there are over 200 symptoms across ten body systems associated with Long Covid.



These included post-ICU syndrome and post-viral syndrome, as well as long-term organ damage as well as an "entirely novel syndrome, separate from the others such that it could more specifically and uniquely be identified as 'long Covid'". The research suggest that Long Covid is an active disease, so the condition could worsen over time. It is thought that at least 10% of those with Covid-19 experience at least one Long Covid symptom, rising to 20-30% amongst those not admitted to hospital. Between 50-89% of those with hospital admissions reported at least one enduring symptom after two months.

The NIHR report also noted that there is increased evidence of organ impairments in both people who were admitted to hospital and those who stayed at home and that women and young people seemed to suffer more frequently than might be expected. In one contributory study, 30% of those surveyed reported anxiety and/or depression, with others

experiencing brain fog. Long Covid was found to impact negatively on family life for 71% of respondents, while for 80% of respondents it was affecting their ability to work. Nearly a third (32%) had not been able to access all of the healthcare services they thought they needed.

Report Author Dr. Elaine Maxwell commented, "New service delivery models that provide rapid access to an increasing number of people with long Covid need to be designed and evaluated. This will also require a multi-professional workforce strategy. Looking forward, we need to offer a holistic, integrated approach rather than symptom by symptom management." Whether there is any role for holistic therapy in such a holistic approach is still to be seen.

HAYMAX COUNTERS RISE IN RAGWEED POLLEN

Research shows that higher carbon dioxide concentrations are encouraging plants to produce more pollen. Climate change means that pollen is emerging earlier than previously and the hay fever season is getting ever longer. Ragweed plants have produced pollen at double the normal volumes, according to one study.

Now that outdoor socialising is the norm, hay fever is likely to rise, particularly amongst children and when fewer people are wearing face masks. HayMax has been scientifically proven to trap all types of pollen, as well as dust mites and pet dander. HayMax offers formulations for adults and children. Stockists can be found at www.haymax.biz.



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¹published 2014 in the British Journal of Nutrition
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²Journal of Appetite, 2012; the Alpro Foundation awarded results in obesity

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