

Editorial

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When I asked authors to write on self-care for this special issue, I did so thinking of the challenges to self-care that often arise from working in psychological healthcare.

I wasn't expecting to be moved, but moved I have been – by both the themes and content of the articles, and particularly by the authors' preparedness to share their experiences to illuminate this important subject.

What strikes me about the richness of the articles in this issue is that the authors write not only with strength of knowledge, they also write from the heart. In our lead article, Linda Dubrow-Marshall's enthusiasm for self-care is evident as she urges us 'to be accountable to yourselves and your profession for keeping yourselves mentally fit, and strengthen your resolve to dedicate time and energy to quality self-care.' Linda goes on to offer valuable suggestions for doing just that. In addition, her awareness of her own need to stay vigilant about self-care is deftly illustrated in her experiences of volunteering to offer therapy following 9/11.

Susan Cousins also draws on her own personal experiences, and those of other black workers, to highlight issues surrounding isolation in the workplace for BME practitioners, and to urge healthcare services to set up black practitioner support groups to foster a sense of belonging. In detailing research which involved rediscovering his own past, Gareth Jones explains how his willingness to explore and integrate his own pain led to benefits for both his clients and himself; Gareth's open approach may encourage us all to delve deep into our wellbeing for the benefit of therapeutic relationships. In another research-based article, Anthony Hickey comments on one aspect of self-care identified through his recent study of trauma therapists – that of internal self-care. Further findings from Anthony's research, related to other types of self-care, will be the subject of future articles.

Some of the authors who have written for this issue were approached after presenting their research at BACP's Annual Research Conference, held in Liverpool last May. Submissions are now being sought for next year's conference, and in a welcoming and informative article, John McLeod describes how decisions are made about submissions, and provides advice on how to offer a paper, workshop or poster. If you have been conducting research and would like to submit, all details are included on page 41. The submission deadline is November 2011.

I hope you enjoy the articles in this issue as much as I enjoyed editing them and working with the authors. As ever, we welcome your feedback and comments in the form of articles or letters, so please get in touch.

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