



**POSITIVE
PSYCHOLOGY
IN PRACTICE**

Positive Psychology for Healthcare Professionals

A TOOLKIT FOR IMPROVING WELLBEING

AUTHORS

Jan Macfarlane
Jerome Carson

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY IN PRACTICE

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Ready for a tour of some of the best work in positive psychology? Read this book, and most important, use your zest and hope as you do the practical activities and curiously reflect on the questions. The more you personalize the material in each chapter, the more benefit you are likely to experience for your wellbeing and resilience!

— Ryan M. Niemiec, Psy.D., Bestselling author of *The Power of Character Strengths*, *Character Strengths Interventions*, and *Mindfulness and Character Strengths*; and Chief Science & Education Officer of the renowned VIA Institute on Character

An indispensable resource for healthcare professionals. Informative, engaging, thoroughly researched and refreshingly practical. This book is an injection of hope that revitalises your sense of agency and leaves you feeling empowered.

— Sarah Gregg, Author of *Find Your Flow & Choose Happy*

I once read how a nurse has ‘the opportunity to heal the mind, soul, heart, and body of our patients. They may forget your name but they will never forget how you made them feel’ (Maya Angelou). Positive Psychology helps us be our best selves, and to be our best for others requires feeling our best selves too. What Jan has done by her research and throughout this book has helped find a way to keep our nurses and caregivers at their best so, in turn, they continue to be remembered for the best they make others feel.

— Dr Michelle Y Tytherleigh, C.Psychol., SFHEA, PGCE(LTHE), AFBPS

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A Toolkit for Improving Wellbeing

BY

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jan Macfarlane, PhD, is a Lecturer in Health and Social Care at the University of Bolton. Her specialist area is Positive Psychology, specifically in how it can be utilised to maintain and potentially improve the wellbeing and mental fitness of health care professionals. She has developed a range of programmes that have been delivered to staff and students which have shown how these can be used to help people thrive. She has contributed to a range of journals and her main suite of publications is with the *British Journal of Mental Health Nursing* where she also holds a position on the board. She is a qualified state registered nurse and a mental health nurse whose career in the NHS spanned over 30 years.

Jerome Carson, PhD, is a Professor of Psychology at the University of Bolton. He is a qualified Clinical Psychologist and has worked in the National Health Service for 27 years. He came to Bolton in 2012. His main research interests are Positive Psychology, recovery from mental health problems, alcohol addiction, bereavement, and autoethnography. He has published widely with over 300 co-authored papers and book chapters. He is the Editor-in-chief of the journal *Mental Health and Social Inclusion* and the Co-editor of journal *Social Work and Social Sciences Review*. He is the Joint Series Editor of the new Emerald Positive Psychology Book Series.

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FOREWORD

Kevin Gournay

In the first two decades of my experience as a healthcare professional, working in a range of settings, I became used to identifying the problems of the patient. I sometimes recorded my assessments on ‘problem-orientated medical records’. My approach therefore led to formulations about problems and deficits. With the benefit of hindsight, I now see that there was so much about my patients that I missed.

My outlook began to change in the early 1990s, when I was fortunate enough to visit a number of model services in the USA and other countries. It was in Kansas that I encountered a new way of working with those with serious and enduring mental health problems, in a method called ‘The Strengths Model of Case Management’. I had the pleasure of meeting Professor Charlie Rapp, a social worker by background, who was instrumental in disseminating this model into practice (Rapp & Goscha, 2011). I began to see that this approach had enormous benefits in the processes of rehabilitation and recovery, for those with serious and enduring mental health problems – with an emphasis on building on the individual’s strengths, rather than focussing on deficits. In turn, this approach required the professional and the service user to engage in a relationship of equals, rather than the service user being a passive recipient of treatments targeted on ‘problem areas’.

Reading this book by two of the UK’s leading authorities on Positive Psychology has been an enormous pleasure. The authors have set out, in a very engaging manner, a range of Positive Psychology interventions. In doing so, they have reminded the reader of the need for the professional to recognize that they need to be kind to themselves, so they can be kind to others. The book also reinforces my long-held belief that humour should play an important part in all of our lives and perhaps needs to be utilised more in professional interactions.

The book does not forget the evidence that underpins the effectiveness of a Positive Psychology approach and serves as a contribution to an area that is being increasingly recognised.

I found reading this book to be an excellent antidote to the reading of soulless scientific papers that appear to summarise human experiences in tables of data. This is not to say that data are unimportant. However, I can see no reason why data cannot be set out in juxtaposition to personal accounts. Thus, we have a reminder that we should never forget that we are all human beings with human needs; all equal beneath the ‘vener of the camouflage’ we all wear.

Back to my experience in Kansas, there I learned that everyone has the potential, or to put it another way, a set of strengths on which to build. However, such strengths may be dormant and may require a process of searching. This book is indeed a ‘toolkit’. First, the book assists the reader to identify potential and then, via Positive Psychology interventions, to begin the process of building.

Professor Kevin Gournay, CBE.

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QUOTE

‘The majority of us lead quiet, unheralded lives as we pass through this world. There will most likely be no ticker-tape parades for us, no monuments created in our honour. But that does not lessen our possible impact, for there are scores of people waiting for someone just like us to come along; people who will appreciate our compassion, our unique talents. Someone who will live a happier life merely because we took the time to share what we had to give. Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have a potential to turn a life around. It’s overwhelming to consider the continuous opportunities there are to make our love felt’.

Leo Buscaglia.

(Living, loving & learning by Leo F. Buscaglia, 1982, Fawcett Columbine edition, in English – 1st Ballantine Books Trade Edition: April 1983.)

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'I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood'.

Audre Lorde ('The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action'. In *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, pp. 40–44. Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1984.)

Jan Macfarlane

This book has enabled me to use my top three signature character strengths of *perseverance, love of learning, and love*. Perseverance in overcoming obstacles and committing no matter what came my way, love of learning in a topic I never tire of, and love of others who were a distinctive and necessary part of the process of creating this work.

Therefore, firstly, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Professor Jerome Carson, my colleague and mentor during this development of this work. His positivity, humour, gentleness, and zest in the completion of this book never wavered. His certainty and conviction of my success remained steadfast throughout. His guidance has had a significant impact in my professional and personal development. He has been inspirational throughout and was able to help me flourish and use my individual style and strengths.

Whilst the academic and professional support has played an important role, it would have not been possible for me to complete this work without the support, encouragement, empathy, patience, listening, dog walking, and tea-making skills of my husband Peter Macfarlane. The dulcet Lancashire tones of 'Are you going to do some of your book work now?', when I really did not want to, ensured I kept on track right to the very end. I am also thankful to my two daughters, Freya and Rhianna Macfarlane, who always believed I could, even when I did not. And loved me more when I thought I could not, which was more important.

Finally, my love goes to Merlin and Nellie who ensured I stopped to take breath, moved from the computer and books and take pleasure in the awesome nature of the seasons, which helped me reflect, process, and put things in perspective. Or as they might say, just be more dog!

Jerome Carson

It has been a pleasure to work with Jan on this book. She has of course written the bulk of it. She is an inspiration to nurses everywhere. She has been awarded her PhD towards the end of her nursing career, yet her desire to keep studying and writing has never been stronger. But for me there is only one person that I would like to dedicate this book to. It is my sister Michele Foster. While I was sorry for myself having had to isolate on my own during the first COVID-19 Lockdown, as I was clinically vulnerable, she messaged me, '*Don't count the days JC. Make the days count!*' I aim to make the days counts for as long as there is air in my lungs Michele! You have taught all your siblings to seize the moment. Carpe diem.

The authors would like to thank Mark Allen Publishing, who publish the *British Journal of Mental Health Nursing* for their permission to use some of the materials for the book from the following suite of published commissioned papers on positive psychology. We are also grateful to the editor of the journal Vicki Williams for commissioning all of the papers listed below.

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