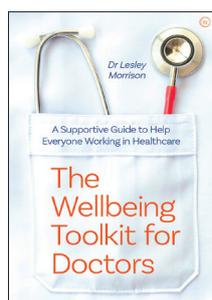


**The Wellbeing Toolkit for Doctors.
A Supportive Guide to Help Everyone
Working in Healthcare**
Dr Lesley Morrison

Watkins Publishing, 2021, PB, 192pp,
£10.99, 978-1786785213



LOOK AFTER YOURSELF BY LOOKING AFTER OTHERS

The increasing pressures brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic has led to greater scrutiny and new literature focused on the wellbeing of healthcare professionals. Prior to this, in 2018, the General Medical Council's report *Caring for Doctors, Caring for Patients* stressed the importance of doctor wellbeing on patient care¹ and, more recently, the British Medical Association survey on the personal impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on doctors' wellbeing highlighted that 41% of doctors were suffering with mental health conditions, with 29% of them saying this had got worse during the pandemic.²

This book is therefore very well timed and, with appraisals now focusing more on wellbeing, would be likely to earn some CPD points as well as providing plenty to consider and reflect on.

The structure is free-flowing and outlines thirty-two tools (one per chapter), which range from the more well-known (teamwork, psychological support, and self-compassion) to a broader outlook on improving your wellbeing by following your passions to tackle social and environmental issues. While this structure leads to many opportunities for neat segues between chapters, its looseness can lessen its appeal to those wanting a more structured guide to improving their wellbeing.

One of the great strengths of this book is Morrison's stories drawn from her own and others' experience and used to

illuminate her points and inspire reflection. In particular, the experiences drawn from healthcare professionals worldwide gave me both a sense of gratitude to be working in the UK as well as admiration for colleagues around the globe coping with the challenges they face.

There are many well-chosen quotes relevant to each chapter. For example, in the chapter on resilience Morrison discusses a doctor who found comfort in the words of Archbishop Óscar Romero of San Salvador (1917–1980):

'We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted. We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realising that. This enables us to do something and to do it very well.'

This quote resonates on different levels; whether you're trying to make changes within an organisation or encourage a patient to exercise more, we plant the seed but cannot, and should not, force the outcome. Such a reminder helps reduce the amount of pressure I put on myself, which in turn assists my wellbeing.

Some tools can be recommended to patients. For example, the chapter on 'Green therapy' highlights the benefits of gardening and I have started advising patients to reap the combined benefits of gardening, such as fresh air, physical activity, creativity, and a sense of achievement.

As a recently qualified GP, I recognised the relevance this book has to GP training. The earlier chapters in particular offer useful instruction in the art of consultation skills. Besides a more obvious point that could be summarised as 'the more you put into your work the more satisfaction you get from it', the narrative style is much more engaging than drier tomes on consultation skills — while still getting across many of the same points.

The strong themes of activism threaded through the book are hard to miss and lead me to wonder whether this book is particularly aimed at the newer generation of GPs. With important subjects such as climate change and racism, and reference to organisations such as Medact (a UK charity for global health, working on issues related to conflict, poverty, and the environment), it seems that, while all of us, regardless of age, can have a profound

impact, these are important values to instil in the GPs set to become the educators and leaders of tomorrow's NHS. The point about looking after ourselves by looking after each other (and our planet) is well made and received.

I recommend this book to all GPs and medical students or doctors in training, whether they have an interest in general practice or not. However, I would suggest savouring it and reading just a chapter each week to allow for deeper, more valuable reflection and to give each tool the consideration and practice of use it requires.

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This article was first posted on *BJGP Life* on 7 Jul 2021; <https://bjgplife.com/toolkit>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3399/bjgp21X716981>

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