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Therapist Magazine

JUL/AUG/SEP 2021
ISSUE 39
£6.00



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Foreword

Summer News from Complementary Health Professionals

Hello everyone and welcome to our summer newsletter! It has been an interesting time with easing of restrictions generally and we have been placing updates regarding COVID-19 in the member's area for you. We updated the pre-screening assessment to include information about vaccines as many of you were unsure as to whether or not you could or should ask. As health professionals it is perfectly acceptable to ask and indeed, as long as it is informing the treatment, we can and should ask about any medical details. We have also added updated for England and Northern Ireland but nothing much has changed. Working with our colleagues at the GCMT and CNHC, we have all agreed that in order to uphold the highest professional standards and to protect our clients, we need to continue wearing PPE and keep going as previously advised in earlier 2020 updates. When and if things change, we will of course continue to update you.

We have been busy planning the conference this year and have now uploaded the agenda onto the website. Full details will be below and we have added the agenda for you to the email when sending out this newsletter embedded into your free electronic copy of Holistic Therapist Magazine.

We have also uploaded the dates and started the planning for **Complementary Therapy Week 2022**, which is in March and we hope to have some exciting events going on next year for that too. In the meantime, we do have World Reflexology Week to look forward to from 21st to 26th September 2021 and we have created some posters you can use to do some marketing for your practice during this period if you practice reflexology.



Accredited diploma and CPD courses

We have been very busy accrediting courses from both new course providers and some of our existing schools too. We accepted the McLoughlin Scar Tissue Release course as accredited CPD for bodywork therapists. This is a proven treatment for scar tissue resulting from surgeries and traumatic injury. Untreated scar tissue can be responsible for referred

pain, restricted joint movement and organ dysfunction. So, it really should not be ignored! The physical and psychological effects of scars are wide and far-reaching in their impact. You can download the free research reports from their website to read more about this technique, which is gentle and non-invasive.

We have also approved Lorraine Bell at Serene Therapies in Northern Ireland, who are offering Hot Stone Therapy and Indian Head Massage at present and will be introducing the full Reflexology Diploma to start in due course, which will be mapped to the full CNHC Core Curriculum. Also in Northern Ireland, Tessa at The Sound Healing Spa has developed a new diploma course in Sound and Movement Therapy, which is really exciting and open to any complementary therapist interested in combining sound healing with basic yoga techniques and stretching. It will allow you to organise group sessions or teach 1-1. Jana at Spiral Stabilization has also developed a new online Foundation CPD course and has been able to facilitate training across the World as a result in her amazing therapy.

Carole, who runs her school "Natural Therapeutics" has developed several new courses for Aromatherapists and these are discounted for CHP members. The Subtle Aromatherapy course includes the psychological and neurological impact essential oils have on our psyche as well as how they can be used to influence our energy systems. She has also developed a huge course in "Less Common Essential Oils" that explores 26 oils in depth with explorations on their chemistry, safety and with suggestions for use from her own case study work. At the conference, Carole & Dan will be announcing the exciting new Level 5 Aromatherapy upgrade diploma for existing aromatherapists and the new level 5 training course for aromatherapy for new therapists. You can view a list of all our accredited schools on the website at <https://www.complementaryhealthprofessionals.co.uk/accredited-course-providers>.

Articles

As you know, we have a page on our website where we publish interesting articles. Many of these are useful for students too to help with coursework. We are working with two members currently who have put together fantastic information that you may find

helpful. The first is on the importance of first aid training for therapists and will come with discounts for CHP members for both the usual first aid course and another for Mental Health First Aid courses. The second will be on contracts for therapists to use in the workplace when organising room rentals etc. along with a template that will go in the member's area for you to use. So do check the website periodically on the articles page.



Online training – is it any good?

We have been in discussion on this subject with our colleagues at the GCMT and CNHC as the pandemic has seen the shift to more online resources and training. When done well, online learning is excellent and has many benefits of being able to be less expensive for you as the consumer and negate the need to travel huge distances to train in therapies that you are interested in in order to develop your skills and your practice. However, there is a great deal out there that is not good quality, so how can you distinguish the good from the bad?

We, along with the other leading professional associations we collaborate with have agreed that any body work training or where you are learning a new technique for the first time, needs to be done face to face in a classroom under the supervision of a tutor where you can be given direction, correct your techniques as you learn and be properly assessed as being competent. For diploma courses, blended learning is a good approach that allows for theory to be done online, supported with a tutor and this leaves lots of quality time in-class to develop those practical skills.



continued...



The one exemption to this is for Carole's Essential Oil Practitioner Diploma, which is the aromatherapy diploma stripped of all the massage elements. This is therefore a theory only course and can be delivered wholly online. It is for people who want to create bespoke blends for clients but not offer massage and is fully supported with access to a tutor via email, phone and video chat. The coursework is as extensive as the aromatherapy diploma but there are fewer case studies due to the massage element being removed. It has been approved for insurance because it is such an in-depth course with masses of assessment. For insurance purposes generally, any bodywork diploma course has to have face to face contact and this is for the reputable insurance companies that we work with. Sadly, there are still some insurers who will insure anything.

CPD and post-graduate training can be done online as long as it has some assessment and is supported by a tutor. The poorer cheap courses available usually have no assessment or a basic multiple-choice questionnaire at the end, which you can re-take as many times as you want – and is automated with no individualised developmental feedback. We actually do not approve these nor in fact any of the one-day workshops available that have no coursework or assessment so in many ways, the online learning we have accredited is superior. It is important that you don't do a course just to get the piece of paper. You need a course that really enhances your understanding of a subject and enhances your skills and practice. It needs to have some coursework and definitely some case study work to prove how you have applied the new learning in practice. It is always worth spending that extra time to do some training really well. Assessments can be done online and practicals can also be assessed via Zoom or Skype or even via recorded videos. One day workshops that teach you a new skill in just a few hours without any formal assessment are just taking your money and not giving you confidence to excel in your practice. They are no good for serious practitioners like us.

We do acknowledge that online learning is not for everyone so it is a choice but if you are considering doing a course that we do not accredit and would like some feedback from us before you part with your money, please email the course link to the office.

Interested in setting up courses in complementary therapies?

If you already have a teacher training qualification, please email the office for our accreditation pack. We will be happy to assist you in setting up your courses, whether these are CPD courses or full diplomas.

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.



CHP Annual Conference - Saturday 16th October 2021

We are so excited to see the bookings coming in for the conference. We should be on track to have a similar number as in previous years and we can't wait to see people in person again. It has been a long time coming! Once you have booked, we will contact you a month before the event to reserve your place on the two workshops so that we can ensure we have everything organised and the necessary resources in place. For Dan's workshop you will be able to take home the blends you make up in his workshop to use on your clients and we will be providing the oils, dark glass bottles and lids.

The goodie bag is currently being developed and we have already had some nice offers from organisations we are affiliated with and with whom we work in the industry. Massage World is going to give each delegate a free copy of their latest magazine, for example. When you consider that this is a free event for our premier members and we cater it too AND you get a goodie bag, this is more than enough reason to be a member, let alone all the other work we do for you and our industry as a whole! We are the only association who offers a free conference for its members; especially where we provide all your food and drink for the day too. You will

receive a CPD certificate for 6 CPD points after the event by email.

As usual, we have lots of industry experts coming to speak to you and all are members of CHP.

List of speakers:

Carole Preen – Aromatherapy and Mental Health
Meghan Mari – Massage and Mental Health

Workshops (these are repeated so you get to choose two)

Dan Stephens – CBD oil in massage and aromatherapy for mental health
Sarah Yow – Reflexology for Mental Health and Emotional Resilience
Dave Green – Hypnotherapy and Mental Health

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.

Don't forget that this year we have a new venue, which is easily accessible from central London, withing 10 minutes' walk of both West and East Croydon stations. You can get to these directly from St Pancras and London Victoria main stations and via Tramlink and London buses (Travelcard zone 5).

Therapy Awards 2021

We have received 14 nominations so far this year for the Therapist of the Year Award and we will be asking our schools soon to start nominating their student of the year. If you want to have a chance of winning the Therapist of the Year Award this year, 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.

We look forward to seeing some of you in October!



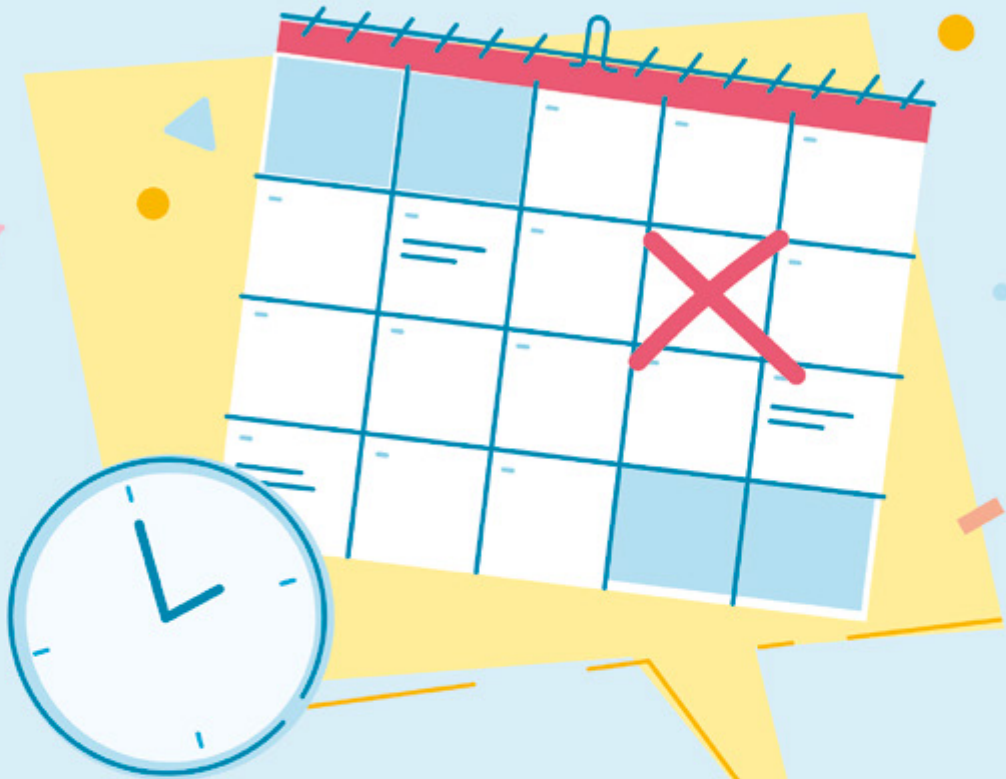
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Support, education and insurance. Created by therapists, *for therapists.*

The Federation of Holistic Therapists (FHT) is here to help you and your therapy career flourish, with tailor-made insurance policies, our exclusive members' magazine, *International Therapist*, as well as training courses, local and virtual group meetings, special events and the professional recognition that comes from being a member.

Visit fht.org.uk or call us on 023 8062 4350 to find out more and join us today!

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Editor's Letter



Hello again,

As I write this, the UK government is cheerleading about “Freedom Day” and a return to normality, despite the inevitable rise in COVID cases this will bring about and the even more concerning figures emerging about underlying health conditions and problems associated with lifestyle diseases. We're looking at a drop in lifespans of 1.6 years for men and 1.2 years for women across North West England, for example.

The impact on poorer areas is much greater than affluent towns and villages. Sticking with figures from Greater Manchester, in Salford, the male COVID mortality rate was 400 per 100,000 people. In Trafford, which is an affluent area, it was 250 per 100,000. That means 150 more men died in every 100,000 because they came from a poor background and were thus more likely to have underlying health problems often predicated on poor nutrition and unhealthy habits. Health inequalities are going to be increasingly important over the next decade as the government commits to “levelling up” and we seek to become a healthier nation. There's something fundamentally wrong with our approach to health and wellbeing when your postcode means that, on average, a woman born in Blackpool will drop dead 7.7 years before one born in Westminster. That's why this issue contains a special report on health inequalities, because holistic therapy should, in an ideal world, be available to everyone.

Another theme that runs through this issue is the differing attitudes that we and our clients have towards this return to normality. Many people are reluctant to resume their previous way of life and will be wary of coming back to the practice room. Some don't want lockdown to end. Indeed, some holistic therapists may not be sure about resuming treatments even though the restrictions are lifted. There are also many potential clients who've re-evaluated their lives and now want to prioritise their personal health and wellbeing, so we're exploring the best ways of working out what will work best for you and your business.

Whether you're raring to go, want to move online, are just starting out or you're apprehensively dipping your toe in the water after lockdown, we're here for you.

Love, Alison and everyone at Holistic Therapist x

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OTHER ISSUE 39 CONTRIBUTORS AND PEOPLE WE'D LIKE TO THANK

OUR THANKS TO SUSIE AND THE TEAM AT WELEDA, KEITH SQUIRES, BJØRN FALCK MADSEN AND ALL THE OTHER CONTRIBUTORS AND THOSE BEHIND THE SCENES WHO HELPED OUT TO GET THIS ISSUE TO PRINT.

Openers

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



NICE DECIDE CHRONIC PRIMARY PAIN SHOULD BE MANAGED WITH EXERCISE, THERAPY, OR ACUPUNCTURE

NICE, the UK drug and medical treatment authority, has issued guidelines on the treatment and management of chronic primary pain. Such conditions should be managed using exercise programmes, cognitive behavioural therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy and acupuncture.

The antidepressants amitriptyline, citalopram, duloxetine, fluoxetine, paroxetine, or sertraline are the only drug treatments that should be offered to patients with chronic primary pain because evidence shows these may improve quality of life, pain, sleep, and



psychological distress, even in the absence of depression, says NICE. For many commonly prescribed drugs, including paracetamol, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, benzodiazepines, or opioids there is little or no evidence that they make any positive difference. **Ref:** <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n907>

CHICHESTER CENTRE HIT BY VANDAL

A new health and wellbeing centre created by the Chichester Community Development Trust was vandalised twice in two weeks even before opening. The new centre was expected to open in June and includes a pop-in café, fitness studio overlooking the park and five therapy rooms. Fitness experts will provide classes such as

yoga, Pilates and HIIT workouts along with evening workshops in the fitness studio, while a range of services will be available in the therapy rooms from talking therapies such as cognitive behavioural therapy to reiki, massage and HeartMath self-regulation techniques, as well as health and life coaching.

NEW STUDY SHOWS POORER HEALTH IN MOST DEPRIVED AREAS LINKED TO GUT MICROBIOMES

A study led by the University of Glasgow shows that the earlier onset of disease and ageing in the most deprived could be linked to gut health and poor diet. The researchers analysed the composition of microbes in the body and found that there was a higher amount of pathogenic – disease-causing – bacteria in those who were most biologically aged. The study also found that those with a lower socioeconomic position had lower levels of betaine in their gut – a nutrient commonly obtained from a healthy, balanced diet containing fresh vegetables and fruits.

Researchers believe that the abundance of pathogenic bacteria found



in those with a low socioeconomic background, combined with their lower levels of good nutrients such as betaine, may explain why people in these groups are more biologically aged than their counterparts from higher socioeconomic backgrounds.

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MARKET OUTLOOK: HERBS FIND GROWING FAVOUR IN DIGESTIVE HEALTH

Botanical ingredients that have been linked to digestive support are carving out a strong niche in the market, and they're expected to continue flourishing in the years to come, so it may be worth looking for ways to include them in your treatment portfolio. There are studies which support the use of many traditional herbs to keep the digestive tract functioning well and the microbiome in balance. These include clinical studies on ginger, chamomile, fennel, and larch. There are also less researched botanicals, such as black walnut, which has long been used in traditional medicines. Artichoke, ginger, curcumin, and



fennel have all been used in traditional medicines for bloating and herbs associated with stress reduction or calming the emotions may also find a use, given the complex relationship between stress, the emotions and the digestive system.

US ADVERTISING BOARD RECOMMENDS DOTERRA DROP "THERAPEUTIC" ESSENTIAL OIL CLAIMS

The US National Advertising Review Board (NARB) has recommended that doTERRA International, LLC discontinue a, "certified pure therapeutic grade" claim as well as any use of the term "therapeutic grade" to describe doTERRA's products in their advertising.

The NARB panel recommendation extends to claims that distinguish doTERRA's essential oils as qualitatively different or more efficacious than those not considered "therapeutic grade." NARB has also recommended doTERRA discontinue express and implied aromatherapy claims that promote health and wellness benefits from essential oils and doTERRA essential oil products.



The advertising at issue had been challenged by S.C. Johnson & Son, Inc. primarily objecting to aromatherapy claims, i.e., benefits claimed to be available from inhaling diffused oils, according to NARB. doTERRA stated that it "will comply with NARB's recommendations" even though it "strongly disagrees with NARB's decision."

TRY THIS... CONFLICT RESOLUTION TIPS

Life Coach Grace McMahon of www.beingwellfamily.com offers some advice when conflicts arise at work or home...

Conflict is of course an inevitable part of life, but for many of us, conflict is anxiety-inducing! Although there's nothing wrong with avoiding confrontation, research illustrates how suppressing feelings when we disagree can be damaging to both our physical and mental wellbeing, and daring to disagree is an important life skill that's worth investing time in.



what to say and think through when a good time might be to bring the issue up- (maybe not in the middle of the person's birthday party?)

Resolve issues as they arise - sitting on your feelings for a long time can lead us to hatch a big old egg of resentment. Try to be upfront with how you feel, it's ok to disagree, but it's not really ok to scream at the person we disagree with!

Think of conflict as a creative engine - reframe conflict as an opportunity to learn and grow. Remember some of the greatest creations were born out of conflict!

Acknowledge challenging feelings - we can't resolve an issue with another person if we don't first acknowledge that it exists ourselves. Acknowledging the uncomfortable emotions such as anger, resentment, frustration that disagreement brings up will enable us to work through them more easily.

Plan it out - if the idea of bringing up an issue makes you feel anxious, make a plan about

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MARKET ANALYSIS: WEIGHT MANAGEMENT SUPPLEMENTS LOSE POPULARITY DURING PANDEMIC

US figures show that the market for weight-management dietary supplements has contracted by 11% since the COVID-19 pandemic began. UK surveys suggest anywhere between a third and half of those in the UK gained weight over the past year, while the USA reports that over half of Americans gained the "Quarantine 15" with gyms closed and many forms of exercise put on hold. The drop in sales of weight-loss supplements is thought to have been impacted



by uncertainties over employment and finances encouraging people to keep hold of their disposable income.



SURVEY SHOWS PEOPLE UNWILLING TO RETURN TO PRE-PANDEMIC ACTIVITIES

A survey of over 1000 people based in the USA suggests that many are hesitant to resume several social and exercise activities compared to a similar study conducted in 2020, when restrictions were tighter. Men stated they were much more likely than women to resume their typical activities. This coupled with the slower than anticipated return to normality has implications for gyms, spas and holistic practices, not least because such fundamental

behavioural changes may lead to a different work environment and the loss of many hospitality industry jobs.

63.5% of respondents said they would consider getting a haircut, 61% would consider visiting their dentist, 55% would consider returning to the office or dining in restaurant. 47% would consider going to the gym.

Older people, who are more likely to have been vaccinated, were more positive about undertaking the activities.

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...

AUGUST

There are fewer awareness events in August as it is the holiday season.

- 1-6 – World Breast Feeding Week
- 5 – Playday 2021
- 6 – Cycle to Work Day
- 7 – Aged Care Employee Day
- 8 – International Cat Day
- 8 – CBD Day
- 10-15 – National Allotments Week
- 10-15 – Afternoon Tea Week
- 12 – International Youth Day
- 15 – Cavernova Day
- 19 – World Humanitarian Day
- 16 – National Children's Day
- 24 – National Plum Day

SEPTEMBER

September brings a bumper crop of awareness days and is the awareness month for Charcot-Marie-Tooth, Childhood Cancer, Oddfellows Friendship, Blood Cancers, Walk Together for Bowel Cancer, Stand Up for Food, Festival of Learning's Have a Go Month and World Alzheimer's Month.

- 3 – EveryWoman Day
- 6 – National Read a Book Day

- 6-11 – Migraine Awareness Week
- 7-12 – Rheumatoid Arthritis Awareness Week
- 7-12 – Organ Donation Week & Youth Mental Health Day
- 13-18 – National Eczema Awareness Week
- 13-19 – Orchid Male Cancer Day
- 13-19 – Mitochondrial Diseases Awareness Week
- 13-19 – Balance Awareness Week
- 14-19 – Sexual Health Week
- 14-19 – Jeans for Genes Day
- 16 – National Teaching Assistants Day
- 20-26 – Recycle Week
- 21-26 – National Eye Health Week
- 21-26 – International Week of Happiness at Work
- 21-26 – World Reflexology Week
- 26 – World Contraception Day

OCTOBER

Awareness months in October include ADHD, Breast Cancer, Go Sober for October, International Walk to School Month and Unblocktober, which aims to reduce the amount of plastic entering marine ecosystems.

- 1 – National Vegetarian Day
- 1 – National Poetry Day
- 4-10 – National Baby Swimming Week
- 8 – World Sight Day
- 11-15 – Legs Matter Week
- 11-17 – UK Malnutrition Awareness Week
- 11 – World Perimenopause Day
- 12-15 – National Work Life Week (Work/Life balance)
- 18 – World Menopause Day
- 23 – Wear It Pink Day (Breast Cancer)

WORDS OF WISDOM...

You are a product of your environment. So choose the environment that will best develop you toward your objective. Analyse your life in terms of its environment. Are the things around you helping you toward success - or are they holding you back?

W. Clement Stone



Making a GREAT START WITH NEW CLIENTS

Mark Shields explains how to ensure that your new client comes back for more...

I have never forgotten Alistair Horscroft, my first NLP trainer, telling me that if you can quickly build strong rapport with a client you're 95% of the way to achieving a successful session. He was so right. Rapport opened the locks of doors never opened before, enabled me to get inside the thoughts of clients who hadn't been able to express themselves for years, and helped me change people's lives in a single session after only spending an hour with me.

Remember, rapport = Client trust, buy-in, commitment, focus, confidence and belief.

No rapport = a lack of client trust, speculation, worry, doubt, and disbelief.

Establishing rapport is undoubtedly the number one

skill that all therapists have to master but also master with real style and vigour. Get this right and it will make the difference between your success and failure with clients.

Our natural ability to relate to others

Some of us seem to flow through life getting on with everyone and, confident in their ability to naturally build rapport with other people. Others struggle, are shy and really find it difficult to strike up small talk conversations with people they don't know. This is mainly down to self-confidence and self-belief. We've said it before: a lack of understanding naturally breeds fear. We are afraid of what we don't know and understand.

You know by now that a huge component of NLP – and success – is modelling. The developers of NLP originally observed some of the world's most amazing psychotherapists in action; these people were superb at gaining rapport with even the most introverted, closed-down clients. Thanks to NLP modelling we know exactly what they did and how they did it, and that's what you can now easily learn.

When you know and understand the “secrets” of rapport, you too will have confidence and self-belief that you can get along with anyone. In a nutshell, rapport is the ability to join someone in their “reality” - or “map of the world” and to make them feel comfortable. They will feel that you have a strong common bond and that you understand them. These are the things that put people at ease, make them more responsive to you and make them more likely to trust, like and befriend you. What stops this from being a manipulative sales technique is that rapport is a two-way street. You are effectively opening yourself up to another person and really feeling what it is like to experience the world as they do.

Practical matters: how can you create rapport?

You need to find things you have in common. The most effective ways of doing this are by mirroring and matching - two concepts that originated in NLP. Mirroring is essentially copying and reflecting back your client's physical patterns of behaviour, without causing offence and without being obvious.

Matching is almost identical as a concept, but normally involves the person's map of the world, their language and beliefs, not just physical mannerisms. Here we'll use the word matching to include mirroring. Matching subtly tells the other person that you are rather like them. It can make them feel totally at ease and fully responsive to what you have to say. Watch two close friends talking and you'll see matching in all its glory.

Matching can be done in a great variety of ways:

Whole body matching Adjust your body to approximate the other person's physical position

and behaviour - head, arms, legs, toes, hands, feet, fingers etc.

Gestures Match the person's gestures - hand waving, crossing arms or legs, finger movements, head tilts etc.

Facial Expressions Match movement of ears, eyebrows, eyelids, jaw position, nose twitches, mouth movements etc.

Breathing One of the best – match pattern, rate, depth, location.

Vocal characteristics Match word and sentence length, volume, tempo, accent (don't overdo this!), recurring words and phrases they use etc.

If you pay attention to what you do when you are talking to a loved one, you'll see how this is done in a way that builds rapport. However be warned you can get too self-aware! When someone is in a heightened emotional state they normally become more sensitive to mimicry, so be careful. You can of course get equally fired up with them or upset with them and keep rapport that way!

In the clinic, if you get it wrong, you will instantly lose rapport. So take it easy. If you are any good at all at talking to people, then you will see you are probably doing some or

all of this already. In which case notice the areas – tone and rhythm of speech, for instance – that you are not doing well, or at all, and practice them.

As an example, a therapist I know had a client who spent entire sessions gazing at the floor. This stressed the therapist as he felt he

wasn't getting through, though the client felt they benefitted from the sessions. One day, just before the session started she took a phone call. She was transformed. She spoke quickly, articulately and at length and was very animated. As soon as the call was over: back to normal. Finally the penny

dropped; in NLP terms, she was highly auditory. Her preferred way of processing information was to listen.

There's a lesson about being willing and able to join someone in their map of the world. In this case, a map where meeting someone's eyes when they talk to you doesn't mean you are being polite, honest, open and communicative – it's just a distraction.

When you know and understand the “secrets” of rapport, you too will have confidence and self-belief that you can get along with anyone.

Pacing and Leading Once rapport is created we then use it to pace and lead the client in the direction that we believe is most beneficial to them. We pace - continually match - the client and lead them to more resourceful, constructive and beneficial states, behaviours and beliefs etc. A graphic physical example of this comes from a sports coach who often works with people who say they, “can't run”. He starts jogging alongside the client very slowly, matching their gait, stride length, footfall, their breathing, until he and the client are in synch. The coach then starts to relax and run faster, the client follows right along, even changing their style as they do so. That's how it works.

You're looking for that moment of synching when your client will follow you into optimism, relaxation, wherever you want to go, as long as they feel it is in their best interests. Just like the slow runners, your clients do have the resources they need for healing, but they have got so used to living with chronic fatigue or endless gut pain that they have completely lost sight of their inner healthy self. It's no use rubbing your hands together briskly and jovially announcing, “We'll soon have you sprinting a mile” to your tired and pained clients: what a mismatch! Think about where they are and how you can meet them there. ■



Find out more about Mark and his courses at

www.thelifeppractice.co.uk

www.thenlpcoachingcompany.com



SEVEN REASON YOUR CLIENTS AREN'T COMING BACK

Elizabeth Ashley explores seven reasons your clients may not be returning, and what you can do to change that...

NOW we are all starting to see clients returning through our doors, but some people are more reluctant than others when it comes to resuming treatments. I spoke with some friends about the reasons they may be avoiding going for their normal massage or aromatherapy session. Their answers were rather thought provoking and illuminating. Many offer the opportunity to coax clients back to your treatment room if well-handled. As usual, good communication builds stronger relationships with clients.

Reason No. 1: They Don't Feel Safe

Most people have adapted to the need to wear masks now, but the overwhelming feedback people gave me is that certain businesses actions were not matching up to their message. There's a substantial group of people who aren't rushing back to restaurants or pubs the minute they open. People have become scared of situations they perceive to be unsafe and being touched by a someone outwith their own household can be a source of anxiety or stress.

One lady told me that her friend had been visited by a mobile hair dresser who had spent the entire appointment telling her all the ways she had stretched lockdown rules. She knew the hairdresser also worked in a beauty salon but now she felt unsafe going there in case other staff members had been equally lax.



In order to tackle this, you need to be clear on your message. The government stipulates minimum measures but what else are you doing to make your clients feel safe? Create a coherent safety strategy for your brand. Ensure all staff understand that the measures are mandatory and put it front and centre of your message. Let your clients know what you're doing so they can feel relaxed.

Reason No. 2: They are not sure what services their therapist is offering now

After months of "can-we can't- we", many clients are unclear what services many holistic therapists are able to offer. Have you adapted some of your services during lockdown which might work even better in these less stringent times? Has your staffing had to alter?

One of the biggest difficulties beauty and holistic therapies face is people have learned to have to cope without them, so part of the strategy must now be to remind them how having cosmetic acupuncture or an aromatherapy facial done by someone else feels.

A great way to market now is to simply show what's changed and what's the same. Remind clients of all the reasons they loved to come before, and give them a reason to want normality back.

Reason No. 3: They haven't heard from their holistic therapist for months

Sadly, a truth of the current economic climate is we're no longer surprised when a business goes under. How many empty shop fronts do you see in your local shopping centre or high street? Things that were once there one day, just disappear. Often, we no longer notice, or don't ask questions why. If your customer hasn't heard from you, have they assumed you've gone out of business? Communication is more important ever before. Even if you just send a note to say hi, how are you, we are here, and this is what we're doing today is enough to get people thinking about you and feeling good about your success.

Reason No. 4: Their holistic therapist failed to follow up after a session

This is an extension of the last point, but in the first few weeks of coming out of restrictions, many of us were almost too busy to answer the phone. I went into two places where the phone was just ringing out. People are desperate for

appointments, so prioritise catching every possible sale. There's a very thin line between being so busy you can't keep up with people and them feeling ignored. Try hard to prioritise getting back to customers, not just in terms of booking appointments, but also after the event. How safe did they feel? Were there any areas they would have liked to feel safer? It's worth going in with the mind set that this is a new world for all of us, the more opinions about how things can be done better are good.

Reason No. 5: Their perception is that standards have dropped

This may not necessarily be your business, but when other businesses have moved out, there is a feeling of a neglect in a neighbourhood. Keep things looking cheerful and ensure bins are tightly locked lest rodents move in.

Reason No. 6: Treatments have become too expensive

Be careful with pricing. Whilst no-one would fault you for trying to salvage some of what you have lost, the truth is no-one actually wants to foot the bill. Use caution when inflating your prices to ensure you are not pricing yourself out of the market.

Reason No. 7: Barking!

We've all been close to a barker recently, I'm sure. Some people are so focused on keeping everyone safe, and trying their hardest to do their work in the madness of these restrictions, that it comes out in their voice, or perhaps the way you have to try and navigate their store. Their system has become so stringent, it's suffocating and unpleasant for everyone else around them. Try and take a break every hour or so. Get some space. Breathe and relax...just relax.

These are bizarre times for all of us. We are all walking a thin line between worrying about what the future holds and trying to wring every last bit of pleasure and success that each opportunity brings.

I guess the most important thing we can do now is to remember why we are doing it in the first time, and try and hold on to some of that love we had for the job before the madness threatened to take it all away.

Try and relax into making your business about what you want it to be. Focus on the good stuff, how you make people feel, all those reasons they wanted to come before. Make a conscious effort to pour your love of your business and your art into everything you do. That's what people feel, and that's essentially what all of us want really – a break from the reality that we are all having to live.

Observe the distancing, and safety certainly, but to me, top of the list of things that stop me going places these days is feeling suffocated by someone else's fear. ■

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

www.thesecrethealer.co.uk/courses

MAKE YOUR WORKING WEEK WORK FOR YOU

We know, thanks to Dolly Parton, that “workin’ nine to five ain’t no way to make a livin’”, but how do you create a working week that works for you?

THE WORLD OF WORK IS CHANGING

The pandemic has brought about major changes in the way many people work. This will have a considerable knock on effect on many holistic therapists. Many people have discovered that working from home is more efficient and enjoyable than being in the office. Deloitte have said that they expect some of their workers will choose to work from home on a permanent basis. A poll of over 500 business leaders by the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry found one in five businesses which were office-based before the pandemic expect staff to work from home for five days a week after the Covid crisis finishes. Almost half of firms that are able to work remotely expect employees to work from home for up to five days a week.

Aside from enabling technology which facilitates working in a distributed organisation, one of the major drivers of this change is the underlying realisation of the importance of work/life balance and the rediscovery of what matters to us. In the US, where unemployment is at a very low level, people who work in areas of high demand are leaving companies that won't offer home working in favour of those which do.

While this move towards working from home has an obvious, and devastating, effect on therapists who offered on-site massages in the corporate sector, it also offers an opportunity for others who can offer online, mobile at home or local treatments.

Working from home will not be the only change in working patterns over the next few years. In Japan, a country where overworking is endemic, there are moves in parliament to bring in a four day working week. Microsoft Japan ran a month long test which showed productivity rose 40% when the company trialled a four day working week. Scotland, Ireland and Spain are also working on programmes to create a four day working week, which offers benefits in terms of physical and mental health as well as a significant reduction in the carbon footprint. If implemented, this may create a three day weekend, with Friday becoming a leisure day, with increased demand for treatments.

Furthermore, working from home need not involve actually being at home. Rather, people could work from the beach in Barbados or a low-cost base in a country that offered better weather than the UK. Barbados fostered the idea of the Digital Nomad. The Barbados Welcome Stamp is a year-long remote work visa scheme open to applicants worldwide who earn around £40,000. Others choose to work from lower-cost economies such as Thailand, or become truly nomadic, travelling as they work.

RECOGNISE THAT YOUR CLIENTS NO LONGER WORK MONDAY TO FRIDAY, NINE TO FIVE

Such changes would mean that many clients would no longer work the standard five day, nine to five week. It would make sense to find out how your clients might be affected and what this means for your own working hours. It may

be that clients would prefer treatments in the evenings or during weekends, but this would, inevitably, have an impact on your own work/life balance as well as having financial implications.

ESSENTIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Many holistic therapists tend to put the needs of others before their own needs. This can lead to feelings of being taken for granted, overlooked and may eventually lead to burn out. It's vital to create a working week that meets not only your financial requirements but your need for time with family and friends or just to yourself.

There are many different factors to consider, but the principle one is to ask yourself, "What does my ideal working week look like?" Is it full time or part time? Would you prefer to work five short days or three longer ones? Do you want to work at weekends or in the evenings? Do you need to create a schedule that takes childcare or other responsibilities into account? How would you fit in training or CPD? What support can you rely on from your family or partner? How many clients do you want to see or need to see each week? What about social engagements?

Many holistic therapists tend to put the needs of others before their own needs. This can lead to feelings of being taken for granted, overlooked and may eventually lead to burn out

Let's take Julie as an example. Julie offers reiki, acupuncture and is a massage therapist. Currently she works four days a week, from Wednesday to Saturday at a local spa. Her hours are 10am to 8pm. The spa often schedules an 8pm appointment which means she's often not home till 9.45. She also sees clients at a holistic centre on Monday afternoons and has a sports massage clinic at a leisure centre on Monday evenings. Tuesdays tend to be spent rushing around, trying to do a week's worth of chores in a day. She feels run

down, but is concerned about her income as her savings took a large hit when she was in lockdown. She has a seven year old daughter, who she drops off at school and who is often in bed by the time she comes home. Her partner is a postman, working six days a week from 6am to 2pm each afternoon. He doesn't work on Sundays and finishes at noon on Saturdays. Her mother helps with childcare during the holidays, but Julie feels guilty that she doesn't spend quality family time with her daughter, or her partner, except for Sundays.

In an ideal world, Julie would like to take the whole weekend off, which would mean negotiating a change to her hours at the spa, swapping her Saturday afternoon shift for working on Tuesday afternoons. In the longer term, she might also look to reducing her working evenings to her sessions at the gym and making sure her spa sessions end at 8pm.

PEAK PRICING

One option when it comes to designing the best working week for your life is to look at how your own availability during the week, then take a lesson from railway and airline companies. It is more expensive to travel at times of high demand and cheaper to travel off-peak. It's also cheaper if you book a season ticket or pay months in advance. Gyms, and many sporting facilities offer off-peak memberships too.

If you work at weekends or during the evening, should you charge more for these slots if they are in greater demand? Suppose you charged £30 for a treatment in a low demand period, £40 for mid-demand times and £60 for treatment at peak times. Could you reduce charges for regular block bookings which are paid in advance? The easiest way to work out how you could get the right balance between income and working hours is to create a number of timetables for different working patterns and the resultant income. It may make sense to work fewer hours during the week and capitalise on higher demand at the weekends, or it may prove that you value free time more than the income a couple of extra treatments might bring.

Whatever your approach, designing your idea working week should enable you to enjoy a better work/life balance and a more secure income stream. ■



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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TRAINING

*Shear Haven's founder **Susanne Post** and **Liz McKeon**, the organisation's UK Ambassador, explain why holistic therapists should take part in their free training to guide clients towards appropriate help in cases of domestic violence...*

Holistic therapists are in a special position to spot signs of domestic violence because clients open up about their personal lives and what is really going on. It is often not a one-time conversation; it might take patience and time for someone to really open up. Helping can be as simple as having brochures and hotlines printed and available for those in need.

The Shear Haven training course is a free overview that helps therapists recognise the signs of domestic violence, learning to respond to the client in a non-judgmental way and how to refer to resources that can get the client to a trained professional. The client knows their situation best and when it is safe to leave. Holistic therapists are not and should not be mandatory reporters of abuse, as this could put the client in an even riskier situation.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales showed that 1.6 million women and 757,000 men had experienced domestic abuse between March 2019 and March 2020, a 7% rise in cases recorded by the police. Between April and June 2020, there was a 65% increase in calls

to the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, when compared to the first three months of that year.

There are many misconceptions about emotional or verbal abuse not being as significant as physical abuse. This simply isn't true. The abuser will try to use forms of manipulation and put-downs in order to undermine one's confidence and self-esteem, as well as isolating them from others. One way they will do this is by controlling the finances. The victim may not have the ability or financial means to feel comfortable leaving. Often close friends and relatives get cut off from the victim, so holistic therapists may be the only consistent contact in their lives.

The Shear Haven training consists of a 20 minute training session followed by a short quiz. After completion, you will receive a personalised certificate of achievement. It can be printed out, or shared via social media. It was important for us to offer it at no charge, to reach as many people who needed it as possible. Some signs to look out for include inconsistent or last minute cancellations or clients who have become more isolated from close family and friends. There are also the physical signs of abuse, such as

bruising around the neck and arms or other parts of the body, bald spots or damage to the scalp where hair has been pulled out, make-up to hide bruising or clothing that doesn't match the weather, such as sweaters to cover/hide the physical signs of abuse.

To date, over 25,000 people have been certified. We have received feedback from service providers about how eye-opening the information was. Many have told us that it helped them recognise and get to safety in their own abusive circumstances, while others have received resources that have helped them support clients or loved ones.

It is too early to tell how many lives have been saved due to this training, but by providing the knowledge to this industry, we are confident that many lives will be saved and many abusive relationships will end with the victim being able to safely escape. ■



Find out how to undertake this training by visiting www.easy-lms.com/shear-haven-domestic-violence-training/course-58210



Moving your BUSINESS ONLINE

Donna Booth shares the lessons she learnt when moving part of her business online...

THE past year has forced many changes in our industry. You may have had to close completely or have moved some or even all your business online. Perhaps you have found that moving your business online has allowed you access a wider range of customers? Even though things are beginning to open again, having an online offering could be an excellent way to future proof your business.

At the beginning of the pandemic, the only part of my business that was online was my marketing and even that was a bit hit and miss. I did run an email course and I had toyed with the idea of creating a 'proper' online course, but I was happily going on my way, busy with clients, fully booked retreats, and classes. Then, almost overnight, it all disappeared. There was never going to be a better time to make the leap, so I moved my classes and coaching sessions online through Zoom and I started to develop an online retreat membership which offers everything you would see in our residential retreats. Moving your business online won't work for everyone but a bit of planning can save you a lot of time and money.

The first thing to consider is your existing audience and what they would like to access online. Do you have a mailing list? Social media followers come and go but you own your email list and people are very responsive to personalised emails. Don't worry if you haven't got an audience, it is possible to start from zero and grow your audience alongside your online business.

It is also a good idea to test your audience with a smaller offering - a free mini course or tip sheet. If you give them access in exchange for their email, it is an excellent way to build your mailing list, your audience, and your brand. It will also boost your own experience and expertise and you can then expand on your initial offering with longer courses, online classes or even a membership site.

There are several options when it comes to hosting your business online. The right choice for you depends on what you are going to use it for, how much you hope to make from your business and how much time you have to support it.

At the most basic level you can create an online course or even a membership that is run purely through email and/or a Facebook group. I did this for about three years with The Practical Goddess course. Weekly emails with a supporting Facebook group. It allowed me to develop content, build an audience and test out my concept. This group has now developed into the Vitality Inner Sanctum membership site, a WordPress hosted membership site which uses the MemberMouse software for the administration.

Developing a site using membership software is a lengthy and expensive process but the results are fantastic. It allows for full customisation of the look and feel of your membership and you can add on features as your online business develops. A word of warning, unless you are very comfortable with technology and design, you will need a web developer to help you set this up and to support you as your business grows. It can be a high initial outlay, but the ongoing monthly costs are reasonable.

An intermediate approach is supplied by sites such as Kajabi or Thinkific. These are online solutions for courses and memberships and have everything you need to get your online content on quickly and easily. Customisation tends to be limited and while the initial setup costs are lower, the monthly costs can quickly ramp up, so it is important to consider your running costs when deciding on your pricing.

Once you have decided on your offering, you need content. My biggest tip with creating content is to have a plan. If you are creating a one-off course, make sure you know the content of the whole course, when it will be released and how

you will support it. For a membership, planning your content at least three months in advance will save you endless stress. In my membership, my content is planned out a year in advance. Planning also helps you to be consistent, which is vital for client retention and provides a focus for your marketing.

Make sure your content is varied, easy to find and attractive enough to encourage your clients back to your site. I use a mixture of videos, lives, zoom events, document downloads, and audios with a themed retreat every month, monthly moon circles and visiting experts. It is also advisable to have three months' worth of quality content ready for launch if you can. Poor content - that which doesn't provide your clients with something they want and need - will lose you customers.

Attracting customers is key but keeping them is arguably even more important. If you have created a one-off course, then you want your customer to enjoy it and be ready to sign up for all your other offerings. If your online business is a membership, then happy customers will attract new members. The online space is very busy, and your audience can be overwhelmed with options. They can forget that what they have signed up to, so encourage participation with regular reminders of what they can find in your online business. Don't send too many though or you could run the risk of someone unsubscribing or marking you as spam. I send an email a week with a roundup of what's new, what's coming and a reminder of any events. Make it as easy as possible to access your business and they will stay with you and recommend you to other people.

Pricing may be the most difficult aspect when

moving your business online. If you are replacing or adding online classes, do you charge the same as an in-person class? What should you charge for a course or a membership? My advice would be to not give too much away for free. Free content is a great marketing tool, but it should always be encouraging customers towards the paid content. Consider how much time it takes you to create the content, any costs for software, design, equipment, and support. What price are other people in your industry charging? Remember, it doesn't pay to be the cheapest, you want your customers to value your offering and if your main selling point is that you are the cheapest, they are less likely to engage with the content.

Make your online offering easy to use and simple to navigate. Make your terms and conditions clear and automate as much of the administration as possible. Create from your heart with your business brain behind it and you have a whole world of potential customers just waiting for your online business. ■



Wellbeing coach, yoga & mindfulness teacher and retreat

host Donna Booth recently launched Vitality's Inner Sanctum membership site. When not working, she spends time with her menagerie of animals in her wild garden in the Scottish Highlands. Find out more at www.vitality-retreat.com or www.vitality-inner-sanctum.com





DISCOVERING

Somatic Healing Practices

Rochelle Calvert explains why somatic healing practices can help improve health and wellbeing. . .

SOMATIC healing is based in somatic experiencing- a trauma informed therapy. This approach teaches one how to be increasingly present to body sensations, thoughts and emotions that are related to trauma and through various practices learn to allow the trauma to transform, release and leave the body. Somatic therapy approaches trauma from the perspective that trauma is stuck in the body- as the body never had a chance to heal and find regulation and restoration from the traumatic event. With unhealed, or stuck trauma in the body, the nervous system experiences dysregulation causing challenges in life with physical, mental and emotional well-being, which ultimately can cause strain in our relationships and engagement in unhealthy behaviors.

With somatic healing you learn to develop a sense of being “embodied” present to and

at home in your body, feeling all mental and emotional and physical sensations safely. This sense of embodiment helps to allow us to make healthy and skillful choices. As somatic healing grows, you are able to move towards the stored trauma in your body, able to explore the barriers related to the stored trauma, and find new impulses of healing awakening and healing the body to experience more health and wholeness.

Developing somatic healing practices

Somatic healing practices are developed by learning to cultivate clear and kind awareness to the body and sensations associated with trauma. Learning to be present with the body, developing the skills of orienting and grounding, as well as pendulation, which is a somatic healing practice to support skillfully being present with the trauma in the body, one can learn how to release and

transform the stuck trauma.

In my book we draw on the support of nature to aid in safety, care, and guidance with somatic practices to help us lovingly and kindly meet the trauma within. Establishing connection to the natural embodied presence of nature herself, we can begin to awaken to this nature within ourselves with the support of various mindfulness and somatic practices that can heal trauma.

Understanding trauma

In order to suggest what types of trauma somatic healing practices best support, it's also important to understand what trauma itself is. Trauma is the response to a deeply distressing or disturbing event that overwhelms our ability to cope, causes feelings of helplessness, changes our sense of self, and diminishes our ability to feel a full range of emotions and experiences. Traumatic events are often unexpected, and if we don't have the resources to cope and find a sense of restoration and balance after the event, we may go on to have difficulty with our physical or mental well-being, relationships, work or other aspects of life.



With somatic healing you learn to develop a sense of being “embodied” present to and at home in your body, feeling all mental and emotional and physical sensations safely.

From this definition of trauma, the types of trauma that these healing practices best support are any of the possible types a person themselves may define as a “traumatic event”. More classically we often think of trauma as acts of war or combat, rape, violent assaults, serious accidents or natural disasters. But trauma can arise from experiences that cause us to feel a sense of loss of control - medical trauma (illness, surgery, and childbirth), loss of a loved one, betrayal, bullying, the abuse of power, emotional abuse, helplessness, political unrest,

systemic racism, pandemics, and the climate crisis. Trauma may be felt as an individual or as a collective/generational experience.

If you experienced a very distressing event, that was unexpected, caused you to feel out of control and you didn't have the resources at that time to cope and restore balance after the event- it is likely that this was a traumatic event, and the residual of the event may be stuck in your body and nervous system. These healing practices are designed to support the range of any possible type of trauma you may have

experienced and hopefully help you to change your relationship to the trauma itself, seeing how it can be a source of wisdom, strength and resilience as we learn to heal.

Contraindications

Possible contraindications to engaging in these practices might be that if you are experiencing suicidal ideation, newly beginning addiction recovery and/or are struggling with addiction, or experiencing psychotic challenges, these practices may not be suitable at this time. If one might choose to explore these practices while struggling with some of these concerns I would suggest this be done with the support of a therapist.

Research studies

When trauma is unhealed there can be challenges with physical, mental, emotional, behavioral and relational impacts in life. Examples of this might be hypervigilance, tension, ruminative thinking, intrusive thoughts, heightened anxiety, irritability, depression, anger, difficulty in use of addictive activities or

substances, withdrawal from others or difficulty with personal relationships.

Many of these challenges associated with trauma have been shown to improve when we practice mindfulness and experiencing somatic healing. Clinically mindfulness has been shown to improve healing difficult states of mind, body and relationships that are affected by trauma. Somatic practices have been shown to heal PTSD, anxiety, depression, chronic pain, and secondary traumatic stress (i.e., therapists, first responders, frontline healthcare workers).

Research on spending time in nature shows that spending just 5 minutes in nature our heart rate slows, facial muscles relax and the prefrontal cortex quiets. Also, when we hear water and birdsong and are surrounded by natural landscapes this can improve our mood and alertness. After spending 15 minutes in nature we experience a reduction in the stress hormone cortisol and after an hour and a half we can

reduce our mental preoccupation with problems and feel more connected to others and the world.

The research to support our healing by spending time in nature, practicing mindfulness and learning somatic practices all point to great benefits to healing trauma. By weaving these respective healing systems into the healing process we have the potential to radically transform and heal trauma. ■



ROCHELLE CALVERT, PHD,

is the author of *Healing with Nature: Mindfulness and Somatic Practices to Heal from Trauma*. She has studied and taught mindfulness for the past 18 years and knows personally the transformational potential. As a licensed clinical psychologist and founder of New Mindful Life, she supports her clients taking them into nature with the aid of Bertha Grace, a Sprinter van that serves as a mobile therapy office. You can find more about her work at www.newmindfullife.com and [@newmindfullife on Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/newmindfullife).

SOMATIC EMPATHY: FEELING WHAT OUR CLIENTS FEEL

Cindy Engel explains why some holistic therapists experience a somatic response, feeling what their clients are feeling...

THE first time it happened, I thought I was having a panic attack. As I placed my hand on my client's abdomen, my heart raced and my chest tightened, constricting my breathing. What was wrong with me? I pulled my hand away, looked out of the window, and my heart rate calmed down. As I turned to focus on my client again, my heart rate raced again.

Over the years, as my experience grew, my somatic responses to clients became more sophisticated and incredibly useful, as this next example illustrates.

My client had recently lost his wife after a protracted illness. He couldn't sleep and acknowledged that he was probably depressed. He found receiving bodywork from me helped him feel less scared. During his third and final session, I felt a very unpleasant sticky feeling in my own body. I had not felt this before making physical contact with him. While working on him, I felt unwell as if I had an infection or was on unpleasant medication; the words "infection?" and "medication?" rolled around my mind. The unpleasant sticky sensation was so strong that I asked him, at the end of the session, whether he was on any medication or was aware of having any infection anywhere. He said he felt fine, physically.

I considered that, perhaps, my felt sense—my somatosensation—had been wrong. However, the next day, he emailed, ‘You asked me yesterday if I’d had any infection or was on any medication. I said no but, coincidentally, the surgery rang when I got home with my blood test results -said there were minor changes, probably due to an infection or medication. So they want me back for another test in 3 weeks. Just thought I’d tell you. You were spot on again.’

My physical sensation of unpleasant stickiness combined with an emotional sense of concern is hard to describe—subtle and difficult to label. However, the words ‘infection’ or ‘medication’ which occurred to me during the treatment and cropped up in his email were precise, especially as they were the *only* words which popped up as relevant during his treatment. This is not information which I could intellectually deduce from my observations of this client. I know of no cues, subliminal or otherwise, that could inform me of such specific concerns of medics. Importantly, I was not deducing his condition but *experiencing* a sense of a ‘wrongness’ in my own body. This is how I would feel if I were taking unpleasant medication or if I had an infection.

I seemed precognisant of two very precise words: *medication* and *infection* and apparent predictions like these can lead to claims, or misguided assumptions, of special extra-sensory powers but this is not a spooky display of the Dark Arts. There are sophisticated psycho-biological processes taking which science is now beginning to unpack.

This phenomenon is known by different terms. Psychotherapists describe somatic counter transfer or projective identification. Psychologists know it as somatic empathy.

Empathy

Empathy can be teased apart into somatic and cognitive. When we understand how someone must feel by intellectual deduction, e.g., it must be dreadful to have lost a brother, how awful they must feel, this is **cognitive empathy**. We understand this other person by *analogy*.

When, however, we experience their sadness and loss as a physical, somatic sensation such as a tightness in our chest and shallow breathing with a deep feeling of loss, this is **somatic empathy**. We understand them by *simulation*. It is also sometimes known as affective or sensual empathy.

Social neuroscientists are very interested in how and why we feel what others are feeling. They are publishing research on emotional contagion, interpersonal physiology and brain-to-brain coupling. It turns out that this happens to all of us but that - for most of us - it remains unconscious. As we interact, our emotions, physiology and mental processing come into alignment, forming a reciprocal loose coupling relationship. It is as if our body has conversations with other bodies. It happens between us whether we are lovers or strangers, near or far, over the phone, via zoom, or face to face.

Studies show that synchronising with others starts in the womb. It is essential for the foetus to sync with the mother to prepare for the life into which they will be born. Interpersonal physiological synchrony continues in infancy but now mother and child adjust their autonomic physiology to match each other. Mothers instinctively use this link to soothe their infant. They calm themselves (lower heart and breathing rates) to calm their infant. As we get older, we become more independent of this process but continue to physiologically synchronise with others on a selective basis. Most academics agree we take on the emotional, physiological, and mental processes of others as a means of understanding them. Before language evolved, this was the way we humans understood each other. Somatic empathy is still functional today.

In a therapeutic setting, somatic empathy can be incredibly useful as an authentic reflection of what is going for the client. In non-verbal situations, somatic empathy can even save lives.

Harvard neurologist Joel Salinas is a medical doctor at Massachusetts General Hospital where he specialises in behavioural neurology and neuropsychiatry. He feels what his patients feel. On one of his regular rounds, he received an urgent call to attend a young woman who was acting ‘combative’. This patient had been born with cerebral palsy, could not speak and was now highly distressed, lashing out at nursing staff, sweating, grimacing, and kicking off



blankets. Attendant staff wanted her sedated so needed his prescription, but Joel was experiencing her beads of sweat, her furrowed brow; his own chest was rising and falling too fast, running ahead of his heart rate. He felt a subtle sensation of his shoulder muscles

contracting with each breath, as if he were struggling to get more air. Based on his own physical sensations, he made a rapid clinical decision to run an emergency CT scan of her chest. This scan showed blood clots in her lungs. She was not being combative but fighting for air! His ability to feel precisely what was going on for her without her being able to say how she felt saved her life.

Most of us do not have Joel’s extreme somatic response to others. Scientists estimate that only 2.5% have such intense responses, however we do all have somatic conversations with others mostly beneath our personal awareness. Somatic empathy is normal. If you experience what your clients experience, you are not crazy or particularly special. You are using an ancient intelligence shared widely with other species. ■

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Dr Salinas’s autobiography, *Mirror Touch*



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FIRST IMPRESSIONS

*In our business, making the right first impression matters more than you might think. **Magdalena Vonk** shares how to get it right...*

THERE are many types of client, but ultimately there are only two types that really matter - those who become repeat clients and those who never return. How do you make sure your client returns? There are some things we cannot change easily, but there are plenty of factors that we can influence when it comes to helping a client feel like they've found a therapist they can work with in the long term.

If you think back to when you first started training in holistic therapy, you probably had to offer some free treatments to friends and family, to complete our case studies. I did around 20 during my first course. Did any of them become my client? No! I had no idea how to engage with clients, create a relaxing space or even how to rebook them. I learned all those important things by trial and error.

As a new therapist you have no bad habits. Straight after the theory and practical exam your knowledge is fresh and ready to be utilised. That is a huge bonus - use it! Even if you're an experienced therapist, the last year can be regarded as a chance to start anew.

Advertise your fresh new clean space and talk about your business with a passion. Your business depends on it. This freshness and passion are priceless, and it can be the fuel for your business.



Friends and family clients

If you used friends and family as case studies, make sure you offer them a post case study, follow up treatment with a discounted rate. Start with something that is manageable for them but still covers your costs. This is a good way to practice your skills, become more confident and get used to being paid. Believe it or not being paid is the biggest problem for new therapists and those returning after a break. Learn how to ask and receive money by using rehearsed phrases like "This will be £20. How would you like to pay? Cash or card?" Even better, ask them to pay online via bank transfer, before the treatment, this way you will avoid disappointments of no shows as well as asking for money after the treatment. Friends and family may be great sources of referrals. Make sure you ask your friends to leave a review after their treatment and ask them to share your page with their friends.

Creating an unforgettable experience

People come back to places where they were made to feel special. If your client feels looked after and valued, providing you and they are a right fit, they will come back. How do you achieve this?

Create a beautiful space

As a new business, you may want to spend a lot of money creating a perfect space for your clients. It's better to create a welcoming place with things you already have and allow the income from the business to pay for upgrading your room. Clients will not see the difference between a couch for £50.00 and £250.00, providing the heated towel is on and they are warm enough. There is nothing worse than being cold during a relaxing treatment. Always, make sure your treatment room is warm enough, with plenty of towels and blankets and a quiet fan in summer. When it comes to relaxing sounds, make sure you have several playlists and ask your clients for their preference. Always make sure that the playlist is longer than the length of the session.

Your room does not have to be decorated top to bottom with expensive furnishings. I am working from a space which is closer to a physiotherapy office than a spa, but I manage my client's expectations well. Clients know what to expect from the space, know it is dual use and I work with my personal training clients from the same room, at different booked times. What is most important, clients know the massage therapy space is always their little haven. It is warm, cosy,

relaxing and private.

I have comfortable chairs for consultation and at the end clients will always receive a drink to hydrate and have a moment to compose themselves and slowly come back to their daily life.

Turnaround time

Timing between clients is important. Allowing a longer gap differentiates between good therapists and those who become tired and exhausted. I've worked in spas where the expected break time would be five minutes – this was for one client to leave, cleanse the room and have a toilet break. Do you think it is enough time to do all of these things properly? Something always suffers when we are in a rush, and more often than not, our standards fall.

Your client requires time to get ready and for you to have some time to breathe. Use this time wisely - I strongly advise no "screen time", water and toilet breaks are a must, apply antiperspirant, go outside to get couple of minutes of fresh air and make sure you are ready mentally and physically for your next client.

Timing between clients is important. Allowing a longer gap differentiates between good therapists and those who become tired and exhausted.

Now, more than ever we are encouraged to allow extra time for the room to be cleaned and refreshed this is a good opportunity for you to have a longer break. Use it to your benefit.

Dialogue

On arrival, greet your client and direct them to their treatment space. Allow time for familiarisation with a new room. Explain the treatment set up and timings to them. Make sure your clients' needs are addressed during the treatment, this can be done when you ask your client before the treatment what they want to achieve during the session. A simple question like, "How do you want to feel at the end of

the session?" may be a good way of starting the conversation about the end results. By this point you already should have their intake form (preferably taken online) which would give you their problem areas and any illness that they may have. Once consultation is over, allow your client some quiet time, limit your conversation during the treatment, allow your clients to relax and be mindful about their body. Some clients would require more or less conversation time during the treatment. It is worth keeping an eye (and an ear) on your clients' needs.

Your appearance

A final point but one of the most important ones. You are a walking advertisement for your treatment modality. Make sure you always look fresh and clean. This includes your clothes, shoes, nails and breath. Avoid overpowering perfumes as this can affect some clients and upset the welcoming ambience you've created in your space. ■



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THE MARK OF A PROFESSIONAL

The Federation of Holistic Therapists' Karen Young looks at some simple ways to help you promote your professional status...

WHETHER you are new to the industry or returning to therapy work as we ease our way out of the pandemic, it's important to make a positive impression on your clients. Below are a few suggestions on how to demonstrate your professionalism ...

Professional recognition

Therapy work is very personal by nature and requires a high level of trust on the client's part. Being part of a professional association such as the FHT not only demonstrates that you are appropriately qualified and insured, it shows that you adhere to a strict Code of Conduct and Professional Practice and are accountable for your actions. It will also mean you can access a range of support materials to show off your professional status, including a membership certificate, logo and badge, as well as a directory listing and printed and digital collateral to help promote you and the therapies you practice.

In safe hands

While the majority of clients have been very eager to return to their therapist after the lockdowns, some may still be a little concerned about having close contact with someone other than their immediate family and friends, and particularly if they have a condition that makes them vulnerable. While hygienic practice is of course second nature to professional therapists, be sure to highlight in all of your communications that you adhere to government guidelines for COVID-19 and that protecting your clients' health and safety is at the heart of everything you do.

Scope of practice and your clients' best interests

The mark of a good therapist is sometimes knowing when it's best not to treat a client and having the confidence to refer them on to a more appropriate health professional or service provider. No matter how advanced your training or how experienced you are, there will be times when it is best to signpost a client to their doctor, an allied health professional, or another therapist, charity or support group, because you recognise that their individual needs fall outside of your scope of practice.

Lifelong learning

Continuing professional development (CPD) is a great way of keeping up to date with changes in the industry, honing your skills and learning new ways to support your clients. It is a common misconception that CPD always involves attending a training course or spending lots

of money – reflective practice, case studies, developing a marketing plan and attending local group meetings can also count towards CPD for FHT members (find out more at www.fht.org.uk/cpd or contact your professional association for more information).

Plan in some me-time

Therapy work is incredibly rewarding, but it can also be a little draining, particularly if your work is very physical or involves regularly supporting poorly clients. It is important to take good care of your own physical, mental and emotional wellbeing, in order to be able to truly support others. Telling your clients that you can't see them on a particular day because you are taking some me-time might also help to reinforce the importance of self-care. You may even want to consider supervision or another form of peer support if you work with certain client groups (for example, those receiving palliative or end of life care). ■



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 or call **023 8062 4350**.



Health Practices Must Enable the Hyper-Convenience Mode of Living!



As lives get even busier and more mobile, people want smarter ways of maximising their time. To stay relevant, **health practices must fit seamlessly into people's on-the-move lives** and facilitate service, ensure safety, and drive efficiency for the patient.

During the pandemic, many health practices and clinics used the downtime to evolve and keep up with changing patient expectations for speed and safety. **Moving from a paper-dependent practice to electronic health records with self-service online tools was a big success** for many practices. Their digital transformation enabled practitioners to exchange information with one another remotely and in real time, making sure everyone working with a patient has a complete and accurate file.

Co-founded by psychologist Damien Adler, **Power Diary** has a goal to **empower practice owners and their teams with business-ready, all-in-one software** that makes running a health practice simpler. **With tools to manage schedules, appointment reminders, client databases, waiting lists, invoicing, online bookings, SMS chat, and Telehealth** you can store all the information your practice needs securely online.

Affordable and easy-to-use, it's **perfect for solo-practitioners and multi-location clinics**. Power Diary's automation tools will make running a health practice easier, and help you provide a fuss-free experience for the patient. Isn't that what we practitioners strive to do?

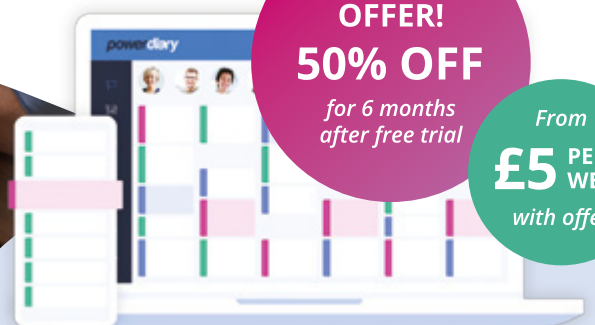
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IS PERSONAL BRANDING REALLY NECESSARY?

Ran Janda explores the benefits and drawbacks of being your own brand...

WHEN you provide a service in exchange for payment, as most holistic therapists do, you essentially become synonymous with your brand. You might think that this would make branding a whole deal easier, you just have to sell yourself, right? In part yes, but it's important not to mix your personal life completely with your professional brand. One place where it is easy to blur the lines of your personal and professional life is online, in particular on social media.

Your brand is how people perceive your business, so take a moment to review your social accounts just now. Are you communicating how you want to be seen?

The fine line

Drawing on your personal experience is a great way to share your story and connect with your audience authentically. Potential clients need to understand what you do and why you came to learn and consequently practice what you do. There is often a unique and interesting story to what has led

many practitioners to do what they do. Sharing your unique story is valuable and invites trust as well as positioning you as an authority in your field.

On the flipside, potential clients do not need to know where you went on holiday or how you celebrated your partners/child's/dog's birthday last week. Sharing this type of information doesn't create value for your practice nor does it create trust in your abilities.

Each social media platform offers the ability to easily create a business page that is completely separate to your personal one and this is something I would strongly suggest every practitioner to do if you haven't already.

Keep it simple

If you're wondering what to post on your business profile if you can't post photos of your dog, these simple guidelines will help to generate ideas for posts which focus on your practice and your unique offering.

You may already have a name for your practice, so that's not something you need to

create. You may also have a logo, if so, great.

A name and logo are all you really need to get started. If you don't have a logo yet, it is easy and free to create one with Wix.com, or you can hire a freelancer to design one for you.

Pick at least one social media platform, such as Instagram or Facebook, to create a business page to develop your professional brand. You will be required to create a bio regardless of the platform and this should highlight exactly what problems you can help with. You can use the following as a guideline to create your bio.

I help _____ (type of person/condition), who are struggling with _____ (problem) and want to _____ (result & feeling).

This bio can also be used on your website under "about me" and as part of your email signature. The main thing to do is to keep it consistent across all platforms so you are strengthening your key message.



Creating a compelling brand story

Answer the following questions and use this information to create a narrative for your professional social pages.

Who are you?

What do you do?

Why does what you do matter to you?

Who are you here to serve?

Answering these questions will also help to keep you on track when creating content for social posts.

Tips for creating effortless content

Decide on how regularly you are able to post and stick with that number. Be consistent. Regular posts will keep you in their mind rather than forgetting who you are.

Always ask yourself each time you create a post, "Am I offering value in some way?" If the answer is yes, great! You are halfway there already.

You can vary and alternate your posts by using the categories below to guide what you write about and to keep your content fresh.

Know, Like & Trust

The type of communication in these posts will be most valuable in the early days when you first launch your business profile. Focus on allowing new visitors to your profile to really get to know you better.

Tell people about why you do what you do. Share your values and purpose to make a connection with people. Think about what makes you stand out from the crowd. Consider how you want your reader to feel when they read your post to check if your message is aligned with the intended effect received.

Engagement

Engagement posts are short, sharp and snappy. Their purpose is to generate engagement such as shares and comments. To encourage engagement, ask questions and ask for responses to be left in the comments. Be specific in what you would like them to do. Always respond to every comment that has been left, if someone is taking the time to engage, they should be acknowledged as they are more likely



to turn into a loyal follower if you do so.

Authority

These posts are about positioning yourself as the expert. There are a number of ways to demonstrate this, such as sharing new research or client success stories anonymously. Focus on content that they can use to improve something in their life and turn them into loyal fans - cheerleader clients who will recommend you when someone complains to them about an issue you are an expert in.

Always respond to every comment that has been left, if someone is taking the time to engage

Think about what you want your reader to know when creating authority posts. What can you share that will make you stand out from the crowd?

Call to action

A call to action (CTA) post encourages the reader to do something specific. Think about framing it

around a story, so if you want someone to book a session with you, share a story about a problem you can help with. Then invite them to book a session if you can support them in a similar way.

This is a more authentic way of booking clients than just putting out a post that reads "Book with me" without any context or reason why they should.

Think about what you want the reader to do in CTA posts and create a story around it before asking the reader to do something.

Never sell your soul

If you are not a natural marketer, the thought of having to manage a business account can feel overwhelming at first. Unless you want to be an influencer, you don't have to sell your soul to create a compelling brand. Once you have a clear brand story, your communication will always be anchored by that and will direct all posts and content that you create, ensuring that you always stay on track.

Remember to focus on the obstacles and problems that your potential clients face. Highlight the solution that you offer. Explain to them what their future will look like after receiving your services and inspire them to take action. ■



RAN JANDA is the founder of Holistic Room, which matches up clients with suitable therapists in their local area. Find out more at www.holisticroom.com.

HEALTH INEQUALITIES

Despite 70 years of the NHS, healthy lifespans, risk of disease and even life expectancy depends on where you live, who your parents were, your education and your bank balance. Understanding health inequalities can help you to reach out to a more socio-economically diverse customer base...

Go back twenty, maybe even ten years, and holistic therapy was very much perceived as a nice lifestyle add on service for women who were mature, relatively well off and had relatively little in the way of serious health problems. The Worried Well, they called them.

Now, with growing evidence that modalities such as yoga, mindfulness and nutrition are fundamental to our health and mental wellbeing, it's time for other holistic therapies to establish themselves as accepted mainstream solutions to some of the UK's lifestyle diseases, improving the health of the nation and helping the most disadvantaged in terms of both mental and physical health to level up.

Each country within the UK publishes their own data on health inequalities, so we will present a range of information in this feature. Much of the data is drawn from national indices of multiple deprivation, which rank neighbourhoods in order of their level of deprivation. The Index of Multiple Deprivation for England is based on seven different domains of deprivation. These are:

- Income Deprivation
- Employment Deprivation
- Education, Skills and Training Deprivation
- Health Deprivation and Disability
- Crime
- Barriers to Housing and Services
- Living Environment Deprivation



Those living in areas of high income, with good employment opportunities and large, comfortable homes and lots of green space, degree or professional level education, low crime rates and low levels of disability and poor health tend to live in the least deprived areas. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation uses similar measures. It should be noted that while Indices of Multiple Deprivation provide information down to small areas of around 700-1200 people, not everyone who lives in a given area will experience the same level of deprivation. In other cases, there are pockets of deprivation next to highly affluent areas.

The level of deprivation affects almost every aspect of life. In England, the gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas is growing. On average, men in the most deprived areas will now die 9.4 years sooner than those in the least deprived areas. This gap was 9 years in 2011 to 2013. The figures for women rose from a gap of 6.9 to 7.6 years. Men living in the least deprived areas of Scotland are likely to live over 13 years longer than those in the most deprived places, while the deprivation gap for women is 10 years. Indeed, life expectancy in Scotland is around two years less than in England and is now the lowest in Western Europe.

The coronavirus pandemic has shown clearly that pre-existing health inequalities have led to a significantly poorer outcome for particular groups of people, including several ethnic minorities and

those from areas of deprivation.

Not only are lives being cut short, but people in the most deprived areas were four times more likely to die prematurely from cardiovascular diseases and 2.2 times more likely to die from cancer than people living in the least deprived areas in 2017 to 2019. The suicide rate in the most deprived areas is almost twice that of the least.

The level of deprivation affects almost every aspect of life. In England, the gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas is growing.

The percentage of children (under 16 years) in relative low income families significantly increased between 2014 to 2015 and 2018 to 2019, from 15.5% to 18.4%. The percentage of children in relative low income families in the most deprived areas of England was 3.2 times higher than in the least deprived areas in 2018 to 2019.

Those with long term health conditions are 10.6% less likely to be employed, compared to the overall employment rate.

Childhood obesity significantly increased in England between 2015 to 2016 and 2019 to 2020. Absolute inequality between children aged 10 to 11 years in the most and least deprived areas also significantly increased from 16.2 percentage points in 2015 to 2016 to 17.2 in 2019 to 2020. Inequality between ethnic groups has widened in both children aged 4 to 5 and 10 to 11 years.

Even diseases that we largely think of as a thing of the past are found in the most deprived areas. Tuberculosis is 5.3 times more common in the most deprived areas. NHS figures for malnutrition as a factor in hospitalisation are reported regionally, but, using the North West as an example, rates for most age groups increased significantly between 2008-9 and 2018-19. Admissions for those aged 20-29 rose from 20 to 265, while figures for the 50-59 year olds increased from 60 to 330 and the over 80s were also noticeably more likely to be diagnosed as malnourished, with figures rising from 85 to 660.

Those living in areas of marked deprivation are more likely to be obese, with rates growing amongst children. Deprived areas are often food deserts, with families forced into choosing cheap, processed high fat foods just to survive. GPs are reporting rickets anecdotally in Manchester, the East End of London, Birmingham and the West Midlands.



Often, the worst affected areas are former heavy industrial areas which offered employment for working class men who often left school at fourteen or fifteen and immediately joined their fathers, uncles and brothers in the steel works, mine or factory. Mass redundancy leads to a drop in incomes and a dearth of employment opportunities that often lasts for several generations. People lose hope and depression and other mental health issues, coupled with rising alcoholism, poor food, domestic violence and substance abuse, all contribute towards an environment that makes lifestyle diseases more prevalent.

A new report published this May by the International Longevity Centre UK (ILC), drawing on a research project led by Newcastle University, found that ill health and disability have been on the rise in recent decades, while the proportion of life spent in good health has declined.

In 2019, the UK Government set a target to deliver five additional years of healthy life for all by 2035, which was confirmed in the Conservative Party manifesto ahead of the 2019 general election and reaffirmed in a speech by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care in February 2020.

There was already scepticism that these goals could be achieved ahead of the pandemic and they're now likely to be re-evaluated as indicated

in the Government's response to a recent House of Lords committee inquiry into the feasibility of the target.

Those living in areas of marked deprivation are more likely to be obese, with rates growing amongst children.

It's clear that urgent action is needed to invest in preventative health interventions, such as vaccinations, screening and early detection of disease, alongside a greater focus on targeting under-served communities most affected by the pandemic. Holistic therapy can and should be included in the toolkit available to achieve this.

Dr Brian Beach, Senior Research Fellow at ILC and report author, explained, "Increased longevity is a success story, but the opportunities that stem from this will not be maximised if the extra years are spent in poor health or with increased levels of disability and dependency. Our report reinforces the lessons that have been made stark through the course of the pandemic – that socioeconomic inequalities remain prevalent, with the least advantaged members of society suffering from worse outcomes. A key finding

here is how the most advantaged have seen improvements while the least advantaged saw little change."

"As the UK moves into recovery from COVID-19, political pledges to 'build back better' will only be fulfilled if policies actively reduce the kinds of inequalities that have grown since the financial crisis over a decade ago."

Health inequalities are ultimately about differences in the status of people's health. But the term is also commonly used to refer to differences in the care that people receive and the opportunities that they have to lead healthy lives, both of which can contribute to their health status.

Some of these inequalities stem from the way different groups of people are treated when they approach a doctor for treatment. Women with endometriosis will, on average, take eight years before being given a diagnosis, since many doctors dismiss such conditions as being, "all in the head". This March, the European Society of Cardiology reported that women having a cardiac arrest are less likely than men to receive help. 26% of men will reach the hospital alive compared to only 18% of women. Even drug prescription rates vary depending on factors such as socio-economic class and gender. For example, Greater London doctors prescribe 21% fewer antibiotics than the North. The data also reveals that the most deprived coastal towns in Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Essex are prescribing the most antibiotics in the country, with Clacton-on-Sea, the UK's most deprived area, prescribing antibiotics at almost twice the national average. Prescription rates peak in December, suggesting that some doctors prescribe antibiotics for things like cold and flu even though the drugs have no effect on these viral diseases. In effect, the disadvantaged are being fobbed off with antibiotics as a placebo treatment, which then wipes out their gut microbiome, leading to imbalances and further issues. In terms of mental health, data from NHS Digital shows that 70.9 million prescriptions for antidepressants were given out in 2018, compared with 36 million in 2008. Those with higher socio-economic status are more likely to be referred for counselling compared to disadvantaged groups. Even the diagnosis may vary according to the patient's gender and access to health services. Women are more likely to be diagnosed with depression while men with

the same systems are said to be stressed, while women are either offered HRT or told to put up with it when facing the menopause depending on their location and socio-economic profile.

Groups with particular protected characteristics, such as those with disabilities, those from ethnic minorities, trans people and homosexuals can experience health inequalities over and above the general and pervasive relationship between socio-economic status and health. Geography may also play a part. For example, for any given level of deprivation, life expectancy in the North of England is lower than in the South, while women living in Camden can expect to live an average of seven years longer than those in the most deprived areas of Manchester.

Across the UK, there is a systematic relationship between deprivation and life expectancy, known as the social gradient in health. Importantly, this social gradient relationship holds true across the whole population – health inequalities are experienced by everyone, not just those at the very bottom of the scale. Two important measures of the amount of time that people spend in good health are 'healthy life expectancy' and 'disability-free life expectancy'. The former estimates time spent in 'good' or 'very good' health, based on how people perceive their general health. The latter estimates, again based on self-reported assessment, time spent without conditions or illnesses that limit people's ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

Inequalities in both healthy life expectancy and disability-free life expectancy are even wider than inequalities in life expectancy. People in more deprived areas spend, on average, a far greater part of their already far shorter lives in poor health.

The gap in healthy life expectancy at birth is stark. In 2015–17, people in the least deprived areas could expect to live roughly 19 more years in good health than those in the most deprived areas. People in the most deprived areas spend around a third of their lives in poor health, twice the proportion spent by those in the least deprived areas. Much of this poor health is caused by chronic conditions and lifestyle diseases and there is considerable evidence to show that a range of holistic therapies can ameliorate or reverse many of the symptoms associated with these diseases, but there are several barriers

to access including awareness, shortages of qualified practitioners and funding. There are particular shortages in nutritional services and dietetics and psychological counselling services, which can mean a wait of over six months for an initial appointment. While social prescribing for obesity, anxiety and depression is becoming more common, it is nowhere near mainstream and the benefits of some holistic therapies are held to be questionable. It is often easier to prescribe pills and hope the patient goes away than to direct them to person-centred treatments.

This lack of access to appropriate support means that almost one in four deaths in the UK is classified as avoidable, meaning that the death could have been averted or delayed through timely, appropriate healthcare or wider health interventions. That meant that 140,000 people died unnecessarily in 2017. Cancers were the leading cause, followed by cardiovascular diseases, injuries, respiratory diseases and drug misuse.

In England, in 2017, males in the most deprived areas were 4.5 times more likely to die from an avoidable cause than males in the least deprived areas. Females in the most deprived

areas were 3.9 times more likely to die from an avoidable cause than those in the least deprived areas. Blackpool had the highest rate at 318.0 per 100,000, more than two and a half times higher than the lowest area, which was Rutland at 118.9 per 100,000.

Long-term conditions are one of the major causes of poor quality of life in the UK. More than half of people with a long-term condition see their health as a barrier to the type or amount of work that they can do, rising to more than 80% when someone has three or more conditions. This means that, on top of their direct impact on health status, long-term conditions also have an indirect impact on health, given the importance of being in good-quality work for an individual's physical and mental health. It also means that those with long-term conditions which might benefit from holistic treatments are less likely to be able to afford them. Deprivation also increases the likelihood of having more than one long-term condition at the same time, and on average people in the most deprived fifth of the population develop multiple long-term conditions 10 years earlier than those in the least deprived fifth.





Evidence suggests that inequalities in various types of mental ill-health exist across a range of protected characteristics, including sexual orientation, sex and ethnicity. People in the United Kingdom who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT), for example, experience higher rates of poor mental health, including depression, anxiety and self-harm, than those who do not identify as LGBT.

Women are more likely than men to report experiencing a common mental health disorder, with one in five women reporting symptoms compared to one in eight men. The gap between women and men was particularly wide among young people, and young women experienced higher rates of reported self-harm and positive screening for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) than men of the same age. Both alcohol and drug dependence were found to be twice as likely in men as in women.

Inequitable access can result in particular groups receiving less care relative to their needs, or more inappropriate or sub-optimal care, than others, which often leads to poorer experiences, outcomes and health status. Access

to the full range of services that can have an impact on health includes access to preventive interventions and social services, as well as primary and secondary health care.

More deprived areas tend to have fewer GPs per head and lower rates of admission to elective care than less deprived areas, despite having a higher disease burden. They also tend to have less access to holistic therapy providers, as practice rooms tend to be located in areas that are easily accessible to a paying customer base.

Women are more likely than men to report experiencing a common mental health disorder, with one in five women reporting symptoms compared to one in eight men.

Different social groups might also have different experiences in terms of the quality of care they receive and whether they are treated with dignity and respect. Surveys show that patients who identified as black reported lower levels of satisfaction with the NHS (44 per cent said they were satisfied) than respondents who identified as White (58 per cent).

People's behaviour is a major determinant of how healthy they are. Public Health England's 2020–25 strategy identifies smoking, poor diet, physical inactivity and high alcohol consumption as the four principal behavioural risks to people's health. Behavioural risks to health are more common in some parts of the population than in others. The distribution is patterned by measures of deprivation, income, gender and ethnicity, and risks are concentrated in the most disadvantaged groups. For example, smoking prevalence in the most deprived fifth of the population is 28%, compared to 10% in the least deprived fifth. Furthermore, evidence suggests that some people's circumstances make it harder for them to move away from unhealthy behaviours, particularly if they are worse off in terms of a range of wider socio-economic factors such as debt, housing or poverty. This is compounded by differences in the environments in which people live, with deprived areas having nine times less access to green space and less access to healthy food at affordable prices Blackpool, for example, has more than five times as many fast food outlets per head of population than Sevenoaks in Kent.

So what can holistic therapists do to help? Obviously lobbying at a governmental level by membership associations is key to providing access to holistic treatments under the NHS service umbrella. As individuals, talking to local GP surgeries, gyms, mental health organisations, social work and health promotions departments may result in referrals and help provide access from a wider demographic. Some training schools offer treatments by supervised students at low or no costs which could be focussed on deprived areas. Several holistic centres offer reductions in treatment prices for those who cannot afford it, while others periodically offer a free treatment to those nominated.

The pandemic has laid health inequalities bare. If we really want to "Build Back Better", then holistic therapies must be recognised as an essential part of that process. ■



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SHOULD YOU SPECIALISE OR DIVERSIFY?

As holistic therapists become more experienced, they face a choice between focussing their skills in one area or practicing several modalities. Which is the right path for you?

OVER the last year, many holistic therapists have had cause to re-examine their service portfolio. Hands-on services were banned, therapy rooms closed for months at a time and clients scared of resuming treatment. Some were fortunate in that they found ways of practicing online, but those who specialised in bodywork were devastated. As we become more experienced, most holistic therapists continue to take training courses and add new skills, either at a more advanced level in their existing modality, or by branching out into a new one. For some therapists, the choice will be a relatively simple one. They will follow the path that interests them most. Following your gut instinct can often pay off in terms of less tangible benefits, but may not be so rewarding financially. Given the lessons of the pandemic, it may make more sense to consider a greater number of factors before deciding if you will gain expertise in one modality or many.

Why specialise?

Specialising offers the chance to gain advanced skills and learn new techniques in your chosen modality. You should be able to charge a premium for your services and could find a niche market where you are known and increasingly valued for your expertise. Examples might include a massage therapist choosing to specialise in scar work or equine massage. Specialising could offer additional income streams such as offering training, writing books or running workshops or similar events. You may also get referrals from other holistic therapists. Theoretically, you could find a lucrative niche with clients travelling considerable distances for your services and with few competitors.

Why diversify?

Diversifying into a range of modalities means you have a wider skill base, rather than a high level of skill in a single modality. This can be a godsend should you develop an injury, or if other circumstances mean you cannot practice in one field. This can be a particularly good tactic if some of your treatments can be offered online, particularly if another lockdown occurs. It's also a good option if you don't live in a major city and can draw on a relatively small number of potential clients. It allows you to add lesser known modalities that interest you, with the ability to offer

your clients a more tailored package of treatments.

Things to consider

Unless you feel compelled to follow a training path in one particular area, it makes sense to do some research before investing in a new or enhanced skill set.

Remember that there may be costs associated with training, such as travel and accommodation, books and materials, equipment and disposables, childcare and lost business. These add up and can often outweigh the course fees. Online training may be less costly and might fit round your other commitments more easily, especially if it allows you to learn at your own pace.

You'll also need to factor in the duration of training. In general, there's a linear relationship between the training period and the point at which you are allowed to practice and the level of skill to be acquired. So, you can earn almost immediately if the course is half a day or a day long, whereas you may need to wait a year or two on some intensive courses such as medical herbalism or acupuncture. Can you afford the drop in income while you train? How quickly can you make up your outlay and reach profitability on your investment in training.

You'll also need to check whether your new training is covered under your existing insurance policy, or whether your policy will need to be amended. This should be done before choosing a course, as there is no point spending money on a course that you cannot get insurance to practice. Check if your insurance provider and the appropriate membership organisation accepts the course as properly accredited.

It's also a good option if you don't live in a major city and can draw on a relatively small number of potential clients.

Similarly, there will be a different rate of return on different training courses. By this we mean that your course fees and all associated costs represent an investment. Unless you are simply learning out of professional interest, you will need to see a return on that investment, in the form of being able to charge more because you have specialised, or, if you've diversified into an

additional modality, in the form of being able to take on a new set of clients who require that form of treatment. You will also need to keep in mind that if your business model is predicated on selling your time, you will only have so many appointment slots available each week. On a practical level, this means you may want to devote certain days or time periods to one modality, rather than chop and change from one to another during the day.

Some treatments are more profitable than others, but may also have a greater marketing cost associated with them. You'll need to factor in how well known your chosen modality is. Have many people heard of it? If it's a treatment named after the person who came up with the modality, or it's a treatment which is not well known in the UK, but is common practice in other countries, you may need to factor in the cost of letting people know about your new modality, using advertising, leaflets, your website etc. It can take longer to build up a customer base in a lesser known modality, but, conversely, as there are fewer practitioners, it means that people may be willing to seek you out from further afield. This may have an impact on your working hours depending on the size of the population centre you practice in.

The social demographics of the potential customer base also needs to be factored in when deciding whether to specialise or diversify. For example, training in equine massage makes little sense if you live on a Hebridean island with few horses, or the centre of Birmingham, but could be a savvy business decision if you live near horse racing stables. It's worth checking out the social demographics of your sphere of influence (this is the distance clients would be willing to travel to see you) and other holistic therapists who practice within this area.

It may be, for example, that there are many massage therapists, but none who specialise in pregnancy and baby massage, or you may find that you live in an area with an aging population and could look to diversify into therapies which are of particular benefit to older people.

Ultimately, whether you choose to become ever more skilled in one particular modality, or to spread your net wider, training in several modalities, to capture a wider clientele, you should do your research carefully before choosing your path. If the numbers stack up and the qualification is suitably accredited and your personal interest all align, then go for it. ■

WHY YOU SHOULD SWITCH YOUR PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP TO COMPLEMENTARY HEALTH PROFESSIONALS



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JOURNEYS:

Rachel Eten

One day, I hope to create a sanctuary for these wonderful plants and space for people to connect with them

Rachel Eten shares her journey from international modelling to producing her own herbal infusions in Kentucky...

I was born and raised in a small town in Kentucky where my first loves were fashion, the theatre and dancing in my mother's dance studio. I attended the School for Creative and Performing Arts for a few years which broadened my outlook. While I was there, my mother got very sick. After reaching out to many allopathic doctors, she found healing after connecting with a chiropractor who was qualified in Neuro Emotional Technique (NET). She switched her diet according to his recommendation and soon found relief and, a few months later, healing.

As a nine year old, I loved her discovery of holistic health and whole, clean foods. I'd read her library books about the body's pH balance and candida diets. I'd keep her company on her diets and eat whatever she was eating. This was my first experience with the natural world.

A couple years later I got scouted by a local modelling agency in Cincinnati and was soon working in LA, New York, Miami, Bangkok and London. I grew roots in NY where I spent the rest of my modelling career and married a wonderful man from my home town. When we moved back to Kentucky to raise a family, I was filled with a dream to help my

community find true health.

We soon had a little boy named Ari Rocket who lives up to his name! We spend time together foraging and snacking on weeds out of the yard. I feel it's important to help the next generation connect with our sacred earth. As a family, we are regulars at our chiropractors including the doctor that helped my mom find healing when I was a child. Clean water and food are always important as well as a strong spiritual connection. We believe being kissed by the sun, light exercise and rest are also part of a healthy lifestyle. Incorporating herbs into our life is the icing on the cake!

With certifications in Herbalism and as a Holistic Health Practitioner, I started making Elderberry Syrup at home. Word got out and I was getting so many orders that I needed either to start a business or give it up. I decided to dream big and we became Garden of Eten, a herbalism company specializing in organic, biologically grown and wild crafted botanicals which grow locally in the Greater Cincinnati Area. Elderberry Syrup is a fan favourite but we also have Wild Cider, which is similar to a master tonic, teas, skincare, and herbal extracts called Drunken Botanicals.

We use locally grown and foraged ingredients wherever possible and teach about these beautiful plants through in person classes, and content on our private Facebook group. I also co-host a natural living podcast with some local natural moms called *Cocktails in the Organic Aisle*.

I've grown so much while building up this business. I'm passionate about marketing, brand representation and product development, but have to make myself focus on organisation, book keeping and finding my work life balance.

One day, I hope to create a sanctuary for these wonderful plants and space for people to connect with them. A forest resort of some kind to create a safe place for rest, education and healing. Until then I will continue to do what I do best, be the gatekeeper who welcomes people into health through Garden of Eten. ■



To find out more about Rachel and her products please visit www.gardenofeten.com.

DISCOVERING THE FELDENKRAIS METHOD®

*Dr. Staffan Elgelid and
Chris Kresge, editors of
The Feldenkrais Method:
Learning through Movement,
introduce this educational
method focusing on learning
and movement, which
can bring about improved
movement and enhanced
functioning...*

Feldenkrais is named after its originator, Moshe Feldenkrais (1904-1984), an engineer and physicist as well as a Judo teacher.

The Feldenkrais Method® approach combines movement, breathing and body alignment in a context of mindfulness. It offers a unique and practical way to realise physical and mental potential more fully. It is not just pushing muscles around, but changing things in the brain itself so that the patient can gradually adjust his whole muscular dysfunction to what we call a normal image. The Feldenkrais Method® transmits the image and you organise your brain to meet it.

There are two main ways to learn about The Feldenkrais Method® and to explore its benefits: The first is in lessons, which Feldenkrais named Awareness Through Movement sessions. A qualified teacher takes a small group through a sequence of movements, some of them unusual or unaccustomed, so that participants can explore a movement journey and

then use their increased awareness to release chronic patterns of tension and to create new movement possibilities. As an alternative or addition, individual one-to-one Functional Integration sessions involve a teacher working with an individual to explore new ways of moving, addressing particular habits and increasing self-awareness. Feldenkrais Method® classes are responsive to individual needs and can improve the quality of life for people with a range of mental and physical health conditions.

The Feldenkrais Method® can help with chronic back problems, repetitive strain injury (RSI), tension and stress. There is also evidence of it helping with neurological

conditions such as multiple sclerosis, the symptoms of a stroke and cerebral palsy. There are over 120 Feldenkrais Method® practitioners across the UK who are all members of The Feldenkrais Guild UK.

Jeff Healy shares a Feldenkrais case study

When people come to my office for relief from pain from physical or emotional wounding, they are bearing the weight of the life they have confronted and lived in. They don't know that they really come to me to improve the quality of their life but often become increasingly aware of the underlying issues that affect their well-being. I worked with Beverly, a strong, athletic woman in her early 50s who had played soccer her entire adult life. She was experiencing severe knee pain because her lower leg was angled significantly outward and her foot was unable to support her knee when standing.

*The Feldenkrais
Method® can help with
chronic back problems,
repetitive strain injury
(RSI), tension and stress.*



She walked with a pronounced limp; each time she stood on her leg, her weight dropped into her knee. She could not find a clear path of support from the floor up through her skeleton. Each step was painful.

Beverly was falling and shearing across her knee, which had been damaged through years of playing soccer. Pain, a product of the brain, was trying to protect her from further harm, but she was overriding the pain to play soccer. During our first lesson, I helped her learn how to organise herself so that her skeleton could support her more clearly. Afterward, she was able to walk around my office, and for most of the next week she walked without significant discomfort. In our second lesson (the sessions are called lessons because as Feldenkrais practitioners we create the environment for learning and acquiring new functional behaviour), she was even more clearly capable of finding support through her leg. No pain was attached to the movement of walking.

She had experienced two weeks of relief, so she decided to return to the soccer field and play an 80-minute game. Not surprisingly, she returned to my office in agony. I helped her regain her integrated sense of wholeness, support, and composure. When she sat up, her face was bright and open, the pain that had etched her face supplanted by calmness. She looked at me and said, "This is the happiest I have ever been in my life."

When my students initially come for lessons, I ask them to imagine the future. If they keep doing what they're doing, what will their quality of life be like in five years' time, or in 25 years?

Happiness and a sense of peace had been uncovered from within her. And then she said, "But playing soccer is such a pleasure for me. I would hate to give it up." No doubt being embodied and playing with a team is a great experience and easy to identify with as a source of pleasure. It is easy to have these experiences

become our self-worth, and this reward has been derived from an external source. We see, in this instant, two paradigms of living life before us.

In one, we utilise outcomes driven by our will and conditioning as a basis of self-worth. In the other – the road less travelled, but deeply sought after and yearned for by many – is learning how to care for our most essential nature, to care for ourselves. For some, to give up the "pleasure" of their activities is too much. Others realise that their injury has been a part of their path into the inner domain and dimensions of self-realisation and self-worth that are based on who they essentially are, not on what they can produce. This is the very nature of the midlife crisis for the self-made person, who looks back at their life and asks, "Is this all there is?"



When my students initially come for lessons, I ask them to imagine the future. If they keep doing what they're doing, what will their quality of life be like in five years' time, or in 25 years?

Everyone – especially those in pain who come to me as a last resort – can see their fate and the trajectory they are on. Unless they experience a new intervention that helps them with how they function in life, something that creates a new way for to utilise their own natural inherent way of learning, they will be relegated to the predictable outcomes of their conditioned way of acting.

As a means to recover from our injuries, most of us participate in currently accepted modes of physical training and therapeutic exercises. These are for the most part prescriptive, repetitive directives that don't necessarily lead to changes in behaviour. A key ingredient of the Feldenkrais Method is that a student learns clear new patterns of action, movement, and support that are more efficient and effective for acting in gravity and in society. ■

DR STAFFAN ELGELID, PT, PHD, GCFP, C-IAYT, RYT-500, NBC-HWC, is a professor of physical therapy at Nazareth College in Rochester, NY. He is also a Certified Feldenkrais Practitioner and yoga therapist. Find out more at www.somatologik.com

CHRISH KRESGE, GCFP, has been teaching the Feldenkrais Method of somatic education for over 20 years all over the world. She is also an actor, theatre producer, and director. Find out more at www.Chrishkresge.com

Learn more about Feldenkrais and discover training programmes at The Feldenkrais Guild UK <http://www.feldenkrais.co.uk/>





The influence of

Vitamin C

ON SOFT AND HARD TISSUES

Jordi Mascio looks at the ways Vitamin C affects the formation and performance of hard and soft tissues in the body...

WE'VE long been aware that the body's physiological and biochemical processes require some micronutrients like minerals and vitamins. Among water soluble vitamin category, Vitamin C (L-Ascorbic Acid) plays important roles in homeostasis and metabolism and affect both soft and hard tissues of the body.

Our bones and teeth are considered hard tissues while those which surround other organs and play the function of connectivity and support are soft tissues. These include connective tissues, adipose

tissues, tendons and nerves, blood vessels and muscles as well as the heart.

A third of our total body proteins is collagen. Collagen is the major protein in hard and soft tissues like bones and teeth, skin, cartilage, tendons, heart valves, blood vessels, eye muscles, cornea, and inter vertebral discs. Collagen holds us together.

In view of its wider effects on normal functioning of soft and hard tissues, therapeutically, higher doses of Vitamin C have been used to treat and prevent many diseases like common cold, atherosclerosis, cardiac issues including stroke, retinopathy, cataract, glaucoma and cancer, so understanding the impact of Vitamin C is important.

The effects of Vitamin C on soft tissues

Vitamin C is important in biosynthesis and maintenance of collagen due to its strong anti-oxidant properties. It acts as a cofactor in hydroxylation and optimises the activation of mono-oxygenase and hydroxylase enzymes which are required for collagen formation.

During wound healing, for example, in burns, after surgery or as a result of skin and musculoskeletal injuries, the synthesis and buildup of collagen leads to cross linking of fibres which gives strength to the damaged tissues. Several studies have shown that vitamin C improves the wound healing and regeneration process of soft tissues at recommended doses of 500mg - 1g/day.

Vitamin C helps not only by healing mechanical injuries but also by preventing injuries originating from tissue degeneration due to oxidative stress. For instance, a recent study showed that high-dose vitamin C can prevent rotator cuff degeneration caused by oxidative damage. In 2018, a study on rats showed that high-dose vitamin C speeds up tendon healing, especially in the late phase, whereas a systematic review and meta-analysis from the same year showed promising results in almost every aspect, including oxidative damage and healing time. Vitamin C, therefore, could help bodyworkers restore clients with conditions like Tennis Elbow to health more quickly.

Research data has shown association between metabolism of fats and Vitamin C that its deficiency can cause dyslipidemia, hypercholesterolemia, atherosclerosis, accumulation of cholesterol in the aorta and both pathological and morphological changes in vascular system.

We know that Vitamin C supplementation improves dyslipidemia by lowering Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL) and increasing High Density Lipoprotein (HDL) and thus lowers the chances of Coronary Artery Disease (CAD). Vitamin C protects against harmful effects of oxidative changes - peroxidation and oxidative modification - in LDL. It also strengthens the arteries by collagen synthesis and preventing the unnecessary adhesion of leukocytes on the damaged walls of blood vessels. This interaction of leukocytes and endothelial cells of blood vessels is initiated by smoking or oxidized LDL and results into atherosclerosis.

Therapeutically, Vitamin C cannot cure existing atherosclerosis, but it can prevent vascular inflammation due to dysfunctional endothelial cells in blood vessels that develop atherosclerosis.

Furthermore, the proliferation and expression of collagen type IV in endothelial cells and limitation of growth inhibition of endothelial cells by tumor necrosis factor, such as TNF induced apoptosis, are associated with antioxidant property of Vitamin C. This was observed in a UK based study that higher doses of vitamin C are associated with lower mortality due to Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) in the female. This can be attributed to baseline cholesterol level, the age of the patient, gender and regimen of Vitamin C. The elderly are more responsive to Vitamin C therapy.

Although there is no conclusive evidence, some studies suggest that highest doses of Vitamin C can reduce the risk of stroke by half as compared to low doses and prevent CHD.

Higher doses of Vitamin C have been found promote the shrinkage of tumours in some types of non-hormonal cancer.

Hormonal cancers include those of the breast, cervix, rectum, pancreas, oesophagus, stomach and mouth. This can be attributed to involvement of Vitamin C in different synthetic and biochemical processes. Research based evidence showed lower risk of non-hormonal cancers is linked with high intake of Vitamin C. Most recent research is based on the effects of dose of Vitamin C on development and progression of tumor and underlying anti-cancer mechanisms. High doses of Vitamin C in terminal cancerous patients improve quality of life and can reduce the mortality rate when given by intravenous route which increases the plasma concentration seventy times more than the oral route. It is evident that plasma concentration is directly related to the response/treatment effectiveness.

Hard tissues: bones and teeth

Bones are living tissues, structurally made up of collagen and calcium phosphate. Teeth do not contain any living cells and are made of enamel that is also composed of calcium phosphate, dentin and cementum. Bone and tooth health are important markers of general health and play a critical role in maintaining good quality of life.

As a co-factor for enzymes like lysine and proline hydroxylases, Vitamin C is important

in biosynthesis of collagen by stabilising the tertiary structure of collagen i.e. trabecular bone formation by influencing expression of bone matrix genes in osteoblasts. In some studies on humans, it is reported that cell growth and mRNA expression can be stimulated for collagen type 3 in osteoblasts and bone marrow mesenchymal stem cells by a long acting Vitamin C derivative. Similarly, analysis of several epidemiological studies and genetic mouse models regarding the effect of vitamin C showed a positive effect on bone health.

As an antioxidant agent, Vitamin C plays important role in enhancing bone healing because free oxygen radicals impair the bone healing. Deficiency of Vitamin C decreases the bone density and associated with hip bone fracture in elderly.

Several studies show that inadequate dietary vitamin C intake is independently associated with periodontitis. Periodontal diseases are caused by anaerobes and result in damage of tissues due to complex interaction between invading pathogens and body immunity. Deficiency of Vitamin C causes decreased formation of collagen as a major matrix component of dentin, as well as low immunity, increased permeability of oral mucosa to endotoxins and also the mobility of polymorphonuclear leukocytes. This all results in degenerative changes in soft and hard tissues and reduced chemotactic response. Plaque and decayed tooth are also associated with deficiency of Vitamin C. Several known risk factors, such as smoking, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases, and other diseases like Alzheimer's disease, which influence periodontal disease, are also related to vitamin C deficiency. ■



JORDI MASCI has more than

14 years' experience in the Bio

Medical industry both in highly technical positions and in distribution and managing

roles. He holds an MSc in Bio Medical

engineering and an MSc in Molecular

Physics. He provides courses and seminars

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SELENIUM AND COENZYME Q10: KEY MICRONUTRIENTS *for longevity*

Bjørn Falck Madsen shares the latest studies on the benefits that selenium and coenzyme Q10 offer as we age...

WE all know that abundantly youthful person who has reached retirement age, yet has the energy of a 25-year-old. What's the secret? Well, to be honest, it has a lot to do with hereditary factors. We are all different and some people have been dealt a better genetic hand than others and age at a slower rate. Nonetheless, there are different things you can do to pull the brake on your own age-related physical decline. Besides the obvious – don't smoke, eat a balanced diet, exercise, and avoid weight gain – you should make sure to get the micronutrients your body needs to maintain all the biological functions that are essential for staying healthy. Some of these

nutrients have an enormous influence on our physical well-being.

Selenium and coenzyme Q10

Although we humans depend on regular intake of a dozen or more vitamins and minerals, there are two specific nutrients that have become the focus of attention over the past decade, at least when it comes to good health in old age. One is a trace element called selenium. The other is coenzyme Q10, a vitamin-like compound that the body uses to produce energy inside our cells. In combination, the two appear to pack a serious punch in terms of longevity. Science has known for many years that both selenium and coenzyme Q10 have unique properties of their own.

What is new, however, is that they support one another and work as a team.

Why we may need supplements as we age

We tend to eat less when we age. We don't have the same need for calories, simply because we are less active. Unless you plate up properly, the only way to get those essential micronutrients is to take supplements. A large Swedish study that was published in *International Journal of Cardiology* in 2013 actually demonstrated that daily supplementation with selenium yeast and high-quality coenzyme Q10 did in fact help seniors maintain good cardiac health and longevity.

Blood samples are useful health barometers

In the KiSel-10 study, 443 apparently healthy men and women aged 70-88 years were randomly assigned either

daily supplementation with 200 mg of coenzyme Q10 (Bio-Qinon Q10) and 200 micrograms of selenium yeast (SelenoPrecise) or a matching placebo. The intervention period was four years. Blood samples were collected at regular intervals from both the active treatment group and the placebo group, providing useful information about a person's condition and serve as a highly reliable health barometer. The research team tracked levels of biomarker compounds that are known to go up when the body is struggling or when there is chronic low-grade inflammation or other problems.

The difference between the two groups was staggering. There were 54% fewer cardiovascular deaths in the group that took selenium and coenzyme Q10. Essentially, this means they lived longer than the participants in the other group. What is more, the supplemented seniors had substantially stronger hearts, something which the researchers measured using ultrasound to measure the hearts muscle's contractile strength. They were also able to study levels of NT-proBNP, a protein that the heart muscle produces in increased amounts when working under duress. Having lower levels of this compound means that the heart functions better and has greater capacity and this was exactly what they found in the supplemented group.

Q10 in chronic heart failure

It is not the first time that coenzyme Q10 has demonstrated its heart-boosting properties. In the placebo-controlled, double-blind Q-Symbio study that was published in 2014 in the science journal *JAAC Heart Failure*, daily supplementation with 300 mg of Bio-Qinon Q10 for two years had a profound effect on a large group of patients with chronic heart failure. The researchers found that the mortality rate in the Q10-supplemented group dropped by 43% as compared to the placebo group. What is more, the Q10 supplements boosted cardiac strength

to the point where some of the patients, who were otherwise confined to their homes due to lack of strength and energy, could suddenly move around without feeling exhausted. Their quality of life had improved by leaps and bounds.

Selenium and healthspan

In terms of selenium, interesting research has emerged from a team of scientists working at the Orentreich Foundation for the Advancement of Science (OFAS), Cold Spring, New York, US. One of the proven methods of increasing healthspan (the period of healthy lifespan) in many organisms is to restrict dietary intake of an amino acid called methionine. This causes a decrease in the amounts of an energy-regulating hormone called IGF-1. In a recent study, the OFAS scientists aimed to develop a type of intervention that delivers the same benefits as methionine restriction at the same time as allowing to eat a normal, unrestricted diet. Selenium was tested for that purpose on young mice and the researchers found dramatically reduced levels of IGF-1 in the mice that got a selenium supplement.

There are many other factors involved in boosting longevity and remaining energetic and vital in old age.

The scientists fed the mice one of three high-fat diets: A control diet with typical amounts of methionine, a methionine-restricted diet, and a diet with typical levels of methionine but combined with selenium. Adding selenium apparently offered complete protection against the weight

increase and fat accumulation observed in the mice from the control group. What is more, levels of IGF-1 dropped in the selenium group. Interestingly, the Swedish scientists behind the above-mentioned KiSel-10 study have also looked at IGF-1 in one of the 18 additional studies that have been published in the wake of the original trial. By looking at the more than 50,000 blood samples that were collected during the four-year intervention period, the scientists could see that levels of IGF-1 were significantly lower in the group that got the selenium yeast and the coenzyme Q10 capsules. IGF-1 is a biomarker of inflammation and increased levels are thought to be a warning sign of cardiovascular problems.

Selenium and coenzyme Q10 are only part of the equation. There are many other factors involved in boosting longevity and remaining energetic and vital in old age. Still, there is solid scientific evidence in favour of these two compounds so it makes perfect sense for ageing people to consider them as part of their daily regimen for more energy, better health, and increased quality of life. ■



BJØRN FALCK MADSEN

is a freelance journalist and a health and medical writer with a particular interest in the fascinating world of micronutrients and their impact on human health and quality of life. For a considerable number of years, Bjørn has written articles about diet, nutritional supplements, and disease prevention for magazines and websites in a number of European countries.

A portrait of Blair Norfolk, a man with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a grey patterned suit jacket over a white shirt and a dark tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

Blair

BEHIND THE BUSINESS:

Norfolk

Meet *Blair Norfolk*, founder and CEO of Activated Probiotics...

AS the son of a food chemist, I always found experiments exciting. My father and I would spend late nights in the kitchen working on science projects that the next day I'd proudly share with my peers. After university, I moved to London. The city was a revelation to me, an exciting multicultural and diverse melting pot which would lead me on many adventures, entrepreneurial pursuits and eventually into the world of biotechnology and clinical research.

The people I met along this journey, not only

opened my eyes to my current purpose in life, but, as a collective, inspired me to want to make change, improve not only my own quality of life but also work toward helping others achieve the same.

My journey took its most recent turn in founding Activated Probiotics, a practitioner-only natural medicine brand, backed by gold standard clinical research. I knew that with Activated Probiotics I could not only help people live healthier lives, I could also share my new-found knowledge on the gut-microbiome through educating medical practitioners and health experts the world over.

Building a business means I do work very long hours. The majority of my spare time goes to my wife and little girl. Outside of that, it's usually spent reading; books, studies, clinical trials, forever learning and searching for innovation. Often 'time on' and 'time off' is blurred, I always bring my family on all my work trips. I feel lucky I've found something I truly love doing, so it doesn't feel like work to me. However the work life balance is something that I'm constantly working on!

Prior to working in the natural medicine business I worked across the USA and Europe in the fashion industry as a model. It's a long way from where I am working now! It was an incredible experience, traveling all over the world, working with some of the big names in fashion design and photography. The creative side in me was always excited to be surrounded by other like-minded people and I have brought that creative side into all of the research and education we now work in.

Like many people in the holistic health sector, my interest started out of personal necessity.

I was diagnosed with not one, but two incurable autoimmune diseases, Vitiligo and Ulcerative Colitis (IBD). Like many others working in natural medicine, I was disenfranchised with modern medicine's approach to my health conditions, and I was looking for answers.

As is my way, my search for answers led me to jumping on a plane and going to meet with all of the leading medical researchers in the field of autoimmune diseases and eventually, the gut-microbiome. After spending many months with leading gastroenterologists, microbiologist and researchers at top universities and institutions throughout Europe and North America, I felt a sense of responsibility to bring this new research to the world and so, Activated Probiotics was born.

In the early days of our research and development, we were fortunate to have been involved in a number of clinical trials using very specific and specialised probiotics strains for the treatment and management of conditions such as osteoporosis, depression, nutrient absorption, asthma and eczema. As we were first in the world to have access to such amazing research, we saw it as our responsibility to act and to produce products to help the numerous patients with these conditions. As with my own health conditions, medication does not provide

an adequate solution. For us it is something of a crusade, being able to share this innovation, developing safe and effective probiotic products that can have a positive impact on the quality of life for those who are suffering.

The next challenge came when we started questioning the existing manufacturing techniques and quality in the supplement industry, the stability of products and also the survivability (efficacy) in a patient's stomach and eventually their gastro-intestinal tracts. This next rabbit hole forced our team and partners to develop new types of packaging, new ways to test efficacy of probiotic products and most importantly our patented micro-encapsulation technology. This has all culminated in our products being five times more efficient in delivering live viable bacteria to the large intestine compared with any other with any competitor's naked strains.

The creative side in me was always excited to be surrounded by other like-minded people and I have brought that creative side into all of the research and education we now work in



Once we had all of this exciting new science and technology, we knew that traditional marketing would not suffice. So instead, we set out to build an education company to share this journey with health experts the world over.

The education process has been one of our biggest challenges. We knew we had the highest

quality products with the most research behind them, regardless of this it just takes time for the education to resonate with the audience. Once health professionals and their clients know who we are, learn to trust the science behind us and then finally have a positive experience with our products, then momentum builds.

Access to investment is also a big challenge for start-up founders like myself. We have raised over \$8m to date to fund our business and keep the lights on. This is very hard to do when you're in an early stage business, you're asking people to take a big risk on you and your passion. However, over time, much like with our education program, familiarity breeds confidence and the balance shifts, making securing capital more straight forward.

Over the next few years, we want to help people live healthier lives and educate a great many more people about preventative medicine. We have one of the most passionate teams in the industry, driven to make a global impact. Our goal is to be the leading brand in education in our field and to further the efficacy and reach of clinical research in natural medicine.

One thing I've learned is that we are all students. We need to question and keep an open mind. I try to not plan too far ahead, which drives my family and friends crazy! I like to say yes to whatever opportunities are presented, I believe this has played a major role in getting me to where I am today. Leaving the comfort zone of my home town was the most liberating thing I did in early life; through travelling and meeting different types of people I've gained a better appreciation of who we are and what we really value most. ■

Activated Probiotics are available through our practitioner wholesale partners

📍 www.amritanutrition.co.uk and

📍 www.naturaldispensary.co.uk



For those who are not already registered, Amrita Nutrition are

offering exclusive access to all Holistic

Therapist Magazine readers via this link: 📍

www.amritanutrition.co.uk/account/register using the invite code **A2019P**.



DISCOVER WO-MANIFESTING

Sarah Richardson on harnessing the power of the menstrual cycle...

OUR menstrual cycle is a powerful tool that many women experience throughout their life. However, the power of this has been kept a secret for generations. We learned instead to feel ashamed of our menstrual cycle, or fear and dread it. What if we were to reclaim the power of our cycle?

Allow me to walk you through a process I have created. Wo-manifesting is the art of manifesting your dreams by working with the subtle, yet powerful creative energies of the menstrual cycle. If the menstrual cycle can create life in the form

of a baby, we can also harness this energy to create and design our lives.

Menstrual Phase: Day 1-7

This phase begins with the first day of your bleed. Traditionally in ancient times, and still in many Eastern Cultures, women during this phase would be secluded. In modern times, we're used to taking painkillers so we can continue to work. The rest phase is much needed in life and in the creative process. There is a cocktail of hormones taking place which allows women to rest deeply and receive powerful insights and wisdom.



Think of your menstrual blood as anything you are ready to let go of. We cannot call in our desires if we have not allowed ourselves to let crumble all that no longer serves us. I like to use a Menstrual Cup for this week, so I can really witness this process as I pour the blood away. I thank it and think of all that I am releasing. As you do so, say, 'I am fully willing and ready to release (whatever you are releasing) with my menstrual blood this month.'

Each phase of wo-manifesting includes tips and questions to ask yourself.

Tip: *Take time to rest this week.*

Question: *How can I lighten my load this week?*

Follicular Phase: Day 8- Ovulation (approximately Day 10-15)

This is the phase when our bleeding has stopped. New follicles are growing with fertile eggs inside ready to conceive a baby (or not!) This is the growth period before ovulation occurs. We are beginning to crawl out of our period cave and feeling a little bit more energised. This is a beautiful time to nurture your growth and expansion. We so often fear our growth. We fear our light. We fear our greatness. However, I am here to tell you it is time for you to allow yourself to grow fully and expand more than ever before!

***We learned instead to feel
ashamed of our menstrual
cycle, or fear and dread it.
What if we were to reclaim
the power of our cycle?***

Think of your eggs growing inside your follicles as creative energy. Pure life force energy that can create a life in the form of a baby. If this energy is not being used on a baby we can draw on this creative energy to create and manifest in our life. Whether it is a partner, a home, a career, a car or whatever we want. Now is the time to begin to get clear on what is that one thing you would like this month. Focus on one creation for this month. Visualise this intention being planted into your egg, which is growing and growing each day. Journal to reinforce your intentions.

Use this daily affirmation. 'I am allowing my intention of (insert desire) to grow and expand within my egg. Day by day my intention gets stronger and more powerful'.

Tip: *Journal this month on what it is you truly desire. Get clear!*

Question: *What is my heart yearning for? What is my soul craving?*

Ovulation Phase

The timing depends on your individual cycle, everyone varies! This can be anytime from Day 8-21. The majority of the time it is around Day 10-14. Tune into your body - some of the signs of ovulation are: egg white sticky discharge, pain in ovary, slight raise in temperature, energy surge and sexual energy increasing. You can purchase ovulation tests, however it is a good practice to tune into your body. This is when the egg is released from the follicle and is now patiently waiting to meet a sperm to be fertilised to create a baby. However, some eggs do not get fertilised and this is the energy we can tap into as pure life force creative energy. In this phase, I want you to feel it! When we bring the creation from our journals and into our body through visualisation we begin to create chemical changes in our body. Close your eyes and visualise your desire. Using your senses, what do you see, smell, taste? What can you touch? How do you feel emotionally, physically, mentally and spiritually? When we bring it into our body we begin to change our energy and call our desires to us through magnetism! Work with your maximum creative energy of the month this week. Use the following affirmation: 'I am worthy of the best that love and life have to offer, and I claim it now. With the creative energy within my egg, I am calling into my life (chosen desire)'.

Tip: *Every day, sit down and feel your desire manifesting! It is yours!*

Question: *How will I feel in my body, mind and spirit when all of my desires are in my reality?*

Luteal Phase/ Premenstrum: (approximately Day 21-28)

This phase gets a hard time! This is when the egg has been released from the follicle. If there is no pregnancy the womb prepares to shed the lining of the womb all over again. This is the phase that many women feel a dip in their

energy levels again as we almost complete the full cycle. Personally, I feel this is a powerful phase for women. It is where the Wild Woman energy comes in.

What is your Wild Woman's name? Naming her means that when she rears her head this week, we can greet her and welcome her in and ask her: *What are you angry about? What is not working in my life?*

The gift of the wild premenstrual woman, is her ability to cut away all that no longer serves us.

If we are to create all of the beautiful things we desire we first need to create space in our lives. We also need to create space in our schedules and our homes! Use this affirmation: 'I create space in my mind, body, spirit, home and schedule for all of my desires this week. I allow the Premenstrual Wild Woman to create space for me'.

Tip: *Decluttering your home or even one cupboard as a ritual. As you release objects or clothing make it conscious that you are creating space for your dreams!*

Question: *Take inventory of what it is you are calling in. Ask yourself is there space in my life/schedule/home for this right at this moment. If not, how can I create space?*

The cycle then begins over again. Each month will bring you closer to your manifest desire. ■



SARAH RICHARDSON is a modern medicine woman,

midwife, healer and teacher. Her goal is to share her medical knowledge and wisdom with women to awaken to love, freedom and divine feminine power. Sarah offers Sacred Midwifery, Ceremonial Cacao, Healing & Women's Wisdom. Find out more at www.sarahrichardson.ie

www.sarahrichardson.ie

ITA WEGMAN: PORTRAIT OF A REMARKABLE WOMAN

Weleda's *Suzie Fairgrieve* celebrates the life of one of the industry's trailblazers...

ITA Wegman was an extraordinary woman whose legacy extends far beyond her time. She was born in Java in 1876. At the turn of the last century, she studied massage and physiotherapy in both Holland and Germany, before relocating to study medicine at Zurich University in 1906. This was a time when very few women were admitted to medical school.

Ita went on to specialise in women's health, starting her own medical practice in 1912, and shortly afterwards she opened a pioneering new clinic in Arlesheim, Switzerland, in collaboration with Rudolf Steiner. The clinic became a centre for holistic medicine.

In 1921, Ita Wegman and a small group of progressive scientists founded Weleda. The company was inspired by the vision of Rudolf Steiner whose holistic mind-body-spirit approach to wellbeing continues to shape Weleda's range today. Ita was joined by pharmacist Oskar Schmiedel and his wife Thekla, a fellow chemist, who had started their own laboratory in 1913 chiefly to produce cosmetic products using botanicals.

Together the team manufactured the health and wellbeing products that were needed for the clinic in Arlesheim. Steiner was nearing the end of his life when Weleda was founded, but his wisdom and experience gave the young company both standing and impetus, so Weleda was able to expand internationally. By the end of the 1920s, thanks to Ita Wegman's visionary approach and practical business acumen, six further Weleda companies had been established around the world including the UK in 1925.

Ita Wegman's passionate and progressive ideas and actions have resonated far beyond her own lifetime. With her warm nature and down to earth approach, she contributed to the women's movement of the early 20th century. She was a creative, courageous and determined woman, an exceptional doctor with a strong sense of collegial leadership. She always had a keen interest in how the world was developing, and

her humanitarian nature is revealed through the many letters she wrote to patients, colleagues and social workers.

She had a special love of children, and in 1922 she established a therapeutic home for children with developmental disabilities and special needs, Sonnenhof. It was not only young people who were close to her heart, but also the so-called fringe groups of society of the time, who were persecuted or threatened. From 1933, this was mainly the Jewish people. Ita Wegman saved many lives by helping people to escape from Germany. She was a true cosmopolitan, with friendships and working relationships in countless countries. Even well into her retirement in the 1940s she continued to take in many refugees at her home in Ascona, Switzerland.

Following the premature death of her fiancé, she immersed herself in her work and was tirelessly committed to her holistic approach, exploring ways in which nature could benefit health and wellbeing. Her hospital, Arlesheim Clinic, continues to thrive today and Weleda continues to be partially owned by this non-profit organisation.

Ita lived during a time of great change, and she herself brought about great changes within her sphere of influence. It is thanks to Ita Wegman that the principle of working in harmony with people and nature has guided Weleda since 1921. ■



Weleda products are widely available, from many supermarkets and beauty retailers, pharmacies, health food stores, online retailers and Weleda's own online store at www.weleda.co.uk. The range is also available from a network of knowledgeable Weleda Wellbeing Advisors all around the UK, many of whom are holistic therapists, who incorporate Weleda's range into their work and support their clients with organic skincare and holistic health products as part of their expert service.



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OOOHHH! THAT'S NEW!

If winter is all about traditional comfort food, then summer's the time to explore new flavours and tastes. Here's our pick of the latest ideas from the UK's small food producers...



▲ Seed Snacks from Pep & Lekker

It's often difficult to find healthy snacks that actually taste good, so the new recipes from Pip & Lekker are a welcome discovery. Somehow, they've managed to balance virtuous ingredients to create a range of tasty, nutritionally well-balanced, vegan snacks with a deliciously distinct, lightly baked profile. Seed snacks aren't quite crackers and aren't quite savoury biscuits, but they are very moreish. The range includes three savoury flavours – Rosemary & Hemp Seed, Fennel & Chia Seed and Cumin & Linseed and two sweet treats – Apple & Cinnamon and Cacao & Coconut. Find them at [Pepandlekker.com](https://www.pepandlekker.com), or Amazon.

◀ Wild Life Botanicals

If you're hosting a get together or are driving to a BBQ, then Wild Life Botanicals is a brilliant option for designated drivers and people who prefer something refreshingly non-alcoholic. It's a pioneering sparkling wine that is ultra-low in alcohol yet ultra-high in goodness. Wild Life Botanicals is made in Cornwall, it tastes great and is even good for you as ingredients include Damask Rose, Lemon Balm, Damiana and Ashwagandha. Just one 125ml glass delivers a minimum of 15% of the rda of eight vitamins and minerals blended into the bubbly. It's just 0.5% ABV and has 60% fewer calories than champagne or prosecco. The 70cl bottles are great for sharing while the 20cl Minis are perfect for picnics or unwinding in the garden - and there's no chance of a hangover! Find it at [wildlifebotanicals.co.uk](https://www.wildlifebotanicals.co.uk), selected drinks specialists, Harrods and Harvey Nichols.



▲ Mandira's Kitchen

Mandira's kitchen is an award-winning producer of authentic Indian food. Their all woman team, based out of a 400 year old cowshed in the Surrey hills create the best food delivery boxes we've ever tried. They have delicious freezer meals with meat, veggie or vegan dishes or you could opt for their picnic boxes, complete with cutlery and tiffin boxes or the amazing Indian BBQ box which comes in a meat or vegetarian version. Everything tastes great because it's made with the freshest ingredients and portions are generous. They even have spiced chocolate samosas! We're now trying to clear out freezer space so we can order more. If you live nearby, they also offer cookery lessons and spice tours including lunch. Discover deliciousness at www.mandiraskitchen.com.

▶ Fiid

If you're back in the practice room and find yourself without the time to eat well, then fiid might be worth trying out. These microwavable vegan lunch bowls combine vegetables, legumes and spices for healthy plant-based meals that are ready to eat in two to three minutes flat. They're available from Ocado or www.eatfiid.com, where you can order a variety box or set up a subscription service. The range includes Aromatic Lentil & Sweet Potato Curry; Rich Sundried Tomato & Lentil; Smoky Black Bean Chilli and a Hearty Moroccan Chickpea Tagine.



Yummy

VEGAN RECIPES

from Keith Squires

Chef Keith Squires shares three recipes from his new book Keith's Favourite Vegan Recipes. The recipes are designed to be inexpensive, but full of goodness...

SESAME GINGER STEAMED BROCCOLI

Serves 2-3

This is a wonderful macrobiotic recipe that seasons the broccoli without overpowering its natural taste. Mirin is a sweet rice wine that has a low alcohol content but adds a depth of flavour and natural sheen to the dish. If you can't find mirin, use a natural teriyaki sauce, which contains mirin and soya sauce.



Ingredients

- 500 g broccoli cut into florets
- 2 tbsp. mirin & 1 tbsp. tamari, or 3 tbsp. teriyaki sauce
- 1 tbsp. grated fresh ginger

- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 100 ml vegetable stock
- Pinch of salt
- 1 tsp sesame seeds

Method -

- Place the broccoli, mirin & tamari/teriyaki, ginger, oil and stock in large pan.
- Cover, and bring to a simmer over a medium heat. Steam for 4 minutes, or until the broccoli is bright green and crisp-tender. Add a little more stock if it dries out.
- Dry-roast the sesame seeds in a saucepan.
- Add the salt and grind with a pestle and mortar.
- Sprinkle over the cooked broccoli.

MIXED BEAN CHILLI

Serves 3-4

This is similar to a bolognese sauce, but with a spicy twist of paprika, chilli and coriander. Great served with rice, or as a potato or pie filling.

Ingredients -

- 1 tbsp. ghee or coconut oil
- 1 onion finely sliced

- 2 sticks celery finely sliced
- 1 small red pepper diced
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 courgette diced
- 1 carrot diced
- 2 garlic cloves crushed
- ½ small red chilli finely chopped
- ½ tsp dried oregano
- ½ tsp mixed herbs
- 1 tsp ground paprika
- 300 ml vegetable stock
- 1 tsp jaggery (optional)
- 250 g tomatoes peeled & chopped
- 3 tbsp. tomato purée
- 400 g tin kidney beans rinsed & drained
- Salt & pepper to taste



Method -

- Sauté the onion and celery in the ghee or coconut oil for a few minutes. Stir in the red pepper.
- Add the ground coriander and cumin and cook for a few more minutes.
- Add the courgette and carrot and continue cooking for a few minutes.
- Add the garlic, chilli, herbs and paprika. Continue cooking to soften the vegetables.

- Stir in the jaggery, chopped tomatoes and tomato purée, then add the stock.
- Cover and simmer for 30 minutes, adding a little more stock if it becomes too thick.
- When cooked, add the kidney beans to the tomato mixture.
- Reheat and season to taste with salt and pepper.

Note: Jaggery is a traditional non-centrifugal cane sugar consumed in East Africa, the Indian Subcontinent and Southeast Asia. It is a concentrated product of cane juice and often date or palm sap without separation of the molasses and crystals, and can vary from golden brown to dark brown in colour. You can find it in larger supermarkets or Asian grocers.

VEGETABLE PAKORAS

Serves 4

Pakoras are made using gram flour, which is made from chickpeas. It's used a lot in Indian cooking because it makes a superb eggless batter. This is popularly mixed with spices and vegetables and then fried.

We may not consider deep frying as a healthy preparation method, but in this case the vegetables are lightly cooked and the gram flour is high in protein.

Ingredients

- 1 onion finely chopped
- 1 small carrot diced small
- 1 small courgette diced small
- 200 g gram flour
- ¼ tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 200 ml cold water
- Approx. ½ tsp Himalayan salt
- Pinch of asafoetida
- 1 tsp garam masala
- ¼ tsp onion seeds (nigella seeds)
- Pinch of chilli powder

- 1 tsp ground coriander
- ½ tsp ground turmeric
- Handful of fresh coriander chopped
- 500 ml coconut oil for deep frying



Method -

- Chop all the vegetables quite finely as they have to cook in the batter. Sieve the gram flour to remove lumps. Mix in enough water to make a thick batter, and whisk. Stir in the baking soda, salt and all the spices and mix well.
- Then add the fresh coriander and prepared vegetables. It should be the consistency of pancake batter; add more flour if it's too runny, or a little water if it's too thick. Heat the coconut oil in a pan on medium heat for deep frying.
- Test the temperature by adding a teaspoon of batter. It will float once the coconut oil is hot enough. Using two tablespoons drop small balls of the battered vegetables into the hot fat. Do not touch them for a few seconds or they will break up. After a little time move them around and fry till they become golden brown on all sides.
- They need to fry for 3-4 minutes to make sure the vegetables are cooked. Reduce the heat if they brown too quickly, or increase slightly if they are taking too long. When cooked, remove them with a metal sieve and place them on kitchen paper to absorb any excess coconut oil.



Keith Squires combines his background in nutrition, Ayurveda, herbalism and cookery with over 30 years of experience as a plant based chef. Keith is also an experienced presenter and has made TV appearances in countries as far afield as Greece and India. His popular blog, www.keithonfood.com, has become a one-stop destination for online inspiration and resources. His book, *Keith's Favourite Vegan Recipes* is available from online retailers or directly from www.keithonfood.com for £4.99.





MAKING A GREAT FIRST IMPRESSION

It takes us just seven seconds to make our initial judgement about someone. Making a good first impression can help build rapport with a new client and help us win repeat business...

WE are, by our very natures, judgemental. We need to be. We need to recognise people or behaviours that threaten us, or that may be able to help us in some way. At first it was biological - being able to sum up a stranger quickly meant we could identify a potential mate, a potential rival, a danger to us, or someone whose position in the social hierarchy was markedly different from our own. These judgements are right around 76% of the time, so we tend to trust our gut instincts when we meet someone new, whether that's socially or in a business context. Just as we sub-consciously judge

those we encounter, so others judge us. People have expectations that their holistic therapist should look healthy and be happy – a positive example of someone with their life sorted out. Making a good first impression will help you gain and retain clients more easily.

It's all about perception

You may be the world's best holistic therapist, you may be a kind and charming person but, when it comes to first impressions, it's the way others perceive you that matters, rather than who you really are. That sounds harsh. It's certainly not fair, but it is the reality of the situation

and applies in both work and social contexts. We not only decide if we like someone in the first few seconds, but also that first impression stays with us. In the USA, surveys suggest this failure to make a good first impression on a new client – the feeling that you are personable and 'get' them and their issues straight away – results in half of all clients not returning for a second session. Creating a positive first impression matters more when businesses are restarting and we are trying to rebuild our clientele. The saving grace is that we have control over the first impressions that we make on new clients.

Thin-slicing

Thin-slicing is the mental snapshot we take of someone on first meeting. We instantly – and it can take under a second – make assumptions about that person's confidence, likeability and competence. If you want to know more about this,

then try Malcolm Gladwell's book, *Blink*, which points out that we use these snap judgements to save time and energy and that we all have inherent biases. Many people, for example, feel that being overweight means a person is lazy and lacks self-discipline. Attractive people are more likely to be offered jobs and there is evidence to suggest they are better paid, even if they are not that competent.

Seeing ourselves as others see us

We often underestimate our appearance. Everyone has their good points and much of what we perceive to be negative is not seen that way by others. It's easy to stand in front of a mirror and list all your 'faults' while ignoring everything that's fabulous about you. We tend to frame ourselves negatively. Instead of thinking about the first impression you make, think about how you'd want someone meeting you for the first time to have to believe. You might choose a word like approachable, confident, charismatic, trustworthy, professional or friendly.

Projecting yourself as you want to be perceived

Before meeting a new client, or indeed going anywhere where you might meet new people, think about the kind of people they are and the nature of the interactions you might have. Set an intention – When I meet someone, I want them to see me as This helps you set the right kind of energy. Don't be a phoney. Most people can spot someone being insincere or pretending to be what they are not and it predisposes them to dislike that person.

Creating a positive first impression matters more when businesses are restarting and we are trying to rebuild our clientele

Use your hands a little when you talk. Open palms can make people feel safe in your presence, making them relaxed and more receptive to what you're saying, because, on a biological level, they can see that you are not threatening them, concealing anything or holding a weapon.

When you first meet a new client, use an eyebrow flash. This is the quick raising of the eyebrows we, and some apes, make when meeting someone they know. A genuine smile – one which is in your eyes and crinkles up your cheeks and doesn't just involve your mouth - will also help you make a great first impression.

When shaking hands your toes should point towards the other person, demonstrating that you are interested in them

Depending on the social situation and, indeed, safety considerations round social distancing, you may be expected to shake hands with a new client or acquaintance. Strangely, we do still judge people by their handshakes. Handshakes are often the first point of physical contact between two strangers and research has shown that our nonverbal signals can be 12 to 13 times more influential than accompanying words. When shaking hands your toes should point towards the other person, demonstrating that you are interested in them. Your arms and shoulders should be loose and relaxed and our chin held level.

If you find a new client is sitting hunched or has their arms crossed, you may have made a poor first impression as

these are defensive postures. Sometimes offering water or something to hold can break this barrier.

When it comes to actually speaking, using a lower register can create a better first impression, especially if you want to be seen as being an authority. Most TV presenters and newsreaders speak in what's known as the maximum resonance point. This is your ideal vocal range where your voice shines, sounds like a leader, but still sounds natural. Mentioning the other person's name in conversation reassures people that you are genuinely interested in them and has been shown to cause the release of dopamine in the brain, meaning they feel better just because you are showing interest. You can also choose to mirror their sensory language. People will tend to agree with a statement by responding with a comment like, "I see what you mean", or "I hear what you're saying". Using the same framing language can help build rapport. Similarly, you can also mirror their affirmative or negative words, like yeah, cool and okay or rubbish, nah, or no way.

If how you speak, the language you use and non-verbal signals can help you make a good first impression, then so can your appearance. 81% of the information we take in is visual, so what we see forms a lot of our first impressions of a new person. No-one expects you to look like a supermodel, but every holistic therapist is a walking advertisement for their own services and that means looking healthy, happy and well groomed. If you don't look like you take good care of yourself, how can you expect a new client meeting you for the first time to place their trust, health and wellbeing in your hands? ■



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CASE STUDY: FAST - BUILDING A NETWORK TO SUPPORT HEALTHCARE WORKERS WITH EFT

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NEW FRONTIERS: RESEARCH ROUND UP

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

ALZHEIMER'S: PROTEINS IN BLOOD COULD INDICATE DISEASE FIVE YEARS EARLIER

The development of dementia in later life has been associated with the presence of abnormal blood levels of dozens of proteins up to five years earlier, according to a new study led by researchers at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Most of these proteins were not known to be linked to dementia before, suggesting new targets for prevention therapies.

The research team examined over 10,000 blood samples from middle-aged and elderly people which had been stored during large-scale studies decades ago as part of an ongoing study. The researchers linked abnormal blood levels of 38 proteins to higher risks of developing Alzheimer's within five years. Of those 38 proteins, 16 appeared to predict Alzheimer's risk two decades in advance.

Although most of these risk markers may be only incidental by-products of the slow disease process that leads to Alzheimer's, the analysis pointed to high levels of one protein, SVEP1, as a likely causal contributor to that disease process.

SVEP1 is a protein whose normal functions remain somewhat mysterious, although in a study published earlier this year it was linked to the thickened artery condition, atherosclerosis, which underlies heart attacks and strokes.

Other proteins associated with Alzheimer's risk in the new study included several key immune proteins -- which is consistent with previous findings linking Alzheimer's to abnormally intense immune activity in the brain. *Ref. 10.1038/s43587-021-00064-0*

INJURY RECOVERY: ICING MUSCLE INJURIES MAY DELAY RECOVERY

It's common to recommend treating sports and

other muscle injuries with ice, as part of the RICE protocol which involves Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation. However, a new mouse model study suggests that icing injured muscles may delay muscle regeneration. The research results revealed that applying an ice pack to a severe muscle injury resulting from eccentric contraction may prolong the time it takes to heal.

The cause of this phenomenon is that icing delays the arrival of pro-inflammatory macrophages, which are responsible for the phagocytosis, or removal, of damaged tissue. Furthermore, this makes difficult for the macrophages to sufficiently infiltrate the damaged muscle cells.

Two weeks after the injury, the researchers noted a significantly higher percentage of smaller regenerated muscle fibres were found in cross-sections from the icing group, with a greater number of medium to large fibres in the non-icing group. In other words, this revealed that skeletal muscle regeneration may be delayed as a result of icing.

COGNITIVE FUNCTION: MEDITATIVE PRACTICE AND SPIRITUAL WELLBEING MAY PRESERVE COGNITIVE FUNCTION IN AGING

By 2050, projections suggest that up to 152 million people worldwide will have Alzheimer's disease. A paper published in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease, finds that spiritual fitness, a new concept in allopathic medicine - but one familiar to many holistic therapists - that centres on psychological and spiritual wellbeing, and Kirtan Kriya, a simple 12-minute meditative practice, may reduce multiple risk factors for AD.

According to the study, religious and spiritual involvement can preserve cognitive function as we age. The authors observe that today, spirituality is often experienced outside the context of an organized religion and may be part of every religion or separate to it. Spiritual fitness is a new dimension in AD prevention, interweaving basic, psychological and spiritual wellbeing. Psychological wellbeing may reduce inflammation, cardiovascular disease, and



disability. Those who have a high score on a “purpose in life” (PIL) measure, a component of psychological wellbeing, were 2.4 times more likely to remain free of AD than individuals with low PIL. In another study, participants who reported higher levels of PIL exhibited better cognitive function, and further, PIL protected those with already existing pathological conditions, thus slowing their decline.

Kirtan Kriya (KK) is a 12-minute singing meditation that involves four sounds, breathing, and repetitive finger movements. It has multiple documented effects on stress, such as improving sleep, decreasing depression, and increasing wellbeing. It has also been found to increase blood flow to areas of the brain involved in cognition and emotional regulation and increases grey matter volume and decreases ventricular size in long-term practitioners, which may slow brain aging. *Ref: 10.3233/JAD-201433*

WELLBEING: A NEW APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING OUR WELLBEING

Wellbeing has emerged as a key social metric over the past few years, at a national, corporate and individual level. Governments track levels of happiness and wellbeing while many businesses have wellbeing policies designed to reduce workplace stress.

A Swansea University paper highlights the importance of taking a wider approach to wellbeing and how it can be influenced by issues

such as inequality and anthropogenic climate change, meaning that we require a transdisciplinary framework to help understand and improve wellbeing.

Lead author Professor Kemp said explained, “We define wellbeing as positive psychological experience, promoted by connections to self, community and environment, supported by healthy vagal function, all of which are impacted by socio-contextual factors that lie beyond the control of the individual.”

“Globalisation, urbanisation and technological advancements have meant that humans have become increasingly disconnected from nature. This continues despite research showing that contact with nature improves wellbeing.”

The research reveals the advantages to health and wellbeing derived from connecting to oneself, others and nature and emphasises a need for focused efforts to tackle major societal issues that affect our capacity for connection.

He added: “The poorest are disproportionately impacted by major societal challenges including increasing burden of chronic disease, societal loneliness and anthropogenic climate change.

“Economic inequality has adverse impacts on the entire population, not just the poor, so improving economic inequality is fundamental to improving population wellbeing.” *Ref: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.642093*

STRESS REDUCTION: EATING MORE FRUIT AND VEG MAY HELP

A new Australian study examined the link between fruit and vegetable intake and stress levels of more than 8,600 Australians aged between 25 and 91 participating in the Australian Diabetes, Obesity and Lifestyle (AusDiab) Study from the Heart and Diabetes Institute.

The findings revealed people who ate at least 470 grams of fruit and vegetables daily had 10 per cent lower stress levels than those who consumed less than 230 grams. The findings support the supposition that diet plays a key role in mental wellbeing.



UK figures suggest that under one in three adults reaches the WHO suggested lower threshold of 400g of fruit and vegetables a day. This lower limit, equivalent to five portions of fruit and veg each day, reduces the risks of chronic diseases, e.g. heart disease, stroke, and some cancers. *Ref: 10.1016/j.clnu.2021.03.043*

MENTAL HEALTH: MEANINGFUL MOVIES HELP WITH LIFE'S DIFFICULTIES

A study published by a team from Ohio State University showed that watching films we find moving and poignant can make us feel more prepared to deal with life's challenges and want to be a better person, a new study found. The findings point to one reason why people may choose to see movies that make them sad as well as happy and that may explore difficult subjects that aren't always uplifting.

Results showed that people who recalled a meaningful movie were more likely than the others to say the film helped them make sense of difficulties in life. For example, the film helped them “feel like struggles in life are for a reason” and “more easily handle difficult situations with grace and courage.”

The study found that the key elements of these films were their poignancy, the mixture of happiness and sadness; their emotional range; and their ability to make people feel elevated and inspired by watching them. *Ref: 10.1080/15205436.2021.1912774* ■


BEHIND THE BUSINESS: Bespoke Aroma



Jo Evans explains how her aromatherapy business went from helping a client to producing bespoke products for spas, salons and individual therapists...

IN 2010 my husband and I, along with our two young children, relocated to the Lake District from the Midlands where I had been an Advisory Teacher specialising in health and well-being. I wanted a new challenge so retrained in an area I have always had a passion for - Aromatherapy. I started off as a mobile therapist. A friend undergoing treatment for breast cancer was struggling to find something to use on her skin safely. After much research, I produced an oil for her with a blend of particularly nurturing oils.

Soon, I was making aromatherapy blends for my massage clients to aid their relaxation and target any specific issues they had. This naturally led onto them asking me for oils and balms to help with other skin related issues such as dry, irritated or congested skin. Through research I made sample products for them which had such fantastic feedback that I then went on to make them available to others through my website,

 www.bespokearoma.co.uk



I always want to know what ingredients are in the products I put onto my own and other people's skin and being able to make the oils and balms myself ensured that I could use beautiful natural oils and plant botanicals and leave out the fillers, harsh chemicals and synthetic fragrances that can sneak into some mass produced products.

A chance meeting with the owners of a 5 star hotel in Windermere resulted in being offered the position of Spa Manager for their brand new spa and I decided to design the treatments and make the products myself. This proved so successful that I decided to launch Bespoke

produced. These spas also had other big brand product ranges on offer to complement their own ranges. I learned about the set up costs for working with these companies as well as the prescriptive training involved. After talking with self-employed therapists and those who own smaller spas and beauty salons, it became clear that they were disadvantaged as they don't have the budgets of the larger spas and salons. These therapists said that they would like to have access to a range of high quality spa products but without the huge set up costs or strict routine protocols and training so that their experience and good practice could

products such as massage oils, facial products, bathing products and natural deodorants. I work with local companies whenever I can such as with design work, printing and marketing. Working with my trainer Jo Griffiths, we develop bespoke treatments and routines for spas and offer in house training.

I think people are far more conscious of what they are putting onto their skin and so ingredients labels are scrutinised far more rigidly.

Understanding the trends in your market is important if you want long-term success. It's all about the natural now and for many people vegan is also a must. I think people are far more conscious of what they are putting onto their skin and so ingredients labels are scrutinised far more rigidly. I always make sure that my labelling is clear with common names as well as botanical names, so people can buy the products with confidence. Consumers want to ensure the ingredients aren't negatively impacting on nature and the environment – so looking for cruelty free, palm oil free, and for ingredients where suppliers are working with the local communities that grow and process it.

Mental Health and Well-being is a major priority for everyone, especially after the unusual year we have just had. I am seeing clients requesting more uplifting blends and those good for concentration. Other important blends are those which are effective for anxiety as well as sleep. With this in mind I am just about to launch a new range of pulse point oils which target these issues.

If you're thinking about starting up, I'd say talk to as many people as you can. There is so much support out there both formal such as government funded workshops and business start-up schemes which offer free adviser support as well as networking groups full of people who all took that first step. So many people will be incredibly supportive and full of useful help and advice. Talking also helps to focus your business idea and helps you to start to develop a plan for moving forwards. ■

Aroma to offer this service to other Spas and further develop my own range of skin nurturing products.

I started off as a mobile therapist. A friend undergoing treatment for breast cancer was struggling to find something to use on her skin safely. After much research, I produced an oil for her with a blend of particularly nurturing oils.

After launching Bespoke Aroma in 2014, I started working with Spas developing bespoke treatments and products for them. This can be quite a costly process as products need safety assessments and new packaging designed and

shine through. This was my inspiration for the Bespoke Aroma Spa vegan skincare range.

To help me decide which products should be prioritised for development, I spent some time discussing the most popular treatments and which products were key with a lot of therapists. It was clear that holistic facials were frequently booked as well as body scrubs and massage. Jo Griffiths, who delivers the bespoke training in the spas I work with, was instrumental in helping me consider ingredients, skin concerns and product ranges, drawing upon her vast experience as a lecturer and working in spas.

To be honest I didn't experience much doubt about making the leap to setting up Bespoke Aroma. I felt so passionately about what I was doing that I didn't really question if it was the right thing to do or not. Going from employed to self-employed was a little nerve wracking but I had the full support of my family, which I am eternally grateful for. I also had a fantastic friend who helped with child care so that I could attend my aromatherapy course.

Now I work with spas, beauty salons, individual therapists, businesses and other skincare manufacturers. I develop bespoke



Books for summer

If you find yourself with some time for reading, we've picked out some titles of interest...

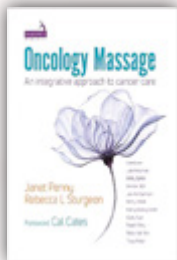
Thai Massage Dissected



Natasha de Grunwald has created the most fascinating book which explores the roots and techniques of Thai medicine and massage, drawing on everything from

traditional Buddhist texts to the cadaver lab. It's ideal for anyone who wants to discover more about Thai anatomy and tools, techniques, herbs and protocols that will enhance all practitioners' skill sets. It's very much grounded in the traditions of traditional medicine. There are chapters on traditional healing practices for women and self-care practices that draw on decades of research and learning from village midwives on the Thai/Burmese border.

Oncology Massage: An Integrative Approach to Cancer Care

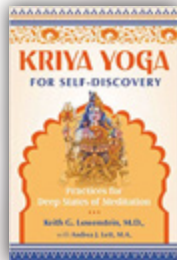


Janet Penny and Rebecca L. Sturgeon have lined up a host of top ranking contributors for this impressive and enlightening book which takes an integrative

approach to cancer care. It also includes feedback from clients which makes a valuable addition to the understanding

of how massage can be used as a safe and effective part of cancer care. Given that one in two people in the UK will get cancer at some point in their lives, most holistic therapists are likely to work with those in remission or recovery at some point in their careers. This thoughtful book is particularly strong on showing how to use adaptations to pressure, site, position and duration during massage to provide safe and effective treatments.

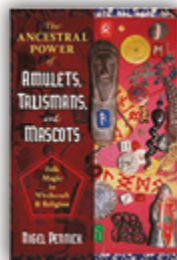
Kriya Yoga for Self-discovery



Lowenstein and Lett have produced a detailed guide to Kriya Yoga, an ancient breath and spine focussed meditation practice for spiritual growth, inner stillness,

and self-realisation. This book is an excellent primer on the inward mental and spiritual aspects of yoga which are often overlooked including proper posture, breath work exercises (pranayama), visualisation practices, and mantra designed to produce deep states of meditation and ultimately experience inner stillness.

The Ancestral Power of Amulets, Talismans and Mascots



Since the earliest beginnings of civilisation, people have used objects to bring about a desired situation, whether that's cave paintings in the hope of a successful hunt or a

stone that the wearer hopes will bring good fortune, all the way to the mascot sitting on a teenager's desk during an exam or symbolic jewellery. In this interesting book, Nigel Pennick explores the origins and history of amulets, lucky charms, talismans, and mascots taking us on a fascinating journey through the age-old spiritual principles, folklore, and esoteric traditions behind the creation of magical objects as well as the use of numbers, colours, sigils, geometric emblems, knots, crosses, pentagrams, and other symbols.

Restoring your Intestinal Flora



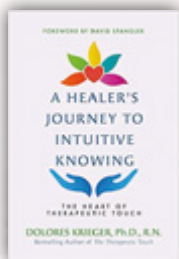
Naturopathic specialist, Christopher Vasey, shares some achievable techniques for rebuilding good gut health, strengthening the

immune system, and reducing inflammation using prebiotics and probiotics. This is a rapidly developing area of health research, with new discoveries every day, so Vasey's guide to the many functions of intestinal flora and their role in a healthy immune system, as well as the major causes of weakened flora, and the negative impact this can have on many aspects of health is a welcome addition to the growing literature.

A Healer's Journey to Intuitive Knowing

One of the emerging explorative trends in holistic therapy is that of exploring how the act of healing impacts on the healer themselves and the effects this can have, both positive and negative, so renowned

healer Dolores Krieger's final book is timely. The cofounder of Therapeutic Touch explores the energetic flow, intuitive knowing, and grounded centred experience that occur for



a healer during a healing session. She explains that healing transforms the healer and how that transformation may elicit more profound and radical healing results.

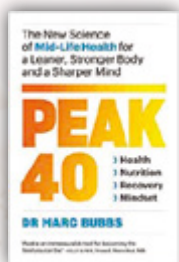
Write a poem, save your life



If you've ever felt that writing poetry could add a new level to journaling or self-understanding, then Meredith Heller's new book could be just the starting point you

need. Heller provides writing prompts, tools, encouragement, and moving student examples, in this guide to figuring out who we are and what matters to us and to heal the deeper issues many of us face.

Peak 40

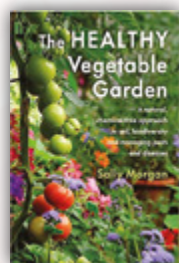


Life, they say, begins at 40 and Dr. Marc Bubbs is on a mission to ensure that mid-life is a period of peak fitness, especially since many of us have experienced

an enforced sedentary lifestyle of late. It's a realistic, grown-up and non-judgemental approach that explains the effect some food groups and lack of exercise and sleep have on our body, and couples this with easy to understand advice that can be tailored to your body and personality type. A good

introductory read for those who want to get back on track.

The Healthy Vegetable Garden



Over the past couple of years, many people have become interested in gardening and, in particular, in producing their own food. Sally Morgan's new book is a

great starting point for anyone interested in growing organically. There's advice on reducing chemical inputs; naturally enriching your growing ecology and creating a hardy, nutrient-dense and delicious crop as well as ideas designed to help you cope with the challenges of a changing climate through principles from regenerative gardening, agroecology and permaculture. We particularly like the sections on attracting pollinators and creating a range of habitats through rewilding, to work with nature rather than against it.

The Forager Chef's Book of Flora



Foraging goes hand in hand with growing your own food, whether that's gathering wild garlic in spring or harvesting blackberries in September. Chef Alan

Bergo gives home cooks and chefs alike a whole new way of seeing and thinking about all vegetable ingredients-by looking at them through a trained forager's eyes. It's similar to how the nose-to-tail movement affected the way chefs consider animals. Bergo shows how understanding the properties of leaves, stems, roots, and flowers can inform how you prepare something unexpected using over 200 recipes, from Seared Hosta

Shoots to Raw Turnips with Acorn Oil or Crisp Fiddlehead Pickles.

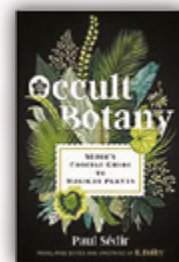
Christopher Hobbs's Guide to Medicinal Mushrooms



Mushrooms have long been foraged by many people in Europe, but are still largely ignored as a wild food in the UK, where we've been brought up to believe that mushrooms

from anywhere but the supermarket will probably be poisonous. We need to rethink our understanding of the benefits mushrooms can offer us and herbalist and mushroom expert Christopher Hobbs' book is a great way to do that. He introduces the mushroom varieties most widely used for medicinal purposes, exploring their powerful health benefits, the science behind their effectiveness, and how to make mushroom medicine at home.

Occult Botany



This is a beautifully illustrated reissue of Paul Seale's classic 1902 text on esoteric traditional herbalism, yet somehow it seems more in accordance with many of today's

ways of thinking than being a historical text. The book covers nearly 300 magical plants with descriptions of each plant's scientific name, common names, elemental qualities, ruling planets, and zodiacal signatures, with commentary on medico-magical properties and uses. It's a fascinating merger of the scientific discipline of botany with ancient, medieval, and Renaissance traditions of practical occult herbalism, connecting us back to the tradition of the wise woman. ■

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Online courses: BUYER BEWARE

Alison signs up for some budget buy online learning...

Asm someone who's in the middle of a third Open University degree, I have no problem with the idea of distance learning. I have, however, had considerable reservations about the value of some online courses aimed at the holistic therapy sector, particularly those offered by deal sites such as Groupon and Living Social.

We've written about the importance of finding the right training courses before, particularly when it comes to accreditation, CPD and the course you've chosen being acceptable to both your membership organisation and your insurance provider. I know, too, that many organisations and training schools in the sector provide outstanding face to face and online training. I do have a problem with online courses that seem little more than a made up qualification based on such nebulous qualities as life experience. I know of one Indian university which offers a doctorate in natural medicine

for under £1700 that can be parlayed into the right to practice as a doctor in some EU countries. Other organisations, particularly in the US, will send you a Masters or Ph.D. degree certificate from a 'real university' on payment of a fee of around \$125, including your academic transcripts.

I used Groupon.co.uk and LivingSocial.co.uk as my source for courses. My budget was £20 and I had a choice of 88 beauty courses and 60 health courses. Many of these were for treatments, such as deep tissue massage or hairdressing, that I wouldn't want someone who had simply taken an online course trying out on me. Some seemed potentially dangerous. Should anyone be able to claim to be certified in Mental Health Counselling for £18 and however many hours work? The most expensive course I could find was an accredited Reiki Level 1 & 2 package for £19 instead of £199. I found courses in diet and nutrition, facials, lymphatic

drainage massage, Indian head massage, chair massage, reflexology and aromatherapy. Most courses seemed to be priced under £10, though often appeared to be discounted from around £450.

I wanted to challenge my own assumptions that such cheap courses had little value, so I decided to buy two different courses, as some course providers may be more professional than others. I also decided to choose subjects I'd be interested in learning more about. I chose a Master Herbalists Level 3 course for £9, discounted from £319 and an Accredited Online Natural Beauty products course with Aromatherapy. Both courses have add on costs if you want a certificate. A PDF version will cost around £10 to £30, with a paper copy around £20-£30. One offers e-mail tutorial support and both a mock and a final exam, though these are based on multiple choice questions. It may, therefore be possible to gain a qualification without having made a single beauty product or indeed having gone near an actual herb.

I plan to report back on how I got on with both courses in our next issue. Having quickly scanned the course content, would I recommend these course to professional holistic therapists? No, because it's very unlikely that you would be able to practice if you had just taken one of these courses. Where they might be worth your tenner is if there was a new modality you had an interest in, but weren't sure that it was right for you. It makes sense to check out bargain basement online courses as a taster before investing in fully accredited training elsewhere. ■

FINDING TIME FOR SELF-CARE

It's not always easy to find time for self-care, but sometimes all it takes is a few minutes each day. Here are our suggestions for taking better care of yourself whether you have five minutes, fifteen minutes or an unexpected half an hour to spare...



A FEW MINUTES

Set aside a few minutes and remove yourself from the rush of your day with

these little treats, most of which can be achieved in five minutes or so.

Make a cup of herbal tea or a smoothie

Write a haiku or a limerick

Massage your temples

Lie down and put your feet up against a wall

Spritz on some perfume

Fill a diffuser with your favourite essential oil

Write in your gratitude journal

Go for a quick walk round the block or sit in the sun

Moisturise your hands or give yourself a facial spritz

Shake out your hands and arms, then your whole body

Congratulate yourself on something you've achieved

Do a few stretches or a grounding exercise

Walk barefoot on the grass

Say your affirmations out loud

Smile at a stranger – even if you're wearing a mask

Play your favourite song, dance if you like

Stroke a pet

Listen to the sounds around you with your eyes closed

Watch the clouds go by or the flight of birds

Focus your senses on enjoying something sweet – maybe a strawberry or a piece of chocolate

Have a go on the swings

Do some breathing exercises



15 MINUTES

If you have a little longer, then one of these self-care activities could make your day a little more special.

Take a walk in your local park or green space, research shows that spending just two hours a week in nature offers huge health benefits.

Unwind with a glass of wine or a cocktail. Low or no-alcohol versions are now pretty good.

Read a short story or poem

Nibble an apple or a bowlful of cherries

Do a guided meditation or practice Yoga Nidra

Do a short stretching workout or Tai Chi session. YouTube has lots of options

Sing and dance along to some favourite tunes

Sprinkle a few drops of essential oil on a cloth and put it in the shower cabinet while you have a quick shower

Read something that makes you happy or lifts your spirits

Journal

Turn your phone and laptop off

Buy and arrange a bunch of flowers or pick some from the garden

Curl up on the sofa and have a nap

Change your bedding



HALF AN HOUR OR MORE

Got a little more time on your hands? Try one of these self-care ideas.

Have a bath with some Epsom salts or magnesium flakes

Pamper yourself with a facial, manicure or pedicure

Visit a museum or gallery

Go to a food shop you've never been to before and buy something you've never tried

Paint, write, draw or craft – any creative activity will do

Take yourself off for a walk, run or cycle – or just get outdoors

Plan a visit to somewhere you've always wanted to go

Curl up with a book and a mug of hot chocolate

Write some positive affirmations or update your journal

Treat your hair to some deep conditioning

Play with a pet

Tidy out a drawer or cupboard full of clutter

Play solitaire by yourself or a board or card game with the family

Try on something you haven't worn in ages that makes you feel special.

Catch up with someone you haven't spoken to a while

Give yourself an afternoon off

Buy yourself a small treat. It might be a new nail varnish, an exquisite cake or a wedge of artisan cheese, but it should be just for you.

Write someone a letter

Browse through your photo album or memory box



Back

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

PAGES

WORCESTERSHIRE HOSPICE SEEKS VOLUNTEER THERAPISTS

The Primrose Hospice is looking for qualified volunteer holistic therapists who can offer treatments to families in north east Worcestershire at a time when they need it most. The charity provides free care and support for people with life-limiting conditions, their families and bereaved adults and children.



Volunteers will be fully supported at all times to give them confidence to work in this specialised setting. Anyone who practises therapies such as massage, aromatherapy, reflexology, acupuncture, Indian head massage or reiki should call Julie Guest, complementary therapy coordinator, on 01527 889799. You can also find out more about the hospice at www.primrosehospice.org.

INDUSTRY-WIDE CLIENT SURVEY

Have your complementary therapy treatments helped to improve the physical, mental or emotional wellbeing of your clients? If so please share a short new survey with your clients. The survey, which is being run by the FHT, but which is open to clients of all holistic therapists, is called 'How complementary therapy has helped me'. It's designed to gather data directly but anonymously from clients that can be presented to the media, government and health and care agencies, to demonstrate the benefits holistic therapies offer to health and wellbeing and how it might work alongside conventional healthcare and alleviate the pressure on the NHS.

Please visit www.fht.org.uk/public-survey where you can find a link to copy and paste to give to clients.



TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE NOW EXPORTED TO ALMOST 200 COUNTRIES AND REGIONS

According to a report in Chinese media source XinhuaNet, more than 13,000 foreign students come to China to learn Traditional Chinese Medicine every year. Furthermore it was reported at the National People's Congress Standing Committee that TCM had been introduced to 196 countries and regions, with over 30 TCM centres established outwith China. It is believed that more than a million people had received TCM treatments in these centres.

Pan Ping, director of the academic department at the World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies, commented, "TCM did not take root in these countries in a day. It has spread overseas along with the footprints of Chinese immigrants over the past few centuries and has proved its value."



TRY THIS... SWICILY

Swicily is a new organic sugar substitute with unique flavour, grown ethically by the local farmers of the island of Sicily. It's made with heritage organic grapes, using methods originating in ancient Mediterranean traditions. It can be used in place of honey, agave syrup or sugar, but you'll need around a third less because Swicily is sweeter. As an unprocessed liquid sweetener, it's uniquely able to retain its nutrients and vitamins, lowering its glycaemic load and thus reducing calories without sacrificing taste or versatility. A 250ml bottle costs £9.00 and is available from Amazon.

TAI CHI CAN MIRROR HEALTH BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

A new multi-national study shows that tai chi mirrors the beneficial effects of conventional exercise by reducing waist circumference in middle-aged and older adults with central obesity. Central obesity is a major manifestation of metabolic syndrome, broadly defined as a cluster of cardiometabolic risk factors, including central obesity, dyslipidaemia, hyperglycaemia, low high-density lipoprotein cholesterol (HDL-C) level, and high blood pressure, that all increase risk for type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

543 participants were randomly assigned to a control group who did not exercise,



one who practiced tai chi and a third group who undertook a programme of aerobic exercise and strength training. Interventions lasted 12 weeks and those who practiced tai chi recorded similar reduced waist circumferences to the conventional exercise group. *Ref: 10.7326/M20-7014*

FIBROMYALGIA IS NOT "ALL IN THE MIND", BUT AN IMMUNE SYSTEM ISSUE

New research from teams at London's King's College, the University of Liverpool and the Karolinska Institute in Sweden,

has shown that many of the symptoms in fibromyalgia syndrome (FMS) are caused by antibodies that increase the activity of pain-sensing nerves throughout the body. The results show that fibromyalgia is a disease of the immune system, rather than the currently held view that it originates in the brain.

Increased pain sensitivity, muscle weakness, reduced movement, and the reduced number of small nerve-fibres in the skin that are typical of FMS, were discovered to be a consequence of patient antibodies. A series of experiments which injected antibodies from people living with FMS demonstrated that the mice rapidly developed an increased sensitivity to pressure and cold, as well as displaying reduced movement grip strength. In contrast, mice that were injected with antibodies from healthy people were unaffected, demonstrating that patient antibodies cause, or at least are a major contributor to the disease.

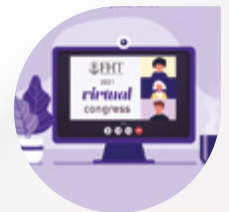
Furthermore, the mice injected with fibromyalgia antibodies recovered after a few weeks, when antibodies had been cleared from their system. This finding strongly suggests that therapies which reduce antibody levels in patients are likely to be effective treatments.



Current estimates suggest that at least 1 in 40 people are affected by FMS worldwide (80% of which are women) and is commonly characterised by widespread pain throughout the body, as well as fatigue (often referred to as 'fibro fog') and emotional distress. It most commonly develops between the ages of 25 and 55, although children can also get it. *Ref: 10.1172/JCI144201*

FHT HOSTS SUCCESSFUL FIRST VIRTUAL CONGRESS EVENT

The FHT's first Virtual Congress took place from Sunday 13 to Friday 18 June 2021. The online event attracted over 640 attendees and 50 expert speakers. The event received overwhelmingly positive feedback received from delegates suggests that the event provided a more accessible learning model combined with the ability to watch more talks than previous face to face Congresses, particularly since the fee allowed access to all fifty pre-recorded presentations. Attendees also enjoyed the live webinar sessions, the ability to network via a Facebook group and access to one-time offers through an online shop. The organisation is now considering hosting further virtual learning events in addition to face-to-face events. The 2021 FHT Virtual Congress was sponsored by Gateway Workshops, Hypnosis Courses, Hypno TC, International Clinical Aromatherapy Network, Power Diary and VRT Online.



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

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