

# HYPNOTHERAPY TODAY

Association for Solution Focused Hypnotherapy

Edition 43, Summer 2024

## *Positive psychology* *A practical approach*



*Also in this issue:*

ADHD and neuroplasticity

Spotlight on confidentiality

Our new Fellows

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Association for  
SOLUTION FOCUSED HYPNOTHERAPY

# All about you!

## Annual poll – how we're working now

I'm very grateful to everyone who completed the Facebook group poll about how we're working now. This digest should be viewed with a little caution – a limited proportion of our overall membership contributed – but it should give us an idea of current trends. Some questions were new for this poll so don't have a previous result. I hope you find it interesting!

AfSFH poll 2024	2024 (%)	Previously (%)
1 I work a mixture of online and face to face	58	42
2 I work mainly or solely online	17	14
3 I work mainly or solely face to face	25	44
4 I'm working full time as a SFH	58	-
5 I'm working part time as a SFH	31	-
6 I'm working part time as a SFH but would like to be full time	11	-
7 I dress in a businesslike way for work - suit or equivalent	0	2
8 I dress smart-casual for work	53	63
9 I'm pretty casual in my work dress	45	31
10 I wear my logo on my work clothes	2	4
11 I work from home	77	62
12 I rent premises	23	38
13 I'm busier than three years ago or when I qualified	77	77
14 I'm quieter than three years ago or when I qualified	8	23
15 I'm working about the same	15	-
16 I'm hoping to grow my business	56	70
17 I'm hoping to scale back my business	3	1
18 I'm happy with the size of my business	41	27
19 I find online marketing most useful	42	50
20 I find traditional marketing most useful	4	0
21 I use a mix of online and traditional marketing	54	50
22 I don't network with other SFHs	0	-
23 I network with other SFHs locally	52	70
24 I network with other SFHs nationally	44	-
25 I'd like to network with other SFHs more	4	30

## Help us continue to spread the SFH word!

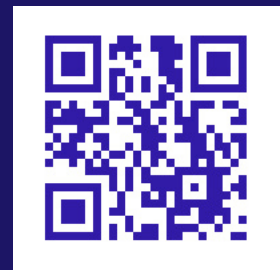
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Or follow us on the public-facing Facebook page – we often publish items that you can share on your own FB business pages. Just search for: **Association for Solution Focused Hypnotherapy** on Facebook or scan the barcode here to join:



If you are a Registered member, or a Student in your eighth 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!



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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## A Message from the Editor ...

Hello, and welcome to our summer edition of *Hypnotherapy Today*.

I'll start by reporting further changes to our Executive Committee. As you may have seen in our newsletter, our longest-serving member and Fellow of the AfSFH, Trevor Eddolls, has, after over 12 years of dedicated service, decided to step down from his role as Head of IT and Social Media. He'll be much missed by his Committee colleagues in the day-to-day running of the AfSFH, but is still a very valued member of our Association and community. In fact, he's written this issue's focus piece on positive psychology. Thanks for all your hard work, Trevor! We look forward to following your solution-focused adventures in the future.

Trevor's moving on has given the Executive the opportunity to reframe his role, better to reflect its current focus. To that effect we have recently recruited our new Head of Social Media and Digital Platforms, and would like to welcome Emma Naughton to the Executive team! Emma has extensive experience of managing social media campaigns and is keen to get started on that of the AfSFH. We'll be introducing her fully in the next issue, but for now we can all wish her the best in her new role.

We've the usual mix of interesting articles for you in this issue of the Journal, with a really positive focus on constructive hints and tips to improve our practice. Many thanks to everyone who has contributed. The next issue's filling up fast, but I'm always pleased to hear from potential contributors, so if you have an

idea for an article then do get in touch at [comms@afsfh.com](mailto:comms@afsfh.com). Pieces should be around 500-1,800 words long and aimed at our professional membership. They can be about anything you think will be of interest to your fellow SFHs, so do get creative! You can find more details on the website at [afsfh.com/publications-journals/](http://afsfh.com/publications-journals/). If you have an idea for a contribution but aren't sure if it's appropriate, or how to take it further, do get in touch. I am more than happy to advise and support you to turn that spark into a published piece for a future issue of *Hypnotherapy Today*.

Happy reading!

*Sally*

Sally Hare,  
AfSFH Head of Communications



# Super support!

**Super supporter:**  
**Tim Maude, AfSFH Supervisor**

**In this feature we continue to get to know some of our fabulous Supervisors. All quotes printed with kind permission. Details of all our AfSFH Supervisors can be found in the Supervisor Directory at [afsfh.com](http://afsfh.com).**

**What do you feel are the greatest benefits of attending Supervision?**

When I first trained as a Hypnotherapist, I was surprised to find that I needed a Supervisor.

Thinks: *You mean I have to pay to have someone to Supervise me?*

I reluctantly signed up for Supervision, realising that this was a requirement for working in this field, but I didn't really like the idea of it. It's the word 'Supervision' that got me. I've had Supervisors all my working life. These were people who told me what to do, and told me off when I got things wrong.

Thinks: *I want to be independent. I don't want anyone telling me what to do.*

I attended my first group Supervision session, expecting to have to justify everything I had done since qualifying. I was pleasantly surprised to find several of the people I had trained with there in the room.

Thinks: *Well, at least I get to catch up with people I know.*

We sat in a big circle, and everyone was asked to say something that had gone well for them. This was not what I was expecting. When it came to my turn, I talked about a client whose life had been turned around after seeing me.

Thinks: *When am I going to have to talk about the things I got wrong?*

Then there were some harder questions, such as – how could you have made that success even better? What can you take from that success to use with other clients? These questions threw me a bit, but other people were chipping in too, and when it came to their turn, I found I could offer my own views.

Thinks: *These are hard questions ... but interesting as well.*

I noticed how our Supervisor didn't tell anyone they had done anything wrong. She just encouraged us to do better. So I signed up for the next group Supervision session. In that first year, I found myself attending far more Supervision than the minimum requirement.

Thinks: *This Supervision thing is quite good actually.*

I also had one or two tricky clients that I did not quite know how to deal with. I found that I could call my Supervisor for a quick

chat. All I ever received was praise, encouragement and a few pointers as to alternative ways to deal with my clients.

Thinks: *Could anyone do this job without Supervision?*

Throughout several years of building my Hypnotherapy practice, I have immensely enjoyed Supervision. I have found it encouraging and insightful, as well as challenging. It keeps me connected with my fellow Hypnotherapists everywhere.

One day, my Supervisor suggested that I might become a Supervisor myself. As Supervision had become one of the joyful things about my Hypnotherapy practice, I signed up for the next AfSFH Supervisors' course.

**What do you enjoy most in your role as Supervisor?**

The Supervision course itself took four or five months to complete, and included working with Supervisees to put into practice everything I was learning (and thank you all for putting up with me ... you know who you are).

Thinks: *Yawn – another night staying up late to complete my assignments.*

There were a lot of things to consider as I set out to work with my Supervisees. Firstly, a lot of practical stuff: everything from how to fit Supervision into a busy Hypnotherapy practice, to whether to provide biscuits at a face-to-face session.

The other big consideration was what style of Supervisor I would be. I thought of my own experience and what a good Supervision session was for me. The three words that sprung to my mind were – encouraging, positive, challenging.

Thinks: *If that's what I like, then maybe others will like that too.*

Another interesting thing that I found out was that my Supervisees have often had challenges growing their Hypnotherapy practice, and I realised that they were asking for a business coach as well as support with their casework. In my past working life, I have helped in the operation and development of three different small businesses, so I decided to include a business focus in my Supervision as well as the practice of Hypnotherapy.

And now, I love helping other Hypnotherapists, and seeing them grow in confidence and ability. It is a real pleasure to be of help.

Thinks: *I have just about hit my word count now. I'd better stop.*



**About the writer:**

Tim runs his Hypnotherapy practice in Fleet, Hampshire. He offers one-to-one and group Supervision online. He intends to be offering face-to-face group Supervision soon.

# Meet our new Fellows of the AfSFH

## What is Fellowship of the AfSFH?

Individuals designated AfSFH(Fellow) are members of the organisation who have been awarded Fellowship status in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the field of Solution Focused Hypnotherapy and the Association for Solution Focused Hypnotherapy. It is a prestigious honour that is awarded following peer nomination and majority vote by the AfSFH Executive Committee.

Earlier this year, the AfSFH Executive Committee were delighted to award designations of 'Fellow' to the following members, who were deemed to have made an outstanding contribution to the field of Solution Focused Hypnotherapy and the organisation itself:



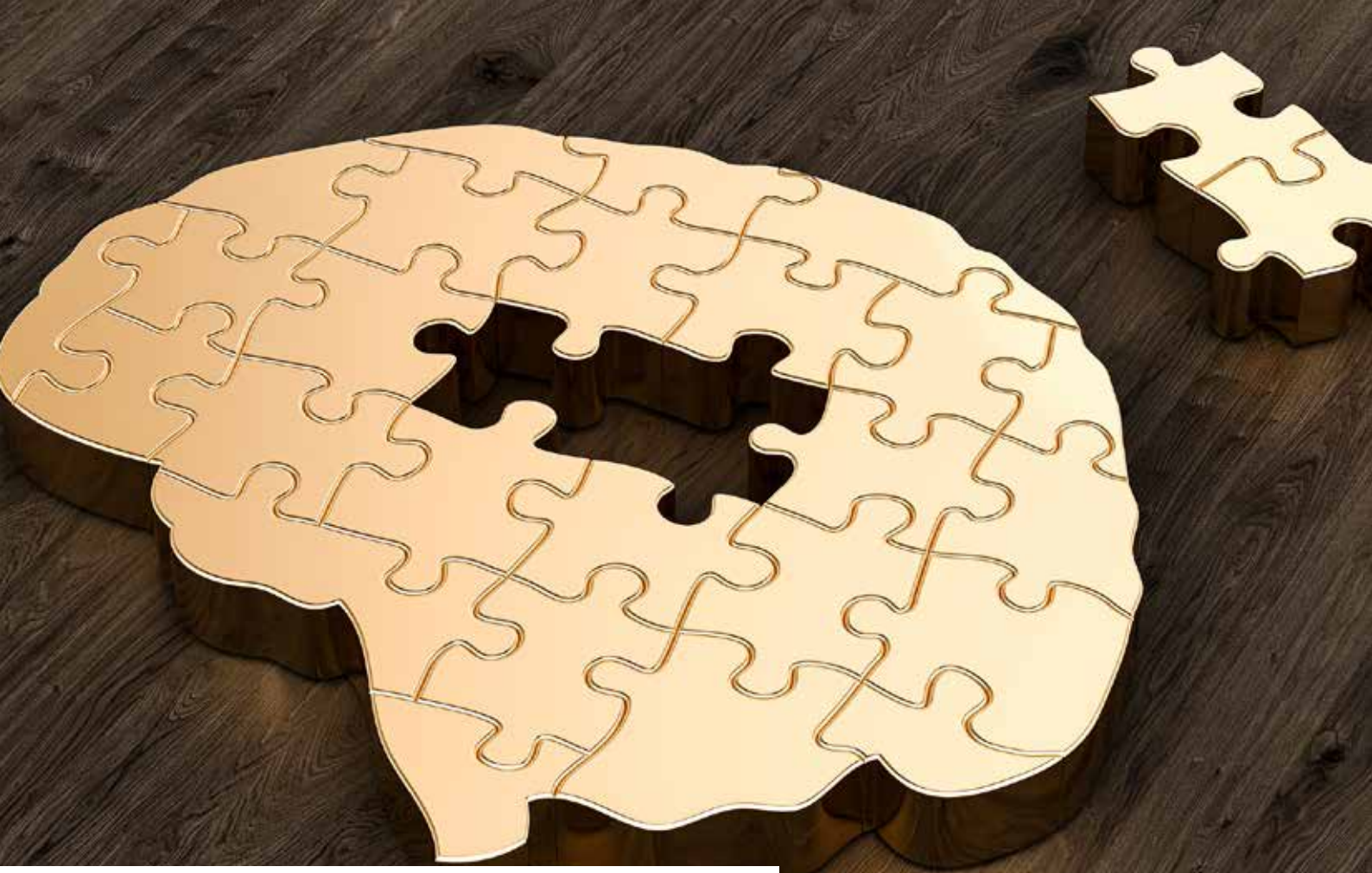
## Helen Green

Helen originally joined the AfSFH Executive Committee as Journal Editor and was then appointed Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in 2018. She stood down as CEO in 2024, making her the longest-serving CEO of the Association since it was founded. Her background is in psychology and clinical research and she qualified as a Solution Focused Hypnotherapist in 2012. Helen is also a qualified Supervisor and she runs a private Hypnotherapy practice in addition to working for a local charity, helping people with neurological conditions.



## Andy Workman

Andy is a very experienced practitioner and enthusiastic advocate of Solution Focused Hypnotherapy. Having qualified with CPHT Bristol in 2009, he went on to start his own highly successful practice. His book *Cavemen and Polar Bears* has proved to be popular with therapists and clients alike, and has been included on the CPHT suggested reading list. As well as continuing as a therapist, Andy is a very busy Supervisor and provides CPD events on a number of subjects, including PTSD and phobias amongst others. His reputation for public speaking has seen him spreading the good news about SFH to both social and corporate audiences across the world, including the UK, Europe and Australasia.



# Neuroplasticity and the ADHD brain

By Melanie Cook

*I can now recognise the coping strategies and strengths I have developed to be able to support myself through some challenging times.*

Living day to day with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) can often feel like navigating a maze without a map.

Diagnosed late in life, I can reflect on ways this condition has influenced my personal and professional journey, and I can now recognise the coping strategies and strengths I have developed to be able to support myself through some challenging times. I hold a lot more compassion for, and understanding of, the younger me as a result.

As a Solution Focused Hypnotherapist, I've come to appreciate the transformative power of neuroplasticity in managing and even thriving with ADHD. I notice this every day in my own life, and in the lives of clients and supervisees who are often also neurodivergent. Here, I'd like to share insights on how neuroplasticity offers hope and practical strategies for those with ADHD, drawing from my own experiences and professional practice.

## Understanding neuroplasticity

Neuroplasticity refers to the brain's remarkable ability to reorganise itself by forming new neural connections throughout life. This adaptability is particularly significant for individuals with ADHD, as it suggests that the brain can develop new pathways

to improve focus, impulse control, and executive functioning. For those diagnosed later in life like me, neuroplasticity provides a foundation for optimism: it's never too late to create positive change.

## ADHD and the brain

ADHD affects the brain's executive functions, which are crucial for planning, focusing attention, and managing impulses. Traditional views once considered these brain differences as static, but current research highlights the dynamic nature of the brain, underscoring the potential for growth and improvement through targeted interventions.

## Solution Focused Hypnotherapy and neuroplasticity

Solution Focused Hypnotherapy, as we know, is a therapeutic approach that emphasises the client's strengths and resources to foster change. By combining this approach with an understanding of neuroplasticity, Hypnotherapists can guide clients with ADHD to harness the brain's inherent adaptability.

## Here are some key techniques that can facilitate neuroplastic changes:

- **Positive visualisation:** visualisation exercises in Hypnosis can create new neural pathways. By imagining scenarios where they successfully manage ADHD symptoms, clients can begin to build the mental framework necessary for real-life improvements.
- **Goal setting:** clear, achievable goals are central to Solution Focused Hypnotherapy. Setting specific, measurable goals can help individuals with ADHD rewire their brains to develop better planning and organisational skills.
- **Mindfulness and relaxation:** Hypnotherapy incorporating relaxation techniques, reducing stress and improving focus, can strengthen the brain's ability to regulate attention and manage emotional responses. This is vital for individuals with ADHD. Also, this is one of the techniques that really helps me to gain space between my thoughts, and pauses the chaotic mind for a while. This helps me think more clearly and creatively. I literally feel the wires becoming untangled and the pressure releasing during trance, which has been one of the main things that has helped with my own ADHD in adult life.
- **Reframing and positive reinforcement:** shifting from a problem-focused mindset to one that highlights solutions can rewire the brain to seek out and reinforce positive behaviours and outcomes. This cognitive shift is essential for creating long-term changes.

### My personal journey with ADHD

Being diagnosed with ADHD later in life was both a revelation and a relief. It provided a framework to understand my lifelong challenges and validated my experiences. Even before I was diagnosed, through my own practice and by seeing other Solution Focused Hypnotherapists, I began to apply Solution Focused Hypnotherapy techniques to myself, discovering firsthand the power of neuroplasticity. I utilise positive visualisation to manage my time more effectively and set specific, attainable goals to improve my organisational skills. Mindfulness has become a daily practice, helping me to stay grounded and focused amidst the chaos. These techniques don't just alleviate symptoms; they fundamentally alter how my brain processes tasks and manages impulses. Other techniques I have found remarkably effective in managing symptoms throughout my life are the trusty 'Morning Pages', the daily practice of writing three A4 pages on waking to empty my brain of clutter and manage the tasks for the days, weeks and months ahead. Yoga I also find very helpful, walks in nature and time out to myself, maybe with my pets or uncomplicated friends. Most of my favourite people also have ADHD, and they are most definitely my favourite clients to work with, as there seems to be an unspoken bond between us all which does not need to be explained.

### Empowering individuals with ADHD

As a Hypnotherapist and Supervisor, my mission is to empower clients to realise their own potential. For those with ADHD, understanding and leveraging neuroplasticity can be life changing. Here are a few tips for fellow practitioners and individuals with ADHD:

- **Educate yourself and your clients:** understanding neuroplasticity can foster a sense of hope and possibility.
- **Tailor interventions:** customise Hypnotherapy sessions to focus on specific ADHD challenges, such as time

*For those with ADHD, understanding and leveraging neuroplasticity can be life changing.*



management or emotional regulation, if this is what the client identifies would be supportive.

- **Encourage consistency:** regular practice of Hypnotherapy techniques can reinforce new neural pathways, making positive changes more enduring.
- **Foster a strength-based approach:** emphasise clients' strengths and resources, encouraging them to view ADHD not as a deficit but as a different way of thinking and processing.
- **Inject a sense of humour:** one of the most important and helpful I find ...!

### Conclusion

Solution Focused Hypnotherapy offers a powerful tool for reimagining ADHD management. As someone who has walked this path both personally and professionally, I can attest to the profound impact of embracing the brain's adaptability. Through Solution Focused Hypnotherapy, we can guide individuals with ADHD to harness their own neuroplastic potential, creating a life that is not only manageable but truly fulfilling. Remember, the journey is ongoing, and with each step, the brain's capacity for change illuminates new possibilities.



#### About the writer:

Melanie Cook has practiced as a full-time SFH since 2010, and a Supervisor since 2020, in Bath city centre, at the Clifton Practice, and at Radstock and Paulton surgeries. Melanie was also a CPHT senior lecturer in North Wales while commuting to the area when caring for her now late father.



## ***Positive psychology – a practical approach***

By AfSFH Fellow, Trevor Eddolls

***One problem  
people often have  
with everyday life  
is remembering the  
good parts.***

Positive psychology began as a new domain of psychology in 1998, when Martin Seligman chose it as the theme for his term as president of the American Psychological Association. He felt that psychology, at that time, tended to focus on mental illness and negative thinking and behaviour.

### **A definition**

Positive psychology uses scientific understanding and effective intervention to aid in the achievement of a satisfactory life. Its focus is on personal growth, happiness, wellbeing, and purpose. According to positive psychology, happiness is improved and affected in many ways, for example: social ties with a partner, family, friends and wider networks through work, clubs, or social organisations. As we suspected, happiness increases with increasing financial income, but it reaches a plateau, and no additional pay rises make you any happier. It's also worth noting that physical exercise correlates with improved mental wellbeing.

As well as helping people change their negative style of thinking about other people, their future, and themselves, positive psychology also helps families and schools to allow children to grow; and it can be used to create workplaces that aim for satisfaction and high productivity.

In addition, positive psychology focuses on: positive emotions (being content with your past, being happy in the present, and having hope for the future); positive individual traits (your strengths and virtues); and positive institutions (strengths to improve a community of people).

One problem people often have with everyday life is remembering the good parts. We've all done it – most of the day was good except for an hour in the afternoon when things went wrong. And that's the bit we remember and tell people about! One way to get an accurate record of how clients feel during a typical day is to have people (scientists) use beepers to remind them to write down the details of how they currently feel – hopefully not irritated because a beeper has just gone off!

Basically, this illustrates the difference between the 'experiencing self' and the 'remembering self'. Daniel Kahneman identified a cognitive bias that he called the peak-end effect. What that means is that people remember the dramatic parts of a day and the end. So, try not to let your clients leave a session with you without giving them a few minutes of a pleasant experience – particularly on a bad day, because that will colour how they remember the whole day.



## PERMA

Martin Seligman came up with the acronym PERMA (Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and purpose, and Accomplishments) for wellbeing. Positive emotions include happiness, joy, excitement, satisfaction, pride, and awe. Engagement refers to involvement in activities that draw and build on a person's interests (what Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi called 'flow' or being 'in the zone'). It involves passion for and concentration on the task at hand. Relationships are about receiving, sharing, and spreading positivity to others. Meaning (or purpose) drives people to continue striving for a desirable goal. Accomplishments are the pursuit of success and mastery, which, sometimes, may not result in positive emotions, meaning, or relationships.

You can see that PERMA can apply to all aspects of a client's life. They need to remember when they've felt 'positive emotions' about different things during the day (experiencing self). That's why asking clients, 'what's been good' is such a positive technique. Clients can spend large parts of their day in the 'flow' – totally 'engaged'. It may be when they're solving a problem and they're completely absorbed in the task, or when they need to use all their knowledge and experience to identify a solution. That could be solving a Sudoku problem, a crossword, or watching a football match. And when they're chatting positively to friends and family, that's ticking the 'relationships' box. 'Meaning' is what drives them to achieve their goal, which could be to become a non-smoker because they see themselves as a non-smoker. And, finally, 'accomplishments' makes them study to pass exams or learn to drive or play a musical instrument better.

All these things can happen every day to our clients. And if we did measure every ten minutes how happy our clients were, we'd probably find that their experience of each day was better than, perhaps, how they say they remember it. And, of course, we should make sure that they leave a Hypnotherapy session on a high point – whatever that might be. Perhaps we could encourage them to run or cycle to our sessions. If we use positive psychology techniques to help make clients happier, we are also making them more confident and better able to deal with the world.

There are plenty of techniques used by positive psychologists that can be 'borrowed' by Solution Focused Hypnotherapists to help their clients. You're probably familiar with some of them. Anyway, here are some examples.

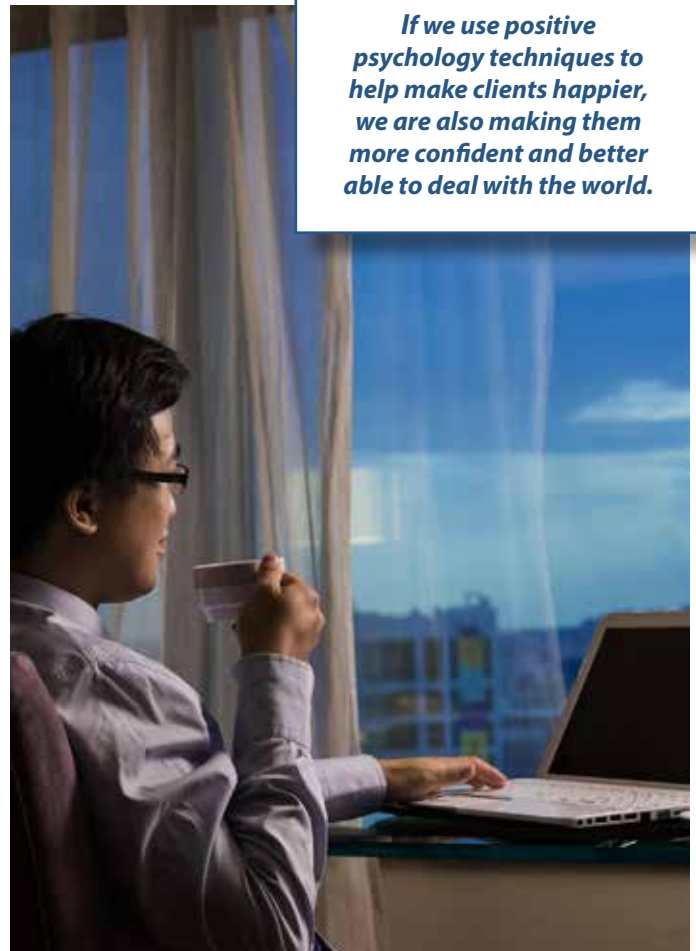
### Three good things

Consciously spending a few minutes each day focusing on some of the good things that have happened can help people to start to notice what goes right in their lives – rather than, like too many people, simply focusing on what goes wrong.

Here's what to do: every night for a week before you go to bed, think back over your day and remember three good things that happened. They can be things that went well, or things that you enjoyed doing, or things that you were grateful for. And they can be small things (enjoying a cup of coffee) or big things that are important to you (that big lottery win!), or anything in between. Write down the three good things for that day and reflect on your role in them. This contributes to a person's perceived sense of control. Stop after a week for maximum effect. That's been found to increase happiness and decrease depressive symptoms (Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2004).

### Gratitude journal

Keeping a gratitude journal has been shown to increase wellbeing, optimism, life satisfaction, and happiness;



*If we use positive psychology techniques to help make clients happier, we are also making them more confident and better able to deal with the world.*

and to reduce negative feelings, depression, worry, body dissatisfaction, and physical symptoms.

Here's what to do: write down what you are grateful for. That way you can review what you've written. The more detailed you are, the better. Focusing on the people you are grateful to is more effective than writing about things. Elaborate the details of one thing rather than making a shallow list of many things. Record events that were unexpected because they elicit stronger feelings of gratitude. The more you engage with the journal, the more you will get out of it. Be consistent. Set aside fifteen minutes at a specific time of day to write your journal. Don't overdo it. Writing 1-3 times per week is more effective than writing daily.

### Gratitude visit

This technique gives an immediate happiness boost that lasts a few weeks before it gradually lessens.

Here's what to do: think of someone you're really grateful to for something they've done in the past. Write them a letter describing what they did for you and how it affected you and your life. Arrange to meet them, preferably at their house. When you meet, tell them you have something you want to say. Then stand or sit in front of them and read your letter out loud. Afterwards, you can give them a copy of the letter to keep. If that sounds too embarrassing, you could simply send them the letter.

### Random acts of kindness

Random acts of kindness make the receiver feel better and they make the giver feel happier. And if you can do several in the same day, that's even better. It's also a good idea to vary the acts so that they remain fresh and meaningful (Lyubomirsky, 2008).

Here's what to do: the acts can be for people you know, or they can be for people in general (eg giving blood). You can do acts of kindness for people you don't know (eg help someone struggling to carry something heavy). You could start by making a list of the small actions you could take (eg offer to babysit for an hour, or take an older relative down the pub for a one-to-one chat if they don't get to see many people). Or you could start by thinking about the people you know and what you could do for them. You could have a kindness day, perhaps once a week, and try to perform at least five different acts of kindness for different people. Or, perhaps, you could think about kind things you could do with friends, family, or neighbours. Meet together and swap ideas and support each other.

### Active-constructive responding

According to Gable *et al* (2004), what distinguishes good relationships is how people respond to good news in their partner's life. They identified four types of responses to good news:

- Passive-constructive – 'that's nice' and move on.
- Active-destructive – 'have you thought of how much time you'll be [doing this] ... instead of being with us?'
- Passive-destructive – 'oh, is dinner ready?'
- Active-constructive – step 1 is listening, asking questions, and being interested. Step 2 is celebrating and capitalising on the success.

Here's what to do: start by listening to what your partner and others you are close to are saying to you, whether that's at work or at home, and try to respond in an active-constructive way.

### Identifying signature strengths

People are often advised to play to their strengths. There are benefits for doing this, including elevated vitality and motivation, a greater sense of direction, and higher probability of goal attainment, not to mention increased self-confidence and productivity (Clifton & Anderson, 2001-2; Hodges & Clifton, 2004; Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Here's what to do: find out what your strengths are. There's the VIA classification of strengths and virtues (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). There's Gallup's StrengthsFinder. And there's the Centre for Applied Positive Psychology's (CAPP's) Realise2. You can do a survey online at [authentic happiness.org](http://authentic happiness.org) to find your signature strengths. Once you know



your strengths, try to use them more over the next week. It will improve your mood in the short term (Seligman *et al*, 2005).

One way to make the positive effect more long lasting is to look at your top five strengths and use them in a new way over the next week (Seligman *et al*, 2005). You can use the strength in a new setting or with a new person. Improving your weaknesses doesn't seem to do any good!

### Savouring

It's very easy to eat food while working on your laptop or while watching TV. Or you might find yourself drinking tea while talking on the phone or engaged in a meeting. One way to increase your wellbeing is to savour what you are doing fully.

Here's what to do to develop savouring as a skill:

- Share your good feelings with others.
- Take a mental photograph by being acutely aware in the moment with intentions to remember the mental photograph later.
- Sharpen your sensory perceptions by being attentive to the present moment.
- Compare the outcome to something worse.
- Get absorbed in the moment.
- Count your blessings (giving thanks).
- Avoid 'killjoy' thinking by looking on the bright side.

**One way to increase your wellbeing is to savour what you are doing fully.**

- Communicate positivity to others by behaving positively, eg positive facial expressions.
- Limit 'time is too fleeting' perceptions.

### Exercise

Exercise reduces anxiety and stress. It improves cognitive functioning as well as physical functioning. And it makes you happy (Lyubomirsky, 2008).

Here's what to do: take a 30-minute brisk walk. Even better, take the walk in the countryside. Join an exercise class. Even better, chat to others in the class before and/or after the session. Choose any other form of exercise that fits with your preferences and lifestyle. Exercise is physically and cognitively good for you.

### Best possible self

Here's what to do: write down what the desired successful future version of you will be like, when you have achieved all you want. Write down the vivid details over a four-week period. This enhances optimism and causes better integration between one's priorities and goals.

### Positive reminiscence

Just thinking about a positive memory in great detail can make people happier.

Here's what to do: For ten minutes, twice a day for a week, think about positive memories.

### Positive planning: a wonderful day together

Here's what to do: plan a wonderful day for you and someone else. Plan from first thing in the morning until bedtime, and include activities that you will both enjoy. Decide when the day will happen. And then have the day and savour each of the chosen activities.

### Cuddles

Friedrickson (2009) came up with the idea of 'plugging in' when she needs to recharge her batteries. The hug should be front-to-front and last closer to a minute than a second. Psychotherapist Virginia Satir said: 'We need four hugs a day for survival. We need eight hugs a day for maintenance. We need 12 hugs a day for growth.' Hugging increases levels of oxytocin, which may have beneficial effects on the health of your heart and more. A 20-second hug, along with 10 minutes of hand-holding, can reduce the harmful physical effects of stress, including its impact on your blood pressure and heart rate. This is probably because hugging lowers the levels of cortisol.

Here's what to do: find someone who likes you and hug them for at least 20 seconds.

### Time

Most people seem to be running a time deficit, running from one activity to another. In 2006, the Oxford English Dictionary found 'time' to be the most frequently used noun!

Here's what to do: spend time with other people (an hour or a whole day) just chatting, or gardening, or playing or doing whatever you all enjoy. This activity can make them, and you, feel happier.

### Life summary

At some time in the future, one of your grandchildren may want to know what you were like. This is your chance to tell them.

Here's what to do: write a one-page summary of your life as you'd like it to be known to your grandchild. Include a description of your values, personal characteristics, and your contribution to humanity. Come back and review what you've written after a few days. What changes might you make in your life so that the summary is a more accurate reflection of your life?



***'We need four hugs a day for survival. We need eight hugs a day for maintenance. We need 12 hugs a day for growth.'***

## Worry time/journal

Erma Bombeck said that worry is like a rocking chair: it gives you something to do but never gets you anywhere. According to *The Worry Cure: Seven Steps to Stop Worry from Stopping You* by Robert L Leahy, 85% of what subjects worried about never happened, and with the 15% that did happen, 79% of subjects discovered either they could handle the difficulty better than expected, or the difficulty taught them a lesson worth learning. This means that 97% of what people worry about is a waste of time!

Here's what to do: set aside half an hour a day when you can worry. It must be the same time and in the same place. Don't allow yourself to worry at any other time. Or, write down your worries in a journal. Cross out all the ones that have already happened because there is nothing you can do about them. Then cross out all the ones that are trivial, and come up with a plan to deal with the rest.

## Three-question process

This idea is taken from Tal Ben-Shahar's book *Happier* (2007).

Here's what to do: ask yourself the following questions:

- What gives me meaning?
- What gives me pleasure?
- What are my strengths?

Take time to reflect on your answers. The next step is to find out where the answers overlap. This may take time. And then do more of them.

## Forgiveness

*Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent to throw it at someone – you are the one getting burned.*

Buddha

Here's what to do: Klimes' five steps for granting the gift of forgiveness are:

- A – acknowledge the anger and hurt caused by the clearly-identified specific offences.
- B – bar revenge and any thought of inflicting harm as repayment or punishment to the offender.
- C – consider the offender's perspective. Try to understand his/her attitude and behaviour.
- D – decide to accept the hurt without unloading it on the offender. Passing it back and forth magnifies it.
- E – extend compassion and good will to the offender. That releases the offended from the offence.

And, of course, there are many other techniques available, for example Enright & Fitzgibbons' four stages of forgiveness.

## Conclusion

Some strategies may work better with individuals than others, but it may well be useful to include some of these activities in the talking part of a Hypnotherapy session to get a positive response from your client.

***Set aside half an hour a day when you can worry ... don't allow yourself to worry at any other time.***



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# Confidentiality

By AfSFH Head of Professional Standards, Nicola Taylor

Our Code of Conduct, Performance and Ethics has recently been updated. In the second of our series of articles exploring aspects of the Code in more depth, we are focusing on item 5.3, Confidentiality, which states that:

*You must keep information about clients confidential.*

It sounds simple, however, alongside confidentiality sit more complex issues of purpose, disclosure, entitlement and consent. Add into the mix the information you may hold on children and young people and suddenly there is much to consider! In this article we will focus primarily on information provided by those capable of giving informed consent, and some of the challenges we face as Solution Focused Hypnotherapists working within our local communities and beyond.

As a Solution Focused Hypnotherapist-in-training, you will have practiced on friends, family, colleagues, then perhaps branched out to their friends, family and wider contacts. This provides great experience for testing your ability to maintain confidentiality. 'Nobody likes a blab', as we say around these parts, and being able to keep to boundaries of confidentiality builds trust which will be crucial in generating those word-of-mouth recommendations as your practice builds. A clearly worded contract, given to your client at the start of your working relationship, is a very helpful tool. Make sure that your client is aware of their right to confidentiality and what this entails. With experience you will learn to consider the appropriateness of working with a client who may be known to you, especially if this person is connected to someone you know well. It is always worth speaking with your Supervisor if you are in any doubt.

*A clearly worded contract, given to your client at the start of your working relationship, is a very helpful tool.*

## Privacy

If you live in a larger town or city, you may not need to worry too much about the chances of your clients knowing one another, but if your work is within a small community, it is worth considering the impact this could have. I have found, from personal experience, that my clients appreciate that I run my face-to-face sessions with 15-minute gaps in between. This avoids the potential for that awkward 'revolving door' moment when paths could cross. Working remotely also poses challenges, and the therapist is responsible for ensuring their working environment is appropriate, and that conversations cannot be overheard. Through contracting, you can also advise the client to conduct their session in private unless, of course, the client is a minor, in which case safeguarding needs to be considered.

## Record keeping

Once you have thought about your environment, the people and the place, you now need to focus on what to do with the information you gather from your client. It is important to complete 'information gathering' during your Initial Consultation, and to record progress during each session. This information is known as 'personal data' and is subject to UK GDPR. Keeping information confidential means primarily that the information is only for your use as a Hypnotherapist and helps you to work effectively with your client. This is the PURPOSE of the information. Using the information for any other reason would constitute 'improper disclosure', and you have a duty of care to ensure that data is protected. If you are storing data

electronically, make sure to use strong passwords for files and folders and don't leave anything open in your absence. Paper-based records need to be stored securely under lock and key and not left where they may be seen. I once worked with a teacher colleague whose car was stolen, and along with it all her reports, exercise books and marked essays bearing student names and details. Whether working remotely or in person, it is likely that you will communicate with clients electronically (by email and/or text). This information is still subject to confidentiality and must be password-protected and stored appropriately. Be mindful of where you are when sending and answering messages to protect the information and identity of your client. We can't be too careful!

## Disclosure

There are, of course, times when disclosure of personal data is appropriate and necessary. Our Code of Conduct states:

*Where consent is given by an adult for an individual at risk, both the client and the consenting adult should be made aware of the need for confidentiality and the exceptions to this eg if a child should reveal that they are at risk of harm. Boundaries should be clearly established in a contract so that children are informed about what will happen in the event of a disclosure and consenting adults are clear about what can remain confidential.*

If you are working with 'an individual at risk', as well as clearly stating the boundaries of confidentiality in your contract, it is also worth speaking with the consenting individual and the client. Articulating clearly what can and what cannot be kept confidential is important, so that the client can make informed decisions about what to disclose, and the consenting individual can have clear expectations about what they can and cannot

### What the guidelines say:

5.3 You must keep information about clients confidential. This applies to all clients who are capable of giving informed consent (including those over the age of 16).

- Information given to you by a client must only be used for the purpose for which it was intended.
- All information pertaining to clients must be protected from improper disclosure.
- No information pertaining to clients should be released to anyone who is not entitled to it and entitlement must be checked before release.
- All client information and records, whether paper-based or electronic, must be stored securely.
- Client information should only be used for the continued care of that person OR for purposes where the client has given you specific written consent to use the information.
- Disclosure of client information is only appropriate when specifically requested for legal reasons by those entitled OR if you have good reason to believe that your client, yourself, or others, may be at risk of harm.
- Clients should be made aware of their rights with regards to confidentiality prior to giving consent for therapy.

***Keeping information confidential means primarily that the information is only for your use as a Hypnotherapist and helps you to work effectively with your client.***



be told. Your duty of care can also extend to those clients who are not considered 'at risk' when you begin to work with them but could later be deemed 'at risk'. A contract which states that you would need to disclose to the relevant agencies if you suspected that your client (or someone close to them) was at risk of harm will clarify your position should the situation arise.

### Access to data and entitlement

You may find yourself in receipt of a Subject Access Request (SAR). This is when, for legal reasons, access to the personal data you hold on a client is required. Clients should be made aware of this through your contract or privacy policy. It may be that the client themselves requests access to their data, and this raises the issue of ENTITLEMENT. Under the Freedom of Information Act (2000), clients are entitled to have access to their personal data. They may also grant permission for a third party, such as a solicitor, to make the request. Requests can be made verbally or in writing, however it is important that the identity of the person seeking access is verified; this will most likely require written communication. Further information on how to respond appropriately to a SAR can be found via the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) website ([ico.org.uk](http://ico.org.uk)).

#### What the guidelines say about a data breach:

It is expected that you will comply with all Data Protection Laws; UK GDPR (2016) and Data Protection Act (2018), in relation to handling and processing personal data.

- You must remain up to date with any changes in best practice and legal policy.
- Any complaints made against a member in relation to data protection will be referred to the appropriate agencies for investigation, and the AfSFH will act in accordance with their judgement and procedures.
- You should take steps to become familiar with the ICO Guidance on Data Breach Management, and adhere to its requirements in the event of a breach. Following the principles of candour, you should respond promptly to advise the client of any breach in security or privacy. You should:
  - Work with the client to take immediate action to limit or prevent harm.
  - Notify your Supervisor immediately.
  - Take steps to repair any harm that has been caused.
  - Take steps to prevent a repetition of the breach.


Even when you have taken every step to minimise risk, a breach can still occur. It is important to have a system in place to manage any breach in security or privacy so that you can respond in an effective and timely manner. Rectify as much as you can as soon as you can. Speak to your Supervisor, contact the AfSFH for support, and refer to the ICO website for further help.

Confidentiality is essential to maintaining high standards in the practice of Solution Focused Hypnotherapy. By having robust contracts, policies and processes in place that adhere to ethical guidelines and legal requirements, you can give your clients confidence in you as a practitioner, and build a foundation of trust for your working relationship.

***Speak to your Supervisor,  
contact the AfSFH for support,  
and refer to the ICO website  
for further help.***



**About the writer:**  
Nicola qualified as a SFH in 2017 and as a Supervisor in 2020. She runs her Hypnotherapy practice in Abergavenny.



*The results give promising implications for Solution Focused Hypnotherapy to be a viable alternative to current approaches such as CBT and counselling.*

## The effectiveness of Solution Focused Hypnotherapy: results from the Northumbria Police pilot trial

By Elizabeth Dunne

As Solution Focused Hypnotherapists, we understand the immeasurable value of the work we do and the life-changing impact it makes, not only to our clients, but the ripple effect it generates on their family, friends, and colleagues. We can be reasonably confident that what we do works as we take a combined approach of existing evidence-based interventions such as Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT), brain-based explanations and Hypnosis. It would be reasonable to assume that the combination of these robust modalities could even enhance effectiveness, but due to issues like lack of funding and interest, not enough research is available that measures Solution Focused Hypnotherapy specifically as a mental health intervention.

### Pilot trial

Excitingly, a first pilot trial carried out by *Inspired to Change*, a network of Solution Focused Hypnotherapists, has recently been published to give credence to the striking results our clients see in the therapy room. I first heard of the study before joining *Inspired to Change* while completing my training with CPHT and found the results both fascinating and exciting. I often refer clients to the study and they are equally impressed at its implications for the efficacy of SFH.

The results give promising implications for Solution Focused Hypnotherapy to be a viable alternative to current approaches such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and counselling. At present, CBT is the gold standard mental health intervention for institutions such as the NHS, however figures show that a little over half of participants respond to treatment. What's

more, as results measure reduction of symptoms only, there is no information on what effect CBT has on improving wellbeing and quality of life.

As Solution Focused Hypnotherapy is proactive in nature, helping clients reduce anxiety and increase resilience to daily stressors relatively quickly, it is a worthwhile intervention for mentally and physically demanding roles that are prone to burnout and overwhelm, such as the police force. Due to the pressurised nature of blue light services, staff are at an increased risk of mental distress such as depression, anxiety, or PTSD. According to a recent (2023) Police Federation survey, a staggering 82% of officers have experienced low mood, increased stress and a noticeable impact on their mental health and wellbeing over a year-long period.

### The cost of poor mental health in the workplace

At the time of the study, Northumbria Police calculated that mental health was costing the force £1.87 million per year through absenteeism. The force provides a range of interventions to support their staff such as 24-hour counselling, peer support, EMDR and occupational health support, but there were issues in employee uptake of these services. This might have been due to the cultural barriers within the police force to seek help for fear of repercussions such as being judged, appearing weak or concerns around confidentiality.

Because of its existing reputation as being highly structured, with a high uptake, Northumbria Police decided to participate in a pilot trial exploring the effectiveness of Solution Focused





***SFH can have a life-changing impact, not just on the individuals' lives, but it can also uplift the very culture of the organisation in which they work.***

Hypnotherapy as a mental health intervention in their workforce. Weekly online SFH sessions were attended by 42 participants who completed between 8-12 sessions; the average amount of sessions typically attended by clients. The participants' presenting issues included: anxiety, depression, public speaking fears, fertility, and insomnia. Results showed that 100% of the participants responded to treatment, (ie saw a reduction in symptoms), an incredible 78% completed therapy with no remaining clinical symptoms and 84% reported a noticeable increase in wellness scores.

### Report findings

Participants reported that they felt better able to cope with the demands of the job as a result of taking part in sessions. One participant said: 'I have so much more control over my emotions towards work.' Another stated: 'I feel more in control and can assess what I can and can't do and think logically about solutions ... rather than going straight into stress/panic mode.' The results were also noted in other areas of the participants' lives. One commented that their social anxiety had gone down and that their organisational skills and energy levels at home had increased. Colleagues who did not participate in the study also enjoyed the benefits of their coworkers' sessions. A member from HR remarked that participants were beginning to talk openly about their mental health, a topic that is often taboo in the police. Through talking about their progress and what they were learning in sessions, participants were creating a space for a more transparent conversation around mental health in the workplace: '[Participants] were reflecting a much more positive and resilient outlook which we felt could spread like a virus across the force.'

### Therapists' reflections

Therapists who participated in the study also commented that participants became highly engaged very quickly, despite some having never experienced therapy before, and others being initially sceptical of the process. One therapist commented 'our structure is so helpful to the client as they know what to expect. They are calm more quickly and they become skilled in Solution Focused questioning themselves.' This was echoed by the participants, who enjoyed the structured format: 'The therapist's approach suited my way of interaction, the sessions never felt rushed or a burden.'

Therapists also reported that the brain-based explanations were extremely helpful, because they provided a logical framework to understand emotional discomfort. They also commented that their clients were sharing this knowledge with their colleagues and friends: 'I ... really enjoyed being told how the brain works, this helped me make sense of why and how my anxiety was there and how changing the way I approach it would help.'

### Conclusion

What this study has shown is that SFH is a highly effective intervention for mental distress in the workplace, regardless of presenting symptoms. Due to the absence of problem talk and diagnoses, results from this study have shown that SFH can even effectively address complex issues such as PTSD and trauma in a non-invasive manner, without clients needing to delve into the past. Most remarkably, SFH can have a life-changing impact, not just on the individuals' lives, but it can also uplift the very culture of the organisation in which they work.

'I am able to relax better, have more confidence ... and interact with my colleagues more. I also feel I am able to cope better in my role and not dwell on the past.'

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# Committee Members



## Chair and Trustee: Susan Rodrigues

Susan is the key interface between Clifton Practice Hypnotherapy Training (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: Sacha Taylor

Sacha trained at CPHT in Bristol in 2014, became a Supervisor in 2018, and served the AfSFH as Head of Finance from 2016-2023. As CEO, she is committed to supporting members and the rest of the Executive Team, and ensuring the AfSFH continues to lead the way in promoting SFH to its members and the wider public.

**Contact email:** [ceo@afsfh.com](mailto:ceo@afsfh.com)



## Head of Finance: Sarah Coward

Sarah graduated from CPHT Bristol in June 2023, and has since set up her own busy SFH practice based in North Somerset. Sarah has a background in marketing, PR, proofreading, and business administration, and she loves helping others. She's passionate about SFH and the AfSFH and is delighted to keep the finance affairs for the Association in order.

**Contact email:** [finance@afsfh.com](mailto:finance@afsfh.com)



## Head of Communications: Sally Hare

Sally is a graduate of CPHT Bristol and has a background in writing, editing and proofreading. Training and practice experience have enthused her to spread the Solution Focused message to as wide a public as possible.

**Contact email:** [comms@afsfh.com](mailto:comms@afsfh.com)



## Head of Social Media and Digital Platforms: Emma Naughton

Emma has a background in marketing with experience of managing social media platforms for international companies. She is keen to create a supportive and informative space for members to connect and access AfSFH resources, and to increase public awareness of SFH and its benefits.

**Contact email:** [it@afsfh.com](mailto:it@afsfh.com)



## Head of Membership: Claire Corbett

Claire 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.

**Contact email:** [membership@afsfh.com](mailto:membership@afsfh.com)



## 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.

**Contact email:** [standards@afsfh.com](mailto:standards@afsfh.com)



## 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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