

# HYPNOTHERAPY TODAY

ASSOCIATION FOR SOLUTION FOCUSED HYPNOTHERAPY

Edition 29, Autumn 2019



## *In with the new?*

*Making 2020 resolutions*

**Also in this issue:**

**Self-care for us all**

**AfSFH Member Event!**

**Exploring CORP results**

**AfSFH.com**

Association for  
SOLUTION FOCUSED HYPNOTHERAPY

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ST: Supervision type (e.g. Skype, One to One, Group supervision).

For the latest list of Supervisors, please refer to the AfSFH website.



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## A Message from the Editor...

Welcome to the Winter edition of Hypnotherapy Today! As the temperatures drop and Autumn gives way to Winter, many of us will reflect on 2019 and start making plans for the year ahead. As I reflect on the work of the AfSFH, it brings a smile to my face to recall our lovely Members' Event, which was held in Bristol in November. It was a fantastic day and we are pleased to share some of the highlights with you in this edition!

Looking forward to a brand-new decade, it's also a great time to be thinking about plans for the coming year. The new year of '2020' lends itself quite well to this...the optometrist's phrase '20/20 vision' signifies perfect sight...so perhaps heading into 2020 we can focus and visualise clear plans for the future – in our work with clients but also in our own development (Miracle Question anyone?!). Guiding us towards that, we explore New Year's Resolutions in this issue, as well as aspects of our own self-care, giving SFH talks to groups and results from our recent members' survey about your plans for the coming year. We also delve into the latest CORP results and explore the benefits of completing an audit!

I hope you enjoy this edition – a big thank you to everyone who contributed; as always, your efforts are greatly appreciated. Hypnotherapy Today would not exist without written contributions from you, our members, so please,

do keep sending in your articles, ideas or reviews to me at: [journal@afsfh.com](mailto:journal@afsfh.com). Don't forget, for all work published, authors will receive a £10 Amazon gift voucher as a little 'thank you' for their efforts!

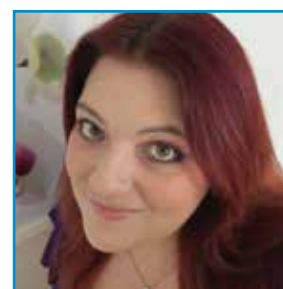
So, that's all from me for now. I hope you can find somewhere warm to relax with a hot drink and take some time out to be inspired by the latest contributions from our members.

From all of us on the AfSFH Executive committee, we hope you enjoy the festive season and wish you health, happiness and success in 2020!

Best wishes,

*Helen*

Helen Green,  
AfSFH CEO & Editor





*"Amazing attention to detail  
– love all the polar bears!"*



*"...it's been fantastic; lots of  
great talks...lots of networking...  
lots of fun, lots of laughter!"*

## AfSFH Member's Event

### Here we share some of the highlights from our Members' Event, which was held in central Bristol on Saturday 30 November 2019. What a great day!

There can't be many things as fun as a room filled with Solution Focused Hypnotherapists and there was a noticeable buzz of energy, lots of laughter and even the odd Polar Bear at the AfSFH 2019 Member Event! One of the suggestions for what to call a group of SFHs was a 'celebration' (thanks to Lisa Hartford for the suggestion!). As well as being a collective term for a group of polar bears (very apt!), it was the perfect description for the day!

Those who attended enjoyed several talks, with Guest speaker Dr David Hamilton giving two informative and entertaining talks on the day! Our additional member talks were from Rachel Gillibrand (the science of SFH), Andy Workman (discussing body language), Debbie Pearce (Marketing tips) and from Susan Rodrigues and Stuart Taylor (using SFH with children). We were delighted to receive lots of fantastic feedback about how informative, entertaining and useful members found the talks!

Following the event, the Exec team were contacted by so many people who thoroughly enjoyed the day, with lots of members posting comments and pictures in our closed AfSFH Facebook group. As well as enjoying the talks, many of you said how much you liked the goody bags, the venue and the food! Once again, huge congratulations to



Abi Rogers and Debbie Daltrey, who won our first and second place prize draw bags!

We had planned to feature several quotes from attendees in this article, but truthfully, we received so many positive comments it was difficult to choose! 'Amazing', 'brilliant', 'fantastic' were just some of frequent words that members were kind enough to pass on to us.

A massive thank you to everyone who came along – it was a wonderful day, and we were so pleased to have so many members attend, who created such a brilliant, positive atmosphere (in fact, two separate members of the hotel staff commented on what a lovely bunch we all were! One even took down the AfSFH website details and was going to go on to the directory to book in for some SFH!).

All the Exec team are so grateful for your lovely feedback and we hope to see you all at the next event! But for now, here are a few pictures from our very special day (printed with permission)!



*“Loved it! Inspiring talks, awesome goody bags, fantastic people!”*





## Making successful New Year's resolutions

By Trevor Eddolls

As the new year fast approaches, many people will be planning to make radical changes to their lives. They plan to stop smoking, join a gym, lose weight, become vegetarian, get a new job, and much else besides. And many people decide they are going to become the person they want to be all in one go. When they wake up on the morning of 1st January, with just the hint of a hangover from the night (or is it the month?) before, they plan to put all their changes into effect. And guess what – it doesn't always work! There are plenty of people I know who decide to do 'Dry January' after partying quite hard through December, and they end up explaining that they thought they'd done well with 'Moist January' – just a few drinks at the weekend and the occasional trip to the pub at lunchtime with work colleagues.

So, let's take a look at some actual statistics for New Year's resolutions, what goes wrong, and how we can help clients do to be more successful.

John C Norcross et al (2002) wrote in the *Journal of Clinical Psychology* that about half of all adults make New Year's resolutions, but less than 10% manage to keep them for more than a few months. Miller and Marlatt (1998) found that the most popular New Year's resolutions that people set are:

- 37% – starting to exercise
- 13% – eating better
- 7% – reducing the consumption of alcohol, caffeine and other drugs, or stopping smoking.

The survey went on to find that 67% of people make more than one resolution. However, 75% of people who make a resolution fail on their first attempt.

More recent research, published in the journal *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, from Woolley and Fishbach found that in their survey 55.2% of resolutions were health-related (specifically 31.3% wanted to exercise more; 10.4% wanted to eat healthy; and 13.5% wanted to have healthier habits) with work-related/financial goals coming a close second, followed lastly by social goals (like spending more time with family or to enjoy life more). The study also found that participants believed both enjoyment and importance were important factors affecting how successful they would be at keeping to their resolution in the future.

So, why doesn't it work? Why do so many people fail to keep their New Year's resolutions? Richard Wiseman (author of '59 Seconds'), found that people who didn't stick to their resolutions tended to rely on willpower and suppressing their cravings, fantasized about how great it would be if they were able to be successful, and thought about the downside of failure. Unfortunately, that didn't seem to work. Wiseman suggests that thinking about the downside of failure might well make people despondent rather than encourage them to carry on.

Another reason why people don't stick to their resolutions is that they decide on too many or the ones they specify are unrealistic for them to expect to achieve. In addition, people may be victims of what's called 'false hope syndrome'. The key factors of false hope syndrome are:

- Speed (how quickly can a goal be achieved)
- Ease (how comfortably can a goal be achieved)
- Amount (how much time is required, or the degree of change)
- Consequence (or benefits).

Miller & Marlatt (1998) suggested that your resolution was doomed to fail if you:

- Didn't think about making resolutions until the last minute.
- Made your resolutions based on what's bothering you or is on your mind on New Year's Eve.
- Framed your resolutions as absolutes by saying, "I will never do X again".

Mukhopadhyay and Johar (2005) looked at how many goals people set and how successful they were. They found that people who believe that self-control is something dynamic, changing, and unlimited tend to set more resolutions. By that they meant people who said things like: "I can stop smoking, all I have to do is put my mind to it. I can also change my eating and be a better person, it just takes willpower".

People who believe that we all are born with a limited, set amount of self-control that cannot be changed and who also have little belief in their own capabilities to carry out their own goals (this is what psychologists refer to as 'low self-efficacy') naturally did worse with achieving their New Year's resolution goals. These people would say things like: "I can't stop myself from eating all this chocolate – I inherited the 'chocolate gene' from my mum!"

People with high self-efficacy attribute failure to insufficient effort, while individuals with low self-efficacy attribute failure to a lack of ability. Higher self-efficacy generally is correlated with a greater likelihood of achieving one's goals. The research also found that people who are made to believe that self-control is a fixed or limited resource that they can't

*"The most common resolutions people make are to lose weight, do more exercise, stop smoking, and save money".*

change, will also set fewer goals and will give up on them sooner, regardless of their level of self-efficacy. Leading on from that, the researchers found that New Year's resolutions were successful if people believed that self-control is an unlimited resource that people can access and make use of. The more a person believes in their own capabilities (high self-efficacy) the more likely they are to succeed in keeping their resolutions.

So, what else can we suggest people do if they want to keep their New Year's resolutions? Where the resolution is a process rather than a single thing (like dropping a dress size rather than simply never smoke again) it is more effective to set a SMART target. SMART targets are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound. Dropping a dress size or losing two inches off your waistline in time for the next summer holiday are SMART targets. Drinking no more than two units of alcohol every other day for one month is a SMART target. 'Drinking less' isn't a SMART target. And connecting a resolution to a specific goal can be motivating. Although there is some conflicting evidence, for most people, the best way to maintain a New Year's resolution is to set only one resolution at a time. Don't try to make too many changes at once. Don't try to lose weight, join a gym, and stop smoking all on the same day. The advice is to stick to one thing at a time.

Breaking things down is also a good idea. For example, if your alcohol consumption is regularly and frequently high, then your resolution needs to be realistic. Don't decide to go 'cold turkey' and become tee total all in one go. Break up the goal into manageable steps. So, for January, drink every other day. Once that becomes the new normal, drink every third day, then only at weekends as the year progresses. The alternative is to cut down on the amount drunk. So, cut down to half a bottle of wine with a meal in January, and continue cutting down throughout the year. So, each manageable micro-target is realistic.



It is also a good idea to let others know what your resolution is. That way, you're less likely to suddenly change your mind on 2nd January when you feel like a drink or cigarette or bar of chocolate. In addition, if you are having a bit of a tough time with your new behaviour, your friends can support you and help you to keep going. Having someone to share your struggles and successes with makes the journey to a healthier lifestyle easier and less daunting.

In fact, joining a group can be very helpful in keeping a resolution. Weight watching groups can be great ways to keep yourself motivated to lose weight. Other research has found that people who have told a group that they are changing their behaviour in a particular way are more likely to continue this new behaviour. If you are planning to lose weight, stop smoking, or drink less, it can be very helpful if your partner is doing the same thing at the same time.

Miller and Marlatt (1998) suggested the following ways to be successful with resolutions:

- Have a strong initial commitment to make a change.
- Have coping strategies to deal with problems that will come up.
- Keep track of your progress. The more monitoring you do and the more feedback you get, the better you will do.

Woolley and Fishbach found that only enjoyment predicted the long-term persistence of a resolution. People don't stick to their plan to attain their goal just because achieving it is important to them. What really matters is how much pleasure they take from their initial efforts to start a new way of behaving.

People should write down a detailed plan for their new way of behaving and keep to it. This allows them to consider what strategies to use when facing any sort of obstacle, difficulty, or resistance.

Clients should regularly remind themselves of the benefits associated with achieving their goals. They can do this by creating a checklist of how life will be better once they obtain their objective (Miracle Question anyone?!). And they should give themselves a small reward whenever they achieve a sub-goal on their route to their full goal.

That way they maintain motivation and a sense of progress. They should also display their progress in a concrete way, by putting stickers on a notice board or using an Excel spreadsheet or similar.

Of course, 1st January is not the best time of year to make a resolution. You're tired after Christmas and you may well have been drinking the night before. The good news is that there are lots of 'New Year's' throughout the year. There's Chinese New Year, Jewish New Year, etc. Try one of those when you're feeling fitter and healthier, and more in control of your life.

And how can we help a client if one day they do have a drink, a bar of chocolate, or a cigarette? Is that the end of the line for their New Year's resolution? I always get them to imagine the most wonderful bowl of fruit. It's an enormous bowl of fresh fruit with every fruit imaginable. One day, as you look at it, you notice there's one strawberry that's just got the tiniest amount of blue mould showing. I then ask clients what they would do. Would they throw away the whole bowl of fruit or just the single mouldy strawberry? The answer, I hope, is just the strawberry. It's a way of overcoming all-or-nothing thinking. One blip (one bar of chocolate or one drink) doesn't mean that all the previous effort (the bowl of fruit) needs to be thrown away. They can continue with their resolution. Everyone has ups and downs; clients can expect to revert to old habits when pushed back into their primitive brain, but they can recover from these lapses and get back on track.

Interestingly, a study published in the Journal of Clinical Psychology found that those who set New Year's resolutions are 10 times more likely to actually change their behaviour than people who don't make any resolutions.

New Year's resolutions don't have to be made on 1st January. People can resolve to make changes to their life at any time in the year that suits them. They need to choose a realistic goal, plan for the change, break the change up in to smaller steps, prepare for what to do when faced with situations where the old habit would have taken place, set SMART targets, tell everyone what they are resolved to do, reward themselves when they achieve each small step, and not get too distraught with the occasional lapse. And, of

course, their friendly neighbourhood Solution Focused Hypnotherapist is there to help them every step of the way and to celebrate their successes with them!

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#### About the writer:

Trevor Eddolls is the Head of IT & Social Media for the AfSFH and is a regular contributor to the journal. He runs his hypnotherapy practice in Chippenham and is also a Supervisor.



# The benefits of... an audit?!

By Nicola Taylor

In April 2019, the AfSFH undertook an audit process in order to sample 10% of our membership across the year to support our aim in providing the highest possible standards in our practice. This action followed the review of our Code of Conduct, Ethics and Performance, which states the minimum requirement of 6 hours of Supervision and 15 hours of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activity per annum.

Sometimes we may think that an audit can be a negative experience, but shown below is a comment from an AfSFH member from Plymouth, who reflects on the importance of the audit process, and how Supervision and CPD help with professional practice (all comments printed with kind permission):

*"I would like to just say what a great idea the audit process is and how painless and beneficial it is for members of the AfSFH and people looking for professional therapists. I feel it is very important that members maintain a high standard of competence and ensure that we adhere to the professional standards required by such an exceptional group.*

*Supervision is always a great help and always friendly. It not only helps members to get great advice with present clients but also gives us a boost in confidence and helps us to get re-focused and motivated to do what we are good at...helping others. CPD helps members to keep up with professional standards and re-energises our enthusiasm to continue our fantastic therapy. It is an honour to be part of such a great group of professionals"*

**– Gary Burge, AfSFH Solution Focused Hypnotherapist practicing in Plymouth.**

Each month a random sample of members is generated. The selected members then receive an e-mail requesting they provide evidence of the AfSFH minimum requirements for CPD and Supervision within 28 days.

Member Kevin Turner also offers advice for a successful audit process and reflects on the benefits:

*"Initially, I felt my stress bucket fill until I actually thought the request through. I am already a Physiotherapist and used to collecting evidence of my CPD activities and I had been keeping a log of my hypnotherapy learning as I went. I decided to arrange it in a more coherent way and send it in to see if I was doing this in the correct way. I am glad that I had already been keeping a log of my activities and reflecting on them as this formed the basis of my evidence. If I had not done this there would have been too much work to do in the time I had been given. I thought the process was good for me as it made me revisit what I had been doing and learn things twice over which helped me consolidate my knowledge. I also now know that what I am doing is at the correct standard and enables me to feel more confident moving forwards"*

**– Kevin Turner, Chartered Physiotherapist and AfSFH Solution Focused Hypnotherapist.**

Organisation is key for a successful audit response. Kevin reminds us of the importance of keeping records of our CPD and Supervision and, in particular, taking time to not just record the activities but to reflect on them. The AfSFH website provides templates and logs to support members in getting the most from their Supervision and CPD activities. Obtaining verified evidence of Supervision from your Supervisor is also important and although signatures are not always possible to attain, receipts and confirmation e-mails from Supervisors can also be accepted.

Heena Rai, a Wiltshire-based SFH practitioner and author, describes how the audit process has helped her:

*"The auditing process helps you become conscious and proactive rather than passive and reactive. It is great for sharing ideas, improving techniques in the areas that you are passionate about, and to help grow you and your business. Not only does it show you how far you have grown as a therapist, but also helps improve the service that you provide to others".*

A member need not worry if, on reflection, they find that the minimum standards have not been met. As a Solution Focused Association, we are here to help our members and to support them in the best way we can.

The most satisfying element for me as the AfSFH Head of Professional Standards, has been working with our members who may be struggling or finding things difficult and helping them to set goals for improving their practice. It is amazing to see how members have been helped in getting back on track and in re-igniting their passion. This is when the audit process is at its best and demonstrates the importance in working in a solution focused way in everything we do!



#### **About the writer:**

Nicola qualified in 2017 and practices in Abergavenny, South Wales. She is training as a Supervisor and is Head of Professional Standards for the AfSFH.

## Brainbox: Exploring CORP results

In this article, Matthew Cahill shares some of the latest CORP figures, and reflects on some of the key findings from data recorded by CORP users.

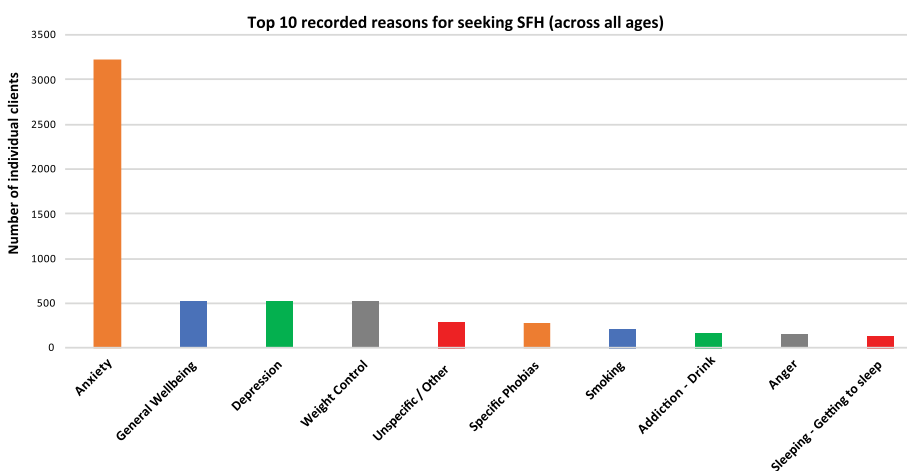
It's hard to believe that over 10 years ago I started my journey of measuring outcomes, back then there was no such thing as CORP (CPHT Outcomes and Research Programme). Anything close was extremely expensive, slow and there was no option to do any backups, consequently, I have lost more outcomes than I wish to remember. Fast forward 10 years, and we have a unique opportunity to measure all our outcomes with ease and become part of the largest real-world research and outcomes collaboration in the history of Hypnotherapy!

As always, thank you for helping us to collate the data we need to compile this important ongoing research and outcomes programme into the effectiveness of Solution Focused Hypnotherapy (SFH). CORP is a useful tool for reflecting on our clients' progress and a great tool for generating our own data for marketing purposes. The tool can record all kinds of information, including self-reported scaling across a variety of areas. As therapy progresses, practitioners and clients can observe and reflect on the progress in each of these areas and adapt accordingly. It can be very motivating for clients to see how much they have changed in graph form!

The scale of this practitioner-wide analysis is incredible. We have collated results from all CORP users and the number of sessions measuring outcomes now totals nearly 40,000 client hours with more than 7,500 client responses anonymously recorded with the use of scaling tailored for CORP!

The number of conditions which are currently being scaled by practitioners totals 44, with help sought for a broad range of problems from addictions to food, drink and gambling through to anxiety-based issues (including fears associated with driving). Figure 1 shows the top 10 reasons recorded for clients seeking SFH across all age ranges, with Anxiety being the greatest reason recorded. As well as the 10 issues shown, help with Pain, addiction to drugs, anxiety around driving, compulsive eating, Irritable Bowel Syndrome, and relationship issues were all frequent issues recorded for clients seeking help.

Figure 1: Graph showing the most common reasons recorded in CORP for SFH



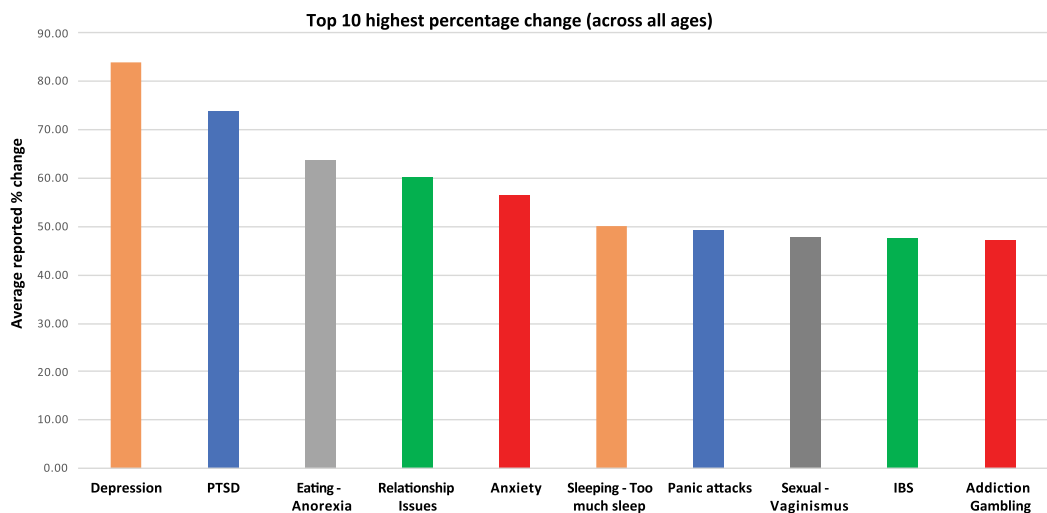
Members have also seen clients seeking help with eating based disorders, chemotherapy treatments and obstacles associated with sports performance, poor sleep and relationships.

As you'd expect, CORP covers areas more regularly associated with SFH, such as help with stopping smoking, overcoming phobias together with help for weight management and depression.

Some of the outcomes are amazing. More than 90 clients sought help to improve their confidence behind the wheel. Altogether, these sessions totalled 432 hours with the greatest positive change recorded in the 25-34 years old age group. These drivers recorded an incredible overall average change of more than 52% over the course of sessions!

Clients coming to see us for help in easing symptoms associated with depression had the highest overall percentage change of 84.08% across all age groups. What a fantastic result! The next highest percentage changes reported were for PTSD, Anorexia, Relationship issues and Anxiety, with the top 10 issues showing the highest percentage changes across all ages shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Graph showing the top 10 issues with the largest average percentage change



The data also show results for clients seen with eating disorders. We saw an average 157.03% change in 18-20 year-olds suffering with Anorexia and a 166.44% average change in 65+ year olds with Bulimia.

Results also showed an average 237.20% change in the 35-44 year-old age bracket of clients who sought help for chemotherapy treatment. Solution Focused Hypnotherapy was also able to assist people overcome relationship issues, with a 60% average change recorded across all age groups. The average greatest amount of change recorded across all conditions was in the 35-44 year-old age groups (average change of 50.94%).

It is an impressive amount of data, reflecting many hours of positive, life-changing work. Let's strive to hit 100,000 hours in 2020!

If you would like to find out more information about CORP, log in to your local CPHT satellite school website and click on the CORP Research tab. Alternatively, go to [www.corp-outcomes.com](http://www.corp-outcomes.com). For further help you can also email: [corpoutcomes@btinternet.com](mailto:corpoutcomes@btinternet.com).



**About the writer:**

Matthew qualified in 2004 at CPHT Bristol. He is a senior lecturer for CPHT, has an AHD and is an author. He is a co-founder of CORP and runs his SFH practice in Plymouth.



## Self-care for Solution Focused Hypnotherapists

By Sacha Taylor

I don't know about you, but one of the main reasons I decided to retrain and become a SFH was to help other people and it's still the main reason for me now, 5 years and 3 relocations later, it's what keeps me going when business is quiet or I'm starting out again from scratch somewhere new.

Just the other day, at an IC with a new client, I asked him what his hobbies/interests were, and his response was simply "I don't have any anymore, I don't have time". When I asked what things he used to enjoy doing, the list was long and full of positive activities and interactions, and no surprises, his life was infinitely better compared to the space he is in now. I'm excited for his journey to come, rediscovering those activities and getting his life back on track with solutions.

When it comes to us as therapists, one of the main benefits of our solution focused work is that our sessions don't focus on the problem, and the client sees benefit after a reasonably short time, 8-12 sessions typically, so the phenomenon of 'therapist burn-out' is rare in our line of work, compared to other talking therapies, where all focus is

on the problems and the process can take years. But therapist burn-out can still happen for us. Sometimes it can sneak up on us gradually, sometimes it seems to come out of the blue when we feel overwhelmed suddenly and our primitive minds leap into action... Over the years, I've chatted to a few colleagues who have gone through this and have found myself there too and, simply put, the one thing that always unites us is we've stopped practicing what we preach.

Being a Solution Focused Hypnotherapist is truly wonderful and fulfilling but being self-employed is really challenging. Being solely responsible for your business is overwhelming at times. The inconsistency of our monthly income, compared to being traditionally employed with a guaranteed income, can be scary. So, making time to look after ourselves is crucial to maintaining a healthy balance and producing ample serotonin so we can cope with the challenges and be happy and successful, no matter what life throws at us.

So, here's a question for you: When was the last time you consciously engaged in a positive activity or

interaction to lift you or did something to actively reverse a stressful mood you've found yourself in? Or put another way, what do you do to cope with stressful situations in your life; how do you employ what you know about the brain in your day-to-day life to remain solution focused and overcome the challenges you face?

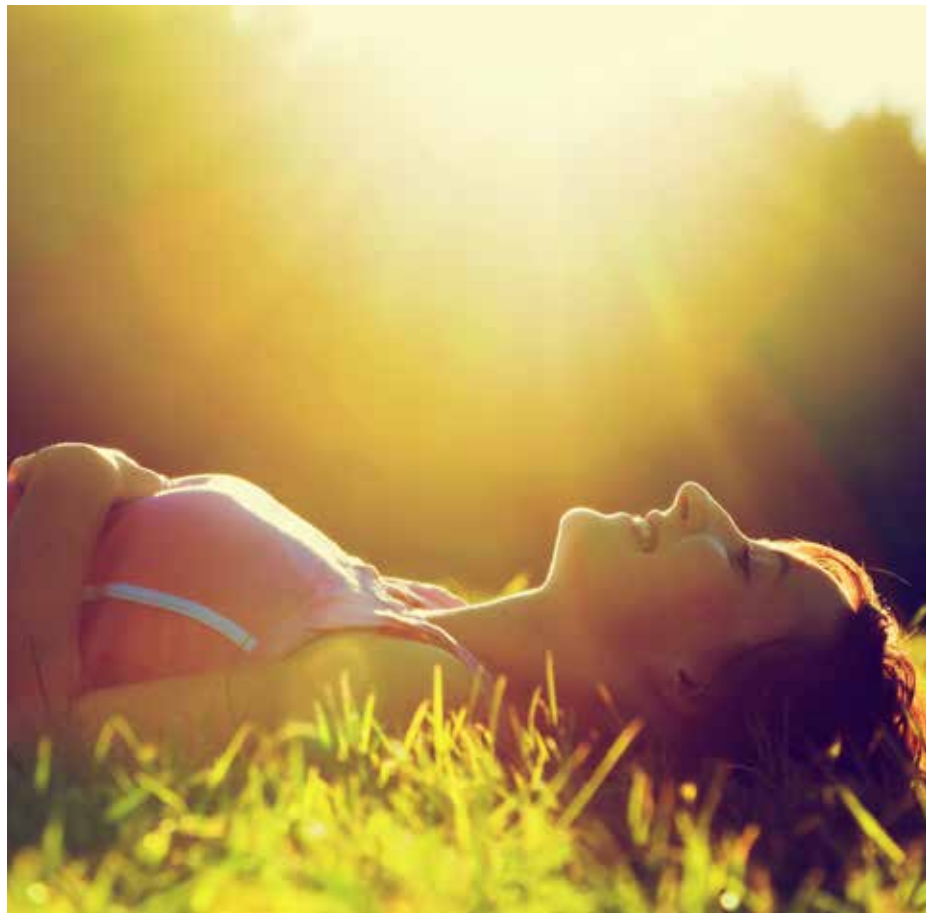
If you can't think of anything recently, or you recognize you're not doing enough, then please read on to get inspired and find solutions to help you get the most out of life. And if you're already engaged and living the SFH way, then see if there are any suggestions here to add to your repertoire. Better yet, if you have any ideas to add to the list of self-care suggestions, please send them in to us (email it@afsfh.com) to add to our dedicated self-care page!

### Boundaries

Firstly, let's address one of the key things we need to manage well as self-employed individuals – your boundaries.

In terms of your availability, it can be very easy, especially when we're first starting out, to be too flexible and say 'yes' to every appointment going – evenings, weekends, 6+ sessions in a single day and suddenly you find yourself overwhelmed with no time for yourself, or all the other things you need to do in a week (family time, marketing, other jobs, eating, sleeping, etc.!). Be clear how many hours you want to work a day/week and what times you are willing to offer and **STICK TO IT!** If you don't want to work weekends and that's all a prospective client can do at first contact, you will quickly find they can manage to fit in a weekday slot when you tell them your availability. One of my first paying clients fit this description and found their own solution, arranging to leave work early on Friday afternoons. Not only did they make great progress, they loved and benefitted from the early start to their weekend and decided to maintain the early Friday finish after our sessions came to an end – a good boundary for them to keep their 'me time' too!

Also, when are your days off? Establish those early and again, stick to them. It's so important you have time for yourself to do things you enjoy, so take good care of yourself and make sure you have time off – it's one of the key benefits to being self-employed, don't overlook it!



When are your 'admin' days/times? Don't forget to schedule time in your week to do marketing, accounting, or anything else you need to keep your business working well for you. Imagine you are the boss of a business with employees – you want them to work smart to get the most benefit to your business, so you wouldn't ask them to work 50+ hours a week with no structure. This boundary can be hard to maintain, but it will keep you focused and successful if you do.

Next up, the SFH basic staple of the 3Ps:

### Positive Thought, Positive Activity & Positive Interaction

What are your hobbies and interests? How do you make sure you have time in your busy week to engage in them regularly? Here are some suggestions of things you can do to achieve your 3Ps:

**Thoughts:** switching off devices/ Facebook/Twitter/news channels etc. and engaging in meditation, mindfulness, reading, puzzles like crosswords/sudoku, listening to music, keeping a journal with positive highlights reminding you of your successes.

**Activity:** sports, yoga/pilates, hobbies/crafts, going to the gym, walking or jogging, going to the theatre/cinema, completing tasks that will ultimately benefit you but that you've been putting off, learning a new skill. One therapist even mentioned doing squats or star jumps in between seeing clients (a great way to ensure we are not sitting down for too many hours at a time!).

**Interaction:** meeting up with friends, family or peers, joining local clubs for networking/socializing, group/team sports, joining a local drama group or dance classes, spending quality time with family, attending CPDs and supervision.

All of these examples, and any others that you can think of, support us in maintaining that much needed constant flow of serotonin, so we are nice, happy, coping souls! They give us healthy doses of lots of the other good chemicals that support us too and it is essential to make time in your busy schedule to engage in your 3Ps, in the same way you find time every day to brush your teeth or have a shower; it needn't take more than 5, 10, or 15 minutes a day to get you off to the best start, and it ties in with those much-needed boundaries discussed above.

## Reciprocal Therapy

Whilst we do our best to keep ourselves ticking over, there can be times in life when challenging situations give us a full stress bucket and this is where reciprocal therapy can really help us. I've helped several fellow colleagues with sessions over the years, and then I went through a particularly difficult period in my own life two years ago. It was affecting everything negatively. My bucket was full, my primitive mind was over-active, and my sleep started to suffer. That was when I contacted a fellow SFH and asked for some sessions to get me back on track and within the very first session, lots of pennies dropped, clarity started to return and another two sessions later, I was fully back to my happy, coping, sleeping self! And some months later, when that therapist had a challenging period in their life, I returned the favour, and within just a few sessions, they too were back on track. The AfSFH has recently updated the list of SFH who are ready and willing to offer colleagues reciprocal therapy free of charge (see <https://afsfh.com/self-care-reciprocal-therapy>), so here are some helpful hints to make the most out of your sessions together:

**Don't combine sessions** – whoever needs it most goes first as the 'client' and has sessions until they are feeling back on track. Thereafter you can swap roles. If you try to do it all in one weekly 2-hour slot, swapping roles after the first hour, sessions can become muddled, and it can be hard to swap mindsets, especially if one might be having a tougher time than the other. Also, your brains will find it harder to process what's been discussed and it's hard to concentrate for that period of time and keep things fresh, so go one at a time. Also, when you are in the role of therapist, you might naturally gain insight that benefits you in your own thought processes, but you maintain your SF approach and stay in your intellectual mind by maintaining your therapist mindset throughout the other's sessions.

**Stick to the full IC for your first session** – just because you know it inside out, doesn't mean you should jump straight to session 1 with a colleague. Each IC explanation will deliver key insight and information specific to your colleague-client and give you important structure as their therapist, so it's really important to follow the sessions just as you would with a paying client. I was surprised how much I learned from my own IC with my colleague, that I hadn't understood when I was trying to cope on my own.

**Don't charge for the sessions** – even if the person in the role of therapist feels they don't need sessions for themselves, they may do in future, possibly years later, so keep a note and be ready to help them at some point in the future. If you offer sessions for free, you also get enormous benefit from the kindness. And remember to only offer to do it if you can accommodate an hour for free in your diary for an appropriate number of weeks. Rather than say yes to any/all requests you get, manage your schedule so you don't feel negative about the help you're giving. It's better to be upfront and say you haven't got space at this time, then you can let them decide if they will wait for you or will seek out someone else, just as we do with our clients. And there we are again, back to those boundaries!

## Some other strategies

Don't overlook supervision – although you must complete at least six hours a year to comply with AfSFH membership requirements, this is of course only a minimum. Spending time with a supervisor who supports you will benefit you and your business hugely. Being able to let off steam about that tricky Warrior client or find a new strategy with the client who seems to be losing momentum, or simply sharing experiences and ideas to help you move forward in your practice will boost your confidence and self-esteem (a huge help with our own stress buckets!).

Lastly, a simple but helpful way to make sure you stay solution focused in your life is to do what I like to call 'sessioning myself'! I have a diary with a day-per-page view and, when I feel a little challenged or need some added clarity, I get it out and write down 'what's been good' recently. Then I scale myself, write the number down and MQ myself, writing down the things I'd be doing differently when I'm a notch higher on that scale. Sometimes I only need to do it once and I'm clear and focused again on what I need to do to feel back on track. Sometimes I'll do it every few days for a week or more if I need reassurance that I'm managing well, despite the challenges I'm facing.

Self-care is hugely important when we are self-employed, because it takes discipline when we suddenly have complete freedom to manage our working days. The good news is, it's never too late to start new habits to benefit you or refresh older ones that have slipped behind in a busy world. You matter – to yourself, to your family, to your friends and to your clients.

So, make 2020 your year for self-care – you won't regret it!



### About the writer:

Sacha runs her hypnotherapy practice in Bath. She is a qualified Supervisor and is the Head of Finance for the AfSFH.



## Spreading the word!

By Janet Dowling

I was asked by the editor of Hypnotherapy Today to write an article to share how I was able to create opportunities that have found me presenting to a wide range of audiences. It's actually taken me longer to write this than I expected as I found it quite uncomfortable writing about myself. Helen asked me because I've had some success in public speaking. Most recently I was asked to present to the Chief of Police and his senior management team at Gloucestershire Constabulary's Strategic Planning Meeting, which has opened a whole new aspect to my business. I hope however that this account shows you that it hasn't all been plain sailing and that there's a certain amount of self-belief and adaptability needed.

I knew whilst I was still training at CPHT that I wanted to present to larger audiences as well as working with individual clients. I saw it as a way to share what I see as an invaluable way of thinking with people, who may not have access to our individual therapy sessions. And I absolutely love speaking to large groups, I get a buzz from the interaction and the sharing of knowledge.

Prior to retraining as a SFH I had been a teacher for 25 years, ranging from teaching four year olds to teaching advanced business English to bankers in Singapore. The latter part of my teaching career was as a primary school teacher in Gloucestershire. Regular assemblies keeping 200 plus five to 11-year olds interested for 20 minutes was part of the job. I was also involved with training other teachers so presented to them too. I'm not sure who was the tougher crowd – children who yawned and fidgeted if you didn't quite pitch it right or teachers who started talking to each other if they felt they knew better. I quickly learnt how to judge an audience and adjust what I was doing to suit them.

There were 5 stages to becoming ready to be 'Janet Dowling Clinical Hypnotherapist public speaker'.

The first stage was deciding **who would be my audience**. For me, it was going to be primary school pupils, teachers and parents. I think our natural inclination is to keep to the familiar for security and we think we know what stresses are likely to be going into their metaphorical stress buckets. And of course, I had lots of contacts in this area. This is still an area in which I present to but not as much as I thought I would.

The next stage was **what I was going to present**. This was the quickest and easiest decision to make and it's one that hasn't changed in 4 years. I 'do' the IC – pretty much word for word with a few references to books and using, as David Newton advised, 'examples from their lives'. I don't know individuals in the audiences, but we can imagine what might go into the stress buckets of an eight-year-old, a teacher, a doctor, a shift worker, someone facing redundancy, a call handler for 999 calls, a newly widowed 70-year-old...I just shift my examples. I try to add humour and give examples from previous talks, for example a teenager at a secondary school talk said he worried that an asteroid would wipe out the planet before he got a life – that always gets a laugh because we can remember how melodramatic we could be at that age. When he said it, he knew how it sounded but he also really felt the lack of control he (and many teenagers) have over their lives.

Then I needed to think about **how I was going to present** the information. I do love technology but also realise the potential for it to go wrong so I quickly dismissed the idea of a PowerPoint style. I know many speakers successfully use this method, but it wasn't for me. I spent ages mentally developing resource based, highly interactive workshop style sessions. I even bought a bucket and balls to illustrate the stress bucket. Then I had coffee with a teacher friend who gave me some great advice that I often return to - KISS - Keep It Simple Stupid. That night my REM must have been on overdrive because I woke up the next morning knowing exactly what I needed to do. I would have my IC sheets printed onto large write-on-wipe-off boards and use those. The first sheet has an empty head (from my logo), some lines to write fight, flight, freeze and anger, anxiety, depression. The second sheet has an empty bucket, some more lines for me to draw the wiggly 'neurotransmitters and hormones and finally a box to write in the 3Ps. I'm still using those same boards four years on. I never have used the bucket and balls.



Finally, **I had to get bookings**. I practiced the presentation in the school that I had just left, and the feedback was promising from staff, pupils and parents. I intended to charge for staff meetings and lessons to the pupils but the talks to the parents were free as I felt that was a way of getting myself in front of potential clients. I then contacted the local schools where I still knew people and they all took me up on the free parent talk. I did gain quite a few clients from these and still do even though it's over three years since I gave the talks.

Because the feedback was so positive, I contacted all the schools in the area. I phoned each school to ask who the right person would be to email. I sent the emails but had no take up. It was disheartening, especially as all the initial responses I'd had from the phone calls had been encouraging. One secretary even rang me back to ask if the school had booked me. She was surprised that they hadn't even booked the free parent talk.



Momentarily, I thought about giving up on the talks, but it felt like such a good idea and I had received some fabulous feedback. I'd also had the boards made and I wanted my money's worth. At this point, I turned my attention to who else might be interested in listening to 'Managing Stress and the Importance of Sleep'. Fortunately, over the years of teaching I'd built up a good rapport with many of the parents. One had contacted me through LinkedIn when he saw I'd left teaching and wondered what I was up to. When I replied I asked him if he'd be willing to meet to give me some advice on working within businesses. He is a straight talking, no nonsense business owner and I knew he'd give me an honest response. I walked out of our meeting with him not only booking me to talk to staff in all of his six offices, but he also offered any member of staff up to 12 sessions with me. The talks were received well and overnight I had 19 new clients.

This gave me the confidence to push for more talks. I started ringing the larger local businesses and I did have one success with the headquarters for SuperGroup (Super Dry) and now present at their Lunch and Learns. However, I discovered that cold calling/emailing didn't work so well for me, so I had to be more creative. I knew that once someone had seen the talk, they were more likely to recommend me to others. Schools can be quite insular and strapped for money and time. Businesses are inundated with sales emails and calls and can be wary of something unknown. I needed to get in front of influential, well connected people. Another coffee with another friend and the answer was simple - the WI. I started another bout of phoning and contacted all the local WIs. Again, I had a great response and although I made four bookings most had already booked their speakers for the rest of the year. I learnt quickly that the WI are super organised. Luckily one of the ladies I spoke to arranged the three monthly New Speakers Auditions and invited me to the next one. This is not for the faint hearted as you have 20 minutes to present part of your full talk and about 60 representatives from the local WIs grade you - excellent, good, average, poor - on slips of paper. Thankfully, you don't get to see the results. They clearly liked what I showed them as I had over ten bookings by the time I got home and to date have had nearly 50 bookings.

From these talks I've gained many individual clients as well as introductions to working with Cruse Bereavement Counselling, MNDA, local private schools, Probus, U3A and Gloucestershire Constabulary. As anticipated, members of the WI are indeed well connected.

As my confidence grew and I shared my experiences within the networking groups I attended, members of the groups started to ask me if I could adapt the talks to their work situations. I have become involved with supporting students at University of Gloucestershire, training for CIPD, providing HR support in a large national company facing redundancies and restructuring as well as charity events to support MS Society, Maggie's cancer support and a local Day Care Centre.

I've enjoyed all of my talks but the first talk I did for the 999 call handlers was perhaps the most challenging as it was the first non-teacher adult talk I did that was compulsory for staff. It was clear from the outset by the body language that some of them did not want to be there. To be fair to them, the heading of the talk was Janet Dowling Clinical

Hypnotherapist and that was it. So, they didn't really know what they were going to be listening to. The organisers had also asked me to do a relaxation at the end. When I reminded them to complete the anonymous feedback form, I made a point of asking for negative as well as positive comments. I explained that this was the first of five talks and I wanted them to be a good use of their precious time and useful. One of the responses was that the relaxation was 'embarrassing'. The trainer was upset for me and reassured me that this was the only negative comment. I however saw this as an opportunity in the subsequent talks to highlight that a guided relaxation wasn't the only way to relax and for some it might feel strange but to use the time wisely and, if they didn't like it, to think about what they did like doing to relax. The outcome of these talks was that the Chief of Staff had heard how well received they were and invited me to present to the Chief of Police. I was one of two speakers of the day, the other being a Red Arrows pilot.

I think what I've gained from these experiences is that when we learnt the IC off by heart, we were given not only an invaluable guide for our own lives but for others too. I feel it's important to be yourself and to not pretend to be something you're not. I have been introduced as a sleep expert on many occasions. I laugh and say something along the lines of 'I might be an expert at sleeping but I'm not a sleep expert, my expertise lies in teaching and Solution Focused Hypnotherapy'.

It's also good to not be too precious about what we do. There are many misconceptions about what hypnotherapy is and I don't get offended by the questions like: "will you make me cluck like a chicken?". My original response was: "only if you want me to". My husband suggested that I refined it to: "Hmmm that's quite an unusual request so I'd charge more for that". I try to make my audience feel that no question is daft, and no question is likely to offend me. If I don't know the answer, I say I don't.

I also make it clear that I'm not there to talk about hypnotherapy but how the brain works, why we suffer with anger, anxiety, depression...you all know the rest! Of course, if they want to ask me how Solution Focused Hypnotherapy can help them, I'm more than happy to inform them. I want participants to feel they've learnt something useful not been sold to. I've realised that my best advert is me. I try to live in a Solution Focused way, and I think that comes across to people who meet me.

And, of course, when in doubt...KISS!



**About the writer:**

Janet has an extensive background in teaching and qualified in SFH in 2014. She runs her SFH practice from two locations in Gloucestershire.

## All about you!

In this section, we explore some of the feedback received from the recent AfSFH Members' survey about your plans for 2020.

### Survey results...

In the first question in the survey we asked if you offered any Christmas or New Year discounts - 18% said they did, but the majority said they did not (82%). In the second question, we asked whether you had thought about/planned specific marketing activities for 2020. It was a fairly even split, with 51% saying they had, with 49% saying they had not. The tables below show further results:

Q3. What are your best hopes for your hypnotherapy business for 2020? (Multiple selections)	Response rate (% of all votes)
Increase my advertising	14.5
Focus on building more networks	11.4
Increasing my referrals	26.04
Undertaking more professional development activities (supervision, CPDs, further qualifications)	16.6
Having a better work/life balance	20.83
Other	10.41

'Other' hopes included getting more clients, to keep running things as they are, and to work on further training.

Q4. For the year ahead, what do you plan to focus on most? (Multiple selections)	Response rate (% of all votes)
Developing digital aspects of my business (website, social media, advertising etc)	12.5
Developing non-digital aspects of my business (attending networking groups, paper advertising etc.)	8.6
Develop my speaking engagements to local businesses/groups/clubs etc.	18.2
Developing my skills and knowledge	26.9
Developing working with clients online	9.61
Arranging more group therapy/relaxation sessions	12.5
Other	1.9

'Other' areas of focus included working with children in schools and reducing client work-load.

**Thank you to everyone who took part in the survey! Lots of interesting things for us all to think about!**

### In case you missed it:

We recently updated our Code of Conduct and have published some guidelines for conducting therapy online. Please take some time to read these important documents, which can be found in our Policy library in the Standards area of our website: <https://afsfh.com/professional-standards>.

Thank you to all contributors and people who have helped make this publication possible. The AfSFH was established in 2010 to represent the practice of Solution Focused Hypnotherapy as a distinct profession in its own right. Membership is open to those practitioners who have appropriate qualifications and experience within the field.

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## Help us continue to spread the SFH word!

Join us on Twitter: [@afsfh](https://twitter.com/afsfh)

Or follow us on the public-facing Facebook page – we often publish items that you can share on your own FB business pages. Just search for: **Association for Solution Focused Hypnotherapy** on Facebook or scan the barcode here to join:



If you are a Registered member, or a Student in your 8th month of training, you can also join the closed AfSFH Facebook group at: [www.facebook.com/groups/Afsfh/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/Afsfh/) Once we receive your request to join, we will verify your membership and add you to the group!



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# Committee Members



## Chairman and Trustee: Nicola Griffiths

Nicola trained in Solution Focused Hypnotherapy in 2007. She is passionate about maintaining the integrity of Solution Focused Hypnotherapy and ensuring that the AfSFH continues to support its members. She is a Senior Lecturer at Belfast and Manchester and is also a Supervisor.



## Trustee: Susan Rodrigues

Susan is the key interface between CPHT and the AfSFH. As CPHT course co-ordinator, her crucial role allows her to organise key speakers and post-CPHT training to ensure your CPD (Continuous Professional Development) is maintained to the highest standards. She is also a senior lecturer with CPHT and was one of AfSFH's first supervisors!



## CEO and Editor: Helen Green

Helen has a background in Psychology and clinical research. She is proud to be the CEO for the AfSFH and wants to continue to raise the public profile of the Association and the work of its members.

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## Head of Finance: Sacha Taylor

Sacha has been a member of AfSFH since 2014 and loves a good spreadsheet, so keeping the finances in order for the Association is an enjoyable challenge for her! She offers administrative support to the Association's CEO as well and is happy to help support all her SF colleagues whenever needed.

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## Head of IT and Social Media: Trevor Eddolls

Trevor, a regular writer and speaker about solution-focused hypnotherapy, has more than 30 years of IT experience and he looks after our website and associated social media (including our Twitter account @ AfSFH). You will probably have seen his posts on Facebook - both the closed group and the public-facing page.

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## Head of Membership: Anne Wyatt

Anne oversees all aspects of the renewal and processing of membership applications for the AfSFH. She is passionate about ensuring members are fully supported and in promoting the AfSFH.

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## Head of Professional Standards: Nicola Taylor

Nicola has an extensive background in teaching and education. Her goals are to promote high standards and best practice amongst AfSFH members, and to ensure that the Association supports members in achieving these.

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## Head of Marketing: Andrew Major

Andrew has a professional background in marketing. He is eager to continue the wider promotion and awareness of SFH and the work of the AfSFH and its members.

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