

# HUMAN GIVENS

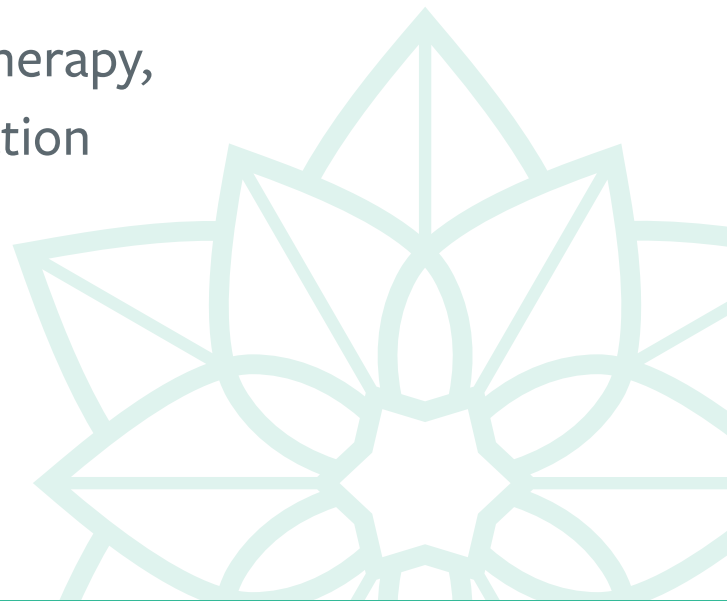
THE ESSENTIALS

*Helping humanity thrive*



Your quick guide to the approach  
that is revolutionising psychotherapy,  
mental health provision, education  
and much more...

BY JULIA WELSTEAD



Human Givens  
College

PSYCHOLOGY  
PSYCHOTHERAPY  
EDUCATION

[www.humangivens.com](http://www.humangivens.com)

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“ It was the down-to-earth practicality that first attracted me to the human givens approach to mental health and wellbeing.

JULIA WELSTEAD

## Why I'd like to tell you about the human givens

### About Julia Welstead

*Further to her nursing career and a degree in biology, Julia undertook the post-graduate Human Givens Diploma and now helps people suffering emotional distress in all its forms – including as part of a team de-traumatising survivors of major incidents. She also trains staff within organisations in how they can apply the human givens principles to all aspects of their working day, including team cohesion.*

My nursing and sheep farming experience have taught me to be practical and pragmatic: there's no time to indulge in intellectual navel gazing, bureaucratic box ticking, or highbrow philosophical exchange when faced with a patient in cardiac arrest or a sheep stuck on its back in freezing mud (a good analogy for some forms of depression!) but there is a vital need for efficient, focused logic and intelligent, practical strategy.

It was this very same down-to-earth practicality that first attracted me to the human givens (HG) approach to mental health and wellbeing.

A few years ago I was working in a busy hospital day surgery unit, nursing a conveyor belt system of patients through their minor operations and investigations, and I couldn't help but notice the high stress levels of both patients and staff. One day I was having a calming conversation with a nervous patient when the nurse in charge strode past asserting 'there's no time for that!'

Thus began my search for an antidote to our world's ever increasing stress levels, a career change, and a way that I could better help people to maintain their emotional health.



## How can we stay sane in our frantic world?

“ It has become obvious that something is not right. But what? To answer these rather big questions, we need to go back to what it means to be human...”

Despite an increase in government funding being allocated to mental health, and huge investments in drug treatments, rates of mental illness continue to rise. Ever increasing numbers fall prey to stress related illnesses: depression, anxiety disorders and addictions. This situation has been made even worse by the effects of the recent pandemic.

You are almost bound to know someone who is suffering.

Much of our workforce risks burn-out from stress and more people are depressed than ever before. Our children and university students suffer anxiety borne of the media-led pressures of perfectionist expectation, isolation and a lack of life skills, and increasingly resort to self-harm. Suicide rates among our young – especially young men – are rising alarmingly.

We face a huge mental health crisis – and it’s getting personal. It has become unavoidably obvious that something is not right. But what? What’s going on?

Are we finding it hard to keep up with our own innovations in our fast-paced and ever-changing world? Have we somehow lost the flexibility and resilience required to stay in tune with our surroundings? Or is our cohesion as a species, our instinctive drive to care for each other, being eroded in the rush for individual gain?



*Working in tune  
with nature...*



## What do we need in order to survive – and thrive?

To answer these rather big questions, let's get back to the basics of what it means to be human. What does every single one of us need in order to survive and thrive?

The fundamental imperative for all organisms, including human beings is, of course, to survive. To do this we must take nourishment from whatever environment we find ourselves in, in order to continually maintain, grow and rebuild ourselves.

Like all animals we need air to breathe, water to drink, nutritious food and sufficient amounts of the right quality of sleep. These physical needs are obvious because, if they are not met, we quickly die – as many people sadly do in those parts of the world where clean water is scarce and food in short supply.

We also seek, or create, shelter where we can protect ourselves from the elements and surrounding dangers, so that we can grow, reproduce ourselves and bring up our young.

We all understand these basic and vital physical needs and take it as a 'given' that we must get them met in order to survive.

But that isn't the whole story. Psychologists throughout the ages have also determined that there are other nutritional needs – emotional rather than physical – which are equally crucial for our wellbeing, and sometimes vital for our very survival.

“ If our emotional needs aren't being met we are likely to suffer

## Our vital emotional needs

The human givens model identifies the following specific emotional needs as core drivers of our behaviour:



### SECURITY

A safe territory and environment that allows us to live without undue fear, develop fully and have space to grow. When we don't feel safe in our environment we may find ourselves in a perpetual state of high emotional arousal, which impairs our thinking and dominates our behaviour, making us more likely to be fearful and aggressive or become anxious and stressed. This can be clearly seen on a grand scale in countries torn apart by war, but occurs wherever security and safety are compromised, within families, at work, at school and within our communities.



### AUTONOMY

A sense of control over what happens to us and around us, the freedom to make our own decisions and choices, which helps us to feel in charge of ourselves rather than overwhelmed by life.



### ATTENTION

Giving and receiving it are both vital forms of nutrition that fuel our development. If we didn't immediately seek attention as newborn babies, we might starve. Paying attention to each other forms part of our group bond as a gregarious species and helps us maintain a shared sense of reality.



### INTIMACY

Emotional connection to others through friendships and loving relationships. We all need at least one person who accepts us for who we are, 'warts and all', who is biased in our favour and will support and defend us. This need not be those physically closest to us, such as parents, siblings, partners or spouses, but may be a grandparent, a teacher, a good friend, a neighbour or a colleague.



### COMMUNITY

Connection to people outside our immediate family, through work, hobbies, sport, geographical and cultural communities. We have evolved as group animals because our survival in harsh conditions depended on being part of a collaborative team – traditionally our tribe. This harks right back to our hunter-gatherer era, and even before that our ancestors would have owed their existence to being part of a primate group. Those who got separated or ostracized were very likely to be eaten by predators or die of starvation. Even in today's world, where we are unlikely to be eaten by hyenas, we still feel the mortal fear of likely death if we are outcasts. We therefore have a very ingrained need to belong to a group of some sort. Do today's 'virtual' communities, gathered together and joined through the technology of social media, give us the same sense of safety?



### STATUS

Within our communities. A sense that we are accepted, valued and have status within the groups to which we belong (work, family, town, sporting etc); being respected for who we are and what we can do (how we can be useful within the group) by at least some people. We need to feel that we are respected and valued by the groups, or communities, to which we belong so that we don't feel in danger of being thrown out or left behind.



### ACHIEVEMENT & COMPETENCE

A sense of our own competence and abilities, knowledge and skills, without which we may feel inadequate, lack confidence and develop 'low self-esteem', and may even withdraw ourselves from our own communities if we don't feel useful enough. Genuine confidence, built through competence, gives us resilience to cope with life's difficulties.



### PRIVACY

Enough time and space to reflect on, learn from, and consolidate our experiences. In our frantic, attention-grabbing world such privacy is an increasingly scarce commodity and must sometimes be deliberately sought so that our minds don't become overloaded with a chaos of information. Some people also need privacy to provide respite from ongoing stressors.



### MEANING & PURPOSE

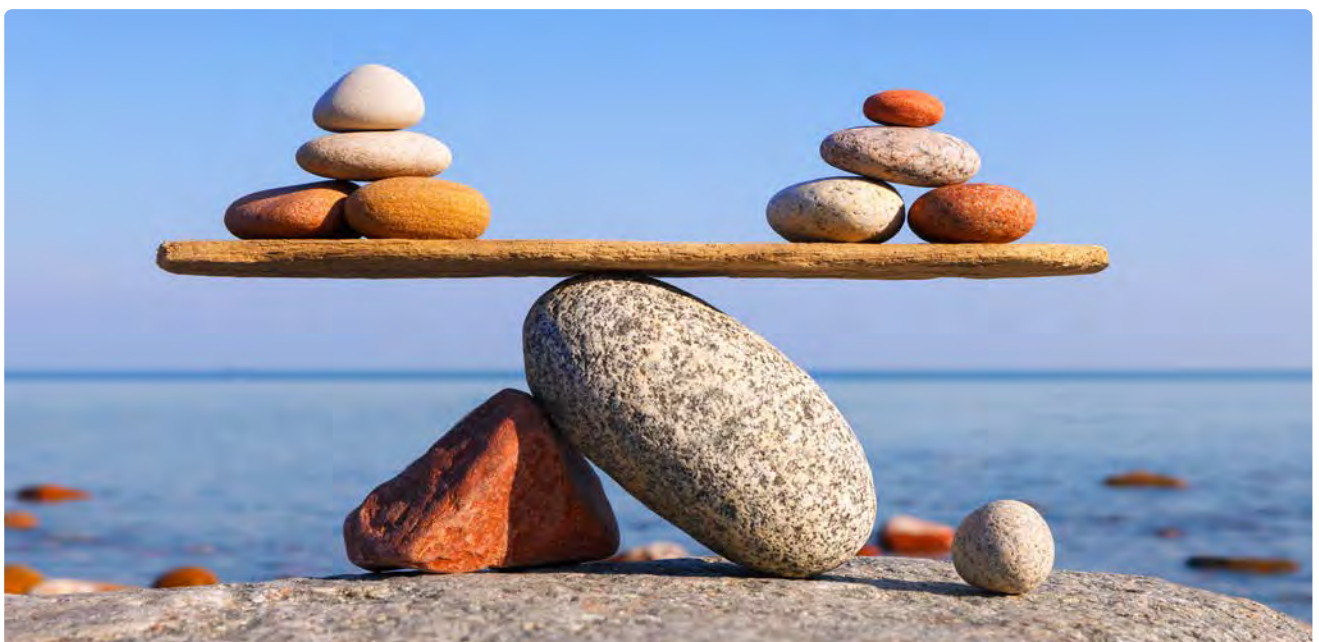
This comes from being stretched, mentally or physically, and having purpose in what we do, being helpful within our communities, or being connected to ideas or beliefs greater than ourselves (being interested in the bigger picture).

As you will have noticed, our emotional needs are not hierarchical; they overlap and interconnect – we need all of them to be met in balanced, healthy ways to keep us well.

For example we all need a certain amount of attention, but an attention seeker can be a nuisance whom we all try to avoid (thus reducing his or her ability to attain community or intimate connection). We all need security, and yet sometimes we need to take risks to progress; being too risk averse, therefore, can be counterproductive. Too much privacy can mean we are not around people enough and not connecting with our community. Control and volition are good, yet control freaks can cause havoc with other people’s needs within families, work situations and at country and global levels, as is all too obvious in our daily news reports.

In short, our emotional needs are best met in balance, on what a colleague of mine has termed the Goldilocks scale: “not too much, not too little, just the right amount”.

Having our emotional needs met in healthy balanced ways is best regarded as a form of nutrition – not too little, not too much – just as a balanced diet of healthy food nourishes our body, but too much, too little or the wrong type of food is bad for us.





“ How we develop and use our resources is just as important as getting our innate needs met...”

## Our inbuilt human resources

In order to get our needs met, we have an inbuilt set of human resources with which we can understand and interact with our environment. The human givens approach identifies our key resources as:



### EMOTIONS AND INSTINCTS:

which help us to understand what’s happening around us and respond accordingly. Our emotions drive us to act, quite literally to move (hence the word). For instance the emotion of fear will prompt us to retreat from the cause. Our emotions all have a vital purpose in our drive to survive



### EMPATHY:

the ability to build rapport, empathize and connect with others, so we can care for each other and share as a group



### MEMORY:

the ability to develop complex, long-term memory, which enables us to add to our innate knowledge, remember experiences and learn



### IMAGINATION:

with which to focus away from emotions and problem solve creatively by trying out ideas in our mind



### INTUITION:

the ability to ‘know’, to perceive and understand the world unconsciously through a subtle metaphorical pattern-matching process (‘this is like that’) – a fundamental way in which our brains work



**REASON:**

a conscious, rational mind that can check out emotions, analyse, plan, fine tune, question



**ENHANCED AWARENESS:**

the potential to develop an ‘observing self’, that part of us which can step back, be more objective and recognize itself as a unique centre of awareness separate from intellect, emotion and conditioning



**DREAMING:**

our brain’s way of both preserving our instincts and defusing uncompleted, unresolved or unfulfilled emotional arousals (including worries and ruminations) from the previous day to create spare emotional and mental capacity for the day to come

These inbuilt resources are our tools: designed, developed and honed to match and meet our needs.



# A practical framework for achieving emotional health and clear thinking

The human givens model, therefore, clearly defines what it means to be a human being: what we need in order to be healthy (innate needs) and what nature has given us by design to get those needs met (innate resources). These are the ‘human givens’.

With the basic elements of our needs and our resources described like this, a framework for wellbeing becomes clear.

Just as a lack of one of our physical needs (water for instance) can make us ill and threaten our life, so a missing element within our emotional needs can cause us difficulties that can lead to mental and physical ill health. Conversely, with all of our needs being met well, and mostly in balance, we will thrive and flourish.

The implications of these essential principles of human nature are what you will learn about in this short ebook.



## The recipe for wellbeing

With these core ‘givens’ of human nature (our innate needs and resources) clearly understood, we can define the fundamental principles of human survival:

- If our needs are being met well and in balance, we will be thriving and in good emotional health.
- When our needs are not well met, we struggle with emotional difficulties and can suffer mental and physical illness.
- The way we use our innate resources to meet our needs determines our physical and emotional health, both individually and within our family, work, cultural and global contexts.



## Putting HG theory into practice

A colleague of mine puts it this way:

“ No matter who comes through my door, I know that I can enable that person to help themselves. Together we can take a step back from whatever the problem is and use the HG framework to look at the situation and find solutions.

When I learned and absorbed the HG overarching idea it transformed the way I approached everything – in all aspects of my life.

Whatever occurred, and whoever I met, I could now see and assess the situation from the perspective of ‘which needs are not being met here?’ and ‘what can I do that will help to clear away the obstacles, or re-balance the situation, so that everyone can begin to get their needs met?’

If, for instance, you are suffering from depression, finding out about the cycle of depression and how all the symptoms spring from an imbalance in your emotional and physical needs is a huge step forward in being able to plan and execute a route out of your difficulties. (Peer-reviewed research into why the HG approach is so effective concludes that its emphasis on psychoeducation is a significant factor in helping a speedy recovery from depression.)

Similarly, if you have ongoing anxieties or recurring panic attacks, knowing the physiological reason for these, and learning how to overcome your symptoms, clear your mind and look to your unmet needs, helps enormously with figuring out how to deal with them and reduce their impact on your life.

To show you what I mean, following are a couple of examples from my own life and work.

## Lifting depression

Last year I successfully treated a client who had suffered recurrent bouts of depression for many years and was at his wits' end. I did this not by using inflexible prescriptive cognitive work, nor with analytical gazing into his past (he had tried both of those methods), but by looking at his life in its current context and helping him to see where his needs were not being met, and why.

“ His life is now full and busy – and he thanks HG therapy for changing the course of his life for the better.

In the first session we identified an underlying trauma that had been diminishing his ability to connect with people, and unhooked from the memory of this the high emotion still attached to it which was triggering his 'fight or flight' response (all human givens therapists are taught how to remove phobic responses and PTSD symptoms). In a few subsequent sessions we worked on strategies for getting his needs met, especially those for attention, emotional connection and status within his community.

Using the HG approach, this man went from having a concrete plan to permanently solve his difficulties (jumping off a bridge) to having a clear set of positive, achievable and needs-oriented goals, based on ideas that he had buried under his fears at the back of his mind for many years, and drawing on his own forgotten resources.

He has since let me know how full and busy his life has become and how vital the HG intervention was in changing the course of his life for the better.

## Being a parent

In a very different example, from my personal life, when my son had just passed his driving test, he bashed into an oncoming vehicle when turning right out of a narrow street. No one was physically hurt, but damage to both cars required attention.

My immediate instinct was to take over, make all the necessary arrangements and protect my boy from 'the big bad world' whilst also admonishing him for not looking properly! But with an HG



focus I could see that allowing him to take the metaphorical ‘back seat’ was effectively treating him like a dependent child and thus doing him no favours at all in terms of his emotional needs for control, volition, competence and status, and his ongoing development of confidence and resilience as a young adult within our culture.

Instead, I taught him how to calm down, think clearly and work out what needed to be done to rectify the situation. I also made sure he got ‘back in the saddle’ by driving the car the next day and successfully making the same right hand turn, so that the incident did not become embedded as a debilitating trauma. And of course taking these measures also helped me, his mum, to calm down! Time and again, in all aspects of my life, I am being shown afresh how effective the human givens approach is, with its clear, simple yet robust framework for understanding human nature and the foundations of health in individuals, teams and communities.

“ Time and again I am shown how effective the human givens approach is

For instance, as I write, I have just completed three teaching days for staff who work with volunteers in outdoor settings, conservation and wildlife projects. Teaching them about our innate needs and resources helps them to identify where needs might not be being well met for both volunteers and staff, what to do about it and how to make the working environment and team spirit better for everyone.





## Why was the human givens approach developed?

**HG psychotherapy is a comprehensive integrative approach derived from psychology, neuroscience and human behaviour**



If you could read a potted history of psychotherapy you would see an evolution of break-neck speed from the birth of the field to the chaotic situation we have arrived at today, where we have at least 650 models of counselling and psychotherapy. Although many of these offer some effective techniques and useful insights, overall we have an uncoordinated disarray of theories, terminology and methods, which causes confusion among both health professionals and those in need of help.

Mature sciences like chemistry, physics and engineering are built on a broad common ground of understanding. Despite the wealth of psychological and neuroscientific knowledge available to us, this is still lacking in psychotherapy. It was to address this lack that the human givens overarching idea was first proposed over 20 years ago.

Psychologists Joe Griffin and Ivan Tyrrell, co-founders of the human givens approach, looked to the fundamental principles of what it means to be human (as explained in this ebook) to develop a simple, robust, scientifically up-to-date, coordinated and agreed bio-psycho-social model of healthy human functioning: a shared language and a practical framework upon which to build an effective, integrative approach to emotional health which truly understands us as human beings with human needs.

“ Griffin and Tyrrell’s contribution advances psychology as much as the introduction of the Arabic numeric system, with its zero digit, advanced mathematics.

*Washington Times*

Taking this scientific approach to psychology and psychotherapy enabled them to develop many revolutionary new insights and understandings of how we ‘tick’ as humans, including:

- A comprehensive understanding of the crucial roles of dreaming and the REM state that is compatible with latest scientific research
- The first comprehensive scientific explanation of clinical depression, how depression is manufactured in the brain and its cyclical progression
- A new understanding of what hypnosis is and why hypnotherapy is often so powerfully effective
- A realistic model of psychosis and how to treat it
- A scientifically compatible model of how trauma is processed in the brain which has enabled PTSD treatment to be refined such that it is swifter and more consistently effective
- An effective approach for treating addictions based on a scientific understanding of the biological pathways in the brain underlying all addictions and the addictive process, which helps control cravings
- The concept of caetextia (context blindness)
- The discovery of molar memories (a memory with two connected emotional roots, one ‘positive’ and one ‘negative’) which drives much compulsive and seemingly irrational behaviour.

*Harnessed between these pages are scientific insights and practical techniques of sufficient power to completely revolutionise our approach to parenting, teaching and the caring*

“

*professions. I wholeheartedly recommend Human Givens to any individual with a burning interest in how life works and can be adapted to work better.\**



**Dr Nick Baylis**

LECTURER IN POSITIVE  
PSYCHOLOGY, CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY

\* These quotes are from the many reviews received for ‘Human Givens: The new approach to emotional health and clear thinking’ by Joe Griffin and Ivan Tyrrell.



## How does the HG approach help us treat mental illness?

On a practical level I, and many other therapists, have found that the HG approach is effective, efficient and consistent in treating a broad range of conditions including:

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Depression, including post-natal depression
- Addiction – in all its forms
- Phobias
- Anger problems
- PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder)
- OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder)
- Self-harming – in all its forms
- Psychosis

It also helps with handling life changes, good and bad, including bereavement, physical ill health, persistent pain, relationship and work challenges or changes, childbirth and parenting.

The HG framework allows us to help people through their difficulties effectively because, if you look at their needs (which ones are not being met, or whether some are being met unhealthily or are out of balance) and their resources (which ones are not being used correctly or are underdeveloped), then you can clearly see how to help get people back on their feet and in charge of their own lives once more. HG simplifies and focuses all aspects of therapy by encouraging constant reference to the fundamentals of what makes us tick.

Thus HG helps all of us to better understand ourselves as well as those around us.



## Why does this approach work?

Speaking from personal experience as a practising psychotherapist, I can say with an open heart that the human givens approach has proved to be an extremely effective way to help the wide range of people that I see.

Here are some of the reasons this approach works so well:

“ I would recommend HG to anybody, for anything, anywhere, any time – it’s a lifeline

SUE HANISCH

- **It is in tune with how we feel.** This is what an HG trained GP colleague of mine calls the ‘nodding patient test’, so called because when he shares the human givens ideas with a patient, they nod a lot. It not only explains the symptoms they are experiencing, but on some inner, more intuitive level they recognise the explanation and their whole being sighs with the relief of that recognition
- **Therapy sessions have a precise and efficient structure,** which helps people to understand quickly what they can do to make things better for themselves
- **It takes into account that we are all different:** it is not a ‘therapy-by-numbers’ prescriptive solution, but looks at everyone as an individual who will devise unique solutions to their difficulties: it is not about the patient fitting the therapy but about us tailoring the therapy to fit the patient
- **It emphasises that circumstances always alter cases.** In other words, it takes into account the context of any difficulties
- **Human givens therapists work in tune with how the brain works,** because we know that when something happens to us the brain does a ‘pattern match’ to what that has meant to us in the past and that arouses emotions in us. Emotions power thoughts and behaviours which we may or may not become aware of, and emotion always comes before thought

You will probably find, as I did, that in learning about the human givens approach you discover not only how best to help others, but how to take care of your own mental and emotional health and be more resourceful and resilient through difficult times – I have certainly become much better equipped for dealing with my own life's ups and downs as well as learning how to help others.



- It gives us **clear, scientifically-based explanations** of what is happening in our brains when we become traumatised, addicted, depressed, overly anxious, stressed, phobic etc. – thus demystifying the symptoms and clarifying exactly what needs to be done to help
- It leads us to set **positive, achievable and needs-oriented goals**, making problem solving easier
- HG therapists are trained to use a **wide range of proven and reliably effective psychological techniques** – which further enhances our ability to **tailor therapeutic interventions** to the individuals we see
- It uses a technique for **mentally rehearsing** any changes or actions needed to **overcome obstacles** that may be in the way, which helps make them become a reality in our lives
- It gives professionals and the public alike a **clear, easily-understood language** with which to talk about mental health and wellbeing
- It defines, in concrete terms, what causes the majority of mental health and behavioural difficulties. This provides a **clear framework** for improving matters through **precisely targeted interventions** – whether for individuals, families, organisations or whole societies
- It gives people the opportunity to own their own recovery and be in charge of their own life choices, independent of any therapeutic help they may receive, thus building their own **sustainable resilience** into the future. People should never become dependent on their therapists, as can happen when people go into psychoanalysis.



## Where's the evidence?

The HG approach draws on research findings from psychology and neurobiology about what people need to function well, and on international research studies that have established which psychotherapeutic techniques are most effective. Decades of social and health psychology research now support the importance of meeting emotional needs if we are to be mentally healthy.

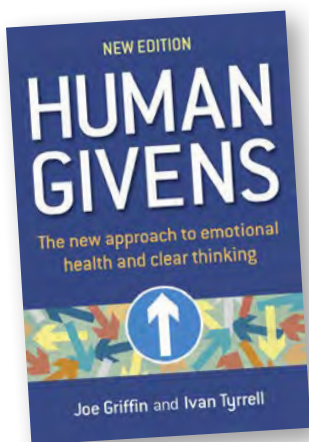
All HG trained professionals are encouraged to collect data on their results. Independent evidence carried out by university researchers shows that therapy from the human givens approach leads to recovery or significant improvement in three out of four clients (those receiving therapy on the NHS and privately), an impressive statistic that is unequalled within the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme, currently rolled out across the country.

Because of HG's effectiveness, the charity PTSD Resolution uses only HG therapists to treat military veterans and their families, who present with often highly complex conditions. Their 2022 data show that, of nearly 2,000 veterans treated, 85 per cent stayed the course and symptom scores dropped down from 23 to 12 – an enormously positive change.

The HG approach is extensively used in Holland, Ireland and the UK, and by individual practitioners in many other countries across the world (with global interest continuing to grow; the seminal book *Human Givens: the new approach to emotional health and clear thinking* has even been translated into Chinese).

For full details of our evidence, visit:

[humangivens.com/human-givens/research/](https://humangivens.com/human-givens/research/)





## Ongoing development of the model

“ *Human givens is constantly engaging in new learning and adapting whenever there are robust new findings. It is not a static model, it’s something that is growing constantly and has not been allowed to become fixed, dogmatic or set in its ways. I feel that’s really important, that it’s a living understanding that is growing all the time.* ”

GAIL RHODES,  
HG PSYCHOTHERAPIST

Scientific research is, by its very nature, always moving forward, developing and discovering, and one of the great strengths of the human givens approach – which I heartily applaud – is that it is an open-minded, dynamic, forward looking discipline, which has always made good use of the wealth of psychological and scientific knowledge available to us and is able to take on board and respond to new scientific discoveries as they emerge.





## Who is using the HG approach?

Because of its universal applicability, the human givens approach is not just used by psychotherapists and counsellors. It is being applied across the wider landscape of health and education, and within professions as varied as: business managers, organisational leaders, the emergency services, police, airline cabin crew, HR professionals, life coaches, strategists, journalists, politicians, diplomats, lawyers and magistrates.

Wherever it is implemented, the people involved find that their work is made easier and more rewarding – and they see great improvements in people’s lives.

To give you a flavour of this, whilst writing this book I decided to ask a few people who use the HG approach in their work to tell me what it provides for them, how it helps and what aspects of it stand out. Excerpts from a few of the many responses I received are given on the following pages – but to start us off, here’s an endorsement from psychiatrist, neuroscientist and acclaimed author Iain McGilchrist.

*I first found out about the human givens from a friend and I thought immediately that it resonated with what I believe. Both from living to the age I have reached and from being a doctor and psychiatrist, I can very*



*much endorse the tenets the human givens approach puts forward. I think your work is important and much needed...*



**Iain McGilchrist**

PSYCHIATRIST, NEUROSCIENCE RESEARCHER, AUTHOR

*I would unhesitatingly recommend the human givens approach to GPs, and I know a lot of doctors who have attended human givens courses or completed the diploma, as I did in 2012.*

*The HG approach informs all the ways in which I explain about mental and emotional health problems. I use it most of all as an explanatory framework because patients find it an extremely useful frame of reference. Whenever I describe their problem from the human givens perspective they are more likely to understand what's happening – and I get the sense that they recognise what I'm saying is true.*

*The human givens approach is completely and seamlessly integrated into the way I work as a GP, and I would certainly feel lost and disabled without it.*



*There is no doubt that the information on issues like depression, anxiety, anger, addiction is invaluable, as well as the general model, which I use multiple times a day in my work, probably in some respect with every patient I see, even if only to calm them down if they are anxious or agitated about coming to see the doctor!*

*Because of the human givens techniques, I find I can manage a lot of the anxiety and depression cases myself, and I don't have to refer people on to the over-stretched NHS mental health services. If needs be, I refer patients to HG practitioners for further treatment.*



**Dr Andrew Morrice**

GP

*I would recommend HG to anybody for anything, anywhere, anytime, any place, because it's a lifeline.*

*As well as my medico-legal work, I have worked in Bosnia with the women victims of war, those who have been in the rape camps.*

*I also work with the IRA, and with amputees. Helping people to adapt to whatever situation they find themselves in has been running through my whole professional and personal life.*

*HG is hugely beneficial wherever we go with it as it gives us the ability to go into any situation and help effectively.*



*Knowledge of the human givens approach allows us to understand what's going on internally, whatever the external circumstances, and therefore have the capacity to stay with difficult conversations and situations and find solutions.*

*As well as being vital within my professional work, HG has been hugely influential in my personal life. In February 1991 I was in Victoria Station, London, and I lost my leg in an IRA bomb.*

*Quite apart from the physical loss, I was emotionally traumatised for ten years, through the negative impact of solicitors (who put everything in terms of loss) and of a series of very harmful forms of counselling (going over and over the negative impacts without ever finding solutions). It was only the human givens approach that helped me, that de-traumatised me and quite literally rescued me. My own life experiences and the HG training have woven together to give me the capacity to help others, and myself, that I have now.*



**Sue Hanisch**

MEDICO-LEGAL CONSULTANT,  
FORMER NHS OCCUPATIONAL  
THERAPIST

The HG approach has provided me with a concrete list of human needs that are frankly directly applicable to many, many situations whether it is status, legitimacy or autonomy. With the human givens idea in place we can look at any conflict and see what's lacking and why they are fighting over those exact things. Joe Griffin and Ivan Tyrrell gave me this framework that's crystal clear as opposed to the more vague one I previously had in my head. They really pinned it down, which was the crucial gain that they provided.

The way I use the HG approach is fourfold. Primarily, and probably most keenly, it informs me in my daily work, in that I now assess a HG approach can be a term of reference for actual negotiations: getting these concepts from the abstract level to living reality is tricky, but I'm promoting this through my teaching, which is the third way I use HG.

I teach HG within my intensive course on diplomacy. Human givens underlies all my

teaching because if people's needs are being met, cult thinking or nationalistic ardour or extremism are far less likely to prevail.

Fourthly, HG is significantly influencing a book I am writing about the current Middle East situation and how it provides an example that can help us to envision a new human politics, one that has as its foundation stone an understanding of how our innate human needs have to be met by all sides in a conflict if we are to avoid the violence produced by extreme cult thinking.



**John Bell**

DIPLOMAT AND MIDDLE EAST  
CONFLICT RESOLUTION  
SPECIALIST

John Bell is a founder director, with Ivan Tyrrell and John Zada, of The Conciliators Guild, which uses human givens insights in its work to bring increased psychological understandings to the world of politics, diplomacy and conflict resolution.

[www.conciliators-guild.org](http://www.conciliators-guild.org)

### 🔍 CASE STUDY: PTSD Resolution

Because of their effectiveness, the charity PTSD Resolution uses [human givens therapists](#) to successfully treat military veterans, reservists and their families – many of whom have suffered considerable trauma in their lives, are struggling other conditions, such as depression and addiction, and a return to civilian life. The [results are impressive](#).

As one client who had seen service in Iraq put it:

“ Before my treatment with PTSD Resolution, I suffered from nightmares, flashbacks and I had experienced a complete psychotic breakdown. But PTSD Resolution has changed my life. Writing this, I am almost in tears because the weight has finally been lifted! I am free from flashbacks, I have reconciled with my parents and I'm getting on great with my wife and children. I have already recommended PTSD Resolution to a number of ex-service personnel, especially to those who are wary about coming forward.

I was nervous at first but my therapist was great and really put my mind at ease. Huge thanks to everyone at PTSD Resolution. You have saved my life, never forget that!



[Find out more >](#)



 CASE STUDY: Suffolk Mind

The human givens approach has been central to the success of the dedicated work carried out by the team at Suffolk Mind. “Our goal is to make Suffolk the best place in the world for talking about and taking care of mental health – the human givens approach is central to our strategy to achieve that,” says Jon Neal, CEO at Suffolk Mind. “It’s an essential framework for achieving good mental health, which is why we’ve been using it for over 10 years.”

“ Suffolk Mind is very often approached by local organisations, who value its insights and expertise...”



To find out how Suffolk Mind use HG to improve mental health and wellbeing across their county – [click here](#).



**Dr Declan Lyons**

CONSULTANT  
PSYCHIATRIST

*HG is a solution focussed approach that does not dwell unnecessarily on the past and has a strong focus on lowering emotional arousal. Patients relate well to the therapeutic explanations and language, which promotes insight and engagement and sets the scene for rapid behavioural change and breaking of patterns. Meeting of wider emotional needs and not just removal of symptoms may enhance functional recovery and reduce relapses.*

*The HG training is flexible, with core subjects on a range of topics from tackling addiction to fast trauma cure given in stand-alone training days suitable for busy professionals from a range of backgrounds, especially for a wide variety of clinicians e.g. higher specialist trainees in psychiatry can fulfil their psychotherapy training*

*requirement with this.*

*There are plentiful opportunities for the use of HG therapy within conventional mental health care.*

“

*The therapy environment could be anywhere from an inpatient ward to A&E (Accident and Emergency). Nursing staff, social workers and paramedics are all ideally positioned to utilise HG principles in acute settings and outpatient facilities where significant steps to recovery can be built using HG methods, which recognise the value of immediate rapport building and support and therefore effectively engage and educate patients even when in crisis.*

*The HG principles can be used as a guide for a daily wellbeing routine, as a template for problem solving (using resources) and to audit the needs of people in relationships. If we accept that we all have to have our needs met in balance, it promotes a no-blame culture – within families, work-teams, organisations and society at large.*

*Psychiatry’s expertise arises from its background in biological sciences (internal focus) but is enhanced by its ability to understand and work within the social environment (external focus) and this maps well onto the HG principle.*

*Having the HG organising idea in your head is like having a brilliant road map to inform what you do and how you do it. It gives me a baseline from which to operate and direct my work.*



**Veronique Chown**

PSYCHOTHERAPIST  
AND SUPERVISOR

*The diploma course was succinct and targeted and left no stone unturned. The training meant that I immediately had a bigger pattern from which to operate. Once I had internalised the knowledge and those firm foundations were in place, I was then free to use my creativity to expand and enrich those new patterns of understanding. I found this hugely empowering.*

*For me it was the practical flexibility of HG, its effectiveness and its emphasis on common sense that I found most attractive; things which to my mind are sorely lacking in our day and age. I like the flexibility of it and its immediate application – and also how you can use it to work with anyone because it applies to every member of the human race. It is based upon innate human needs, and no one is excluded from those.*

*The overarching framework of HG and the practicality go hand in hand because without the bigger framework and the context you lose the practicality. For me it's this connection to the bigger picture that gives HG the flexibility that I really like and that makes my therapeutic work more effective.*

*The human givens approach is a comprehensively built model, very well researched and very well built, with a simple, strong framework that I can plug tools and strategies into all the time. It is flexible and non-prescriptive, I can adapt it to whatever situation I am in really easily.*

*I have found the approach to be particularly well suited to students because they are open to the education aspect of it: they are primed for learning so that whole aspect of 'so why are we feeling like this, what's going on?', the emotional arousal and what you can do about it, the needs and so on, all of that is just learning, and they are used to learning, so you just plug in to all of that and it works well and swiftly.*

*With HG based interventions, we are seeing more students staying, and also a spike in the number of students*

*coming to see us. More students are willing to access support than were before: we've helped to make it more acceptable and normal. The feedback from the students and the lecturers is very good.*



**Gareth Hughes**

LEAD AUTHOR OF THE  
UNIVERSITY MENTAL HEALTH  
CHARTER & FORMER STUDENT  
WELLBEING COUNSELLOR AT  
DERBY UNIVERSITY



**Jenny Moss**

RETIRED HEADTEACHER  
OF A SPECIAL SCHOOL

*I think it is critical to get the human givens approach recognised in schools and in the health service and to incorporate it into all health. For me, coming across the human givens approach was a lightning moment, when I thought 'oh my*

*goodness me yes'. In a nutshell, the human givens organising idea gave me an umbrella, one defining idea for so many things that actually make us human.*

*The school staff really engaged with the HG approach as it provided an environment where everyone (staff, pupils and parents) was valued and accepted, felt safe and secure, and felt they belonged.*

*By internalising the human givens principles, you can apply it to anything. You can find ways through any situation by using the HG philosophies and practice.*

*The most fundamental insight that the HG approach gave me was seeing problem behaviour as an inappropriate attempt to meet valid needs in the child. Being able to identify these needs and look at how the child can learn*



**Miriam Chachamu**

FAMILY AND CHILD  
PSYCHOTHERAPIST

*to meet these needs in a way that's more acceptable gave me the roadmap that I needed. Before my HG training, my thinking had been more, 'OK he's doing this challenging behaviour, you can use all these skills*

*to calm him down and help him behave better', but I didn't have a clear enough understanding of why the behaviour was happening in the first place.*

“

*When teachers and parents who are really frustrated by behaviour that can be really horrible, it can be violent, understand that children behave like that to meet needs, it is easier for them to keep calm and not take things personally. They become less resentful and more sympathetic. To me, the HG approach provides a framework that organises and helps make sense of the things that I already knew. It provides a much more positive way to think about children, teachers and parents.*

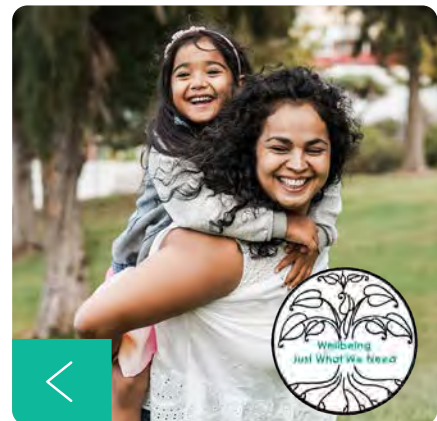
*HG is like the background canvas for my own painting. The canvas is always there in the background, and it allows me to paint my skills and ideas onto it.*



### CASE STUDY: Just what we need

JWWN is a 12-week therapeutic group programme based on the human givens framework. Originally designed (by HG therapists who worked professionally with families) to help struggling parents who often dropped out of other parenting courses, it recognised that parents needed to be able to understand their own emotional needs, and the triggers for their own behaviours, before they could learn to be more effective parents to their own children.

JWWN was so successful that not only has it run consistently in Milton Keynes ever since, with hundreds of parents completing it so far, but it has since been adapted for a variety of different groups, such as female victims of domestic violence, people with mental health problems, carers of relatives with chronic conditions and prisoners about to go on release, and has also been run in schools and in business organisations, as well as in children's centres.



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*We can see a role for it in prisons, in centres treating drug and alcohol abuse, in residential care indeed, with any group in the community struggling with unrecognised or unmet needs.*

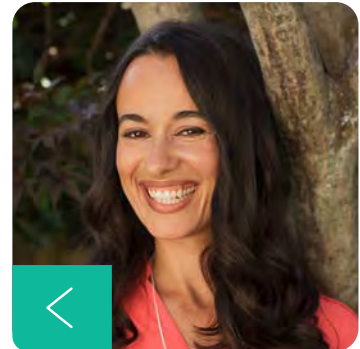
You can find out more at: [www.justwhatweneed.co.uk](http://www.justwhatweneed.co.uk)

 CASE HISTORY: Finding peace at last

Hundreds of thousands of people have been helped by human givens therapists to regain their mental health and quality of life. One such person was Katherine Vlnrotter.

After being subjected to a terrifying ordeal, she had tried everything she could to deal with the resulting PTSD, but it wasn't until she had one pivotal session of HG therapy that she finally got her life back.

You can [read her story here](#).



**Pat Capel**

TEACHER AND  
HUMAN GIVENS THERAPIST

*When I heard about the human givens, it rang so true that, as well as using it in my day-to-day work as a teacher, I felt I had to study it with the idea of eventually becoming a therapist. The solution focused approach seemed so logical. The idea that it is short term therapy seemed desirable and practical.*

*My own 6 month stint in therapy in my 20s had cost me a fortune. Aiming to get the client back out there functioning at optimal level as quickly*

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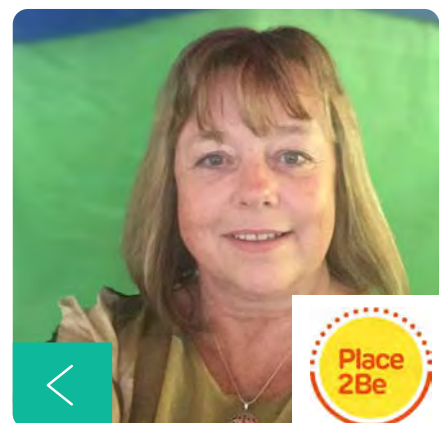
*as possible seemed to be in the client's interest. Over the last few years, the longest I have seen a client for is 6 sessions over a 5-month period.*

*There have been some clients who I have seen only once or twice. But regardless of how many times or over how long I have seen a client, focusing on their wellbeing and mental health instantly has been the key. Finding solutions quickly has been vital. Adolescents and children seem to thrive on this methodology. We all like a problem to solve and potential solutions that make themselves known quickly. I have found it so successful with anxiety, stress, depression and even severe PTSD.*

 CASE STUDY: Place2be and Human Givens

Inga Springell, HG Therapist and School Project Manager for Place2Be, a children's mental health charity, describes how the human givens approach supports her project and practice, working with children and young people and the wider school community.

“ *Using the human givens approach in my practice gives me the ability to help young people get back on track, by reframing and offering them an emotional toolbox, without the need for lengthy therapy or intrusive exploration. It is very empowering for children and allows them to see how they can get their emotional needs met.*



## Find out more



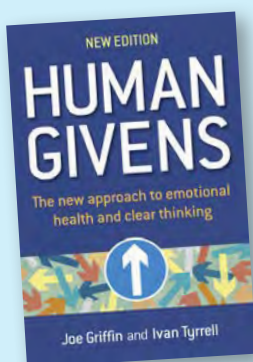
I hope you have enjoyed this ebook and that it has given you a clearer appreciation of why this bio-psycho-social model is being adopted by – and is proving invaluable to – such a wide range of professionals, and how, with this approach, hundreds of thousands of patients and clients have learnt how to maintain their own mental and emotional health in a simple yet effective way.

But this is literally just the ‘essentials’.

For lots more information about all things HG, including details of human givens training including the diploma, more in-depth discussions about the causes of, and treatments for, a wide range of mental health conditions, the scientific evidence for the HG model, the efficacy of the therapeutic approach, and a list of registered therapists throughout the world – please see the links on the following pages.

### HUMAN GIVENS:

The new approach to emotional health and clear thinking



This seminal book on the human givens approach, by Joe Griffin and Ivan Tyrrell, goes into much more detail than I have been able to here in my short ebook and is well worth reading if you would like to find out more.

It includes all the relevant references, including the research that has led to the many useful ideas and concepts found within the human givens approach.

[Find out more >](#)

[humangivens.com/publications/human-givens-book/](http://humangivens.com/publications/human-givens-book/)

## Training

Human Givens College provides clear, practical evidence-based training – online and in person – on a wide range of subjects and essential therapeutic skills, for more details visit: [humangivens.com/college/](http://humangivens.com/college/)

All courses >

HG Diploma >

[humangivens.com/college/](http://humangivens.com/college/)



## Publications

Explore our range of fascinating books, audio downloads, best-selling self-help series, and the *Human Givens Journal* – a great way to keep up-to-date and get inspired! Visit: [humangivens.com/publications](http://humangivens.com/publications)

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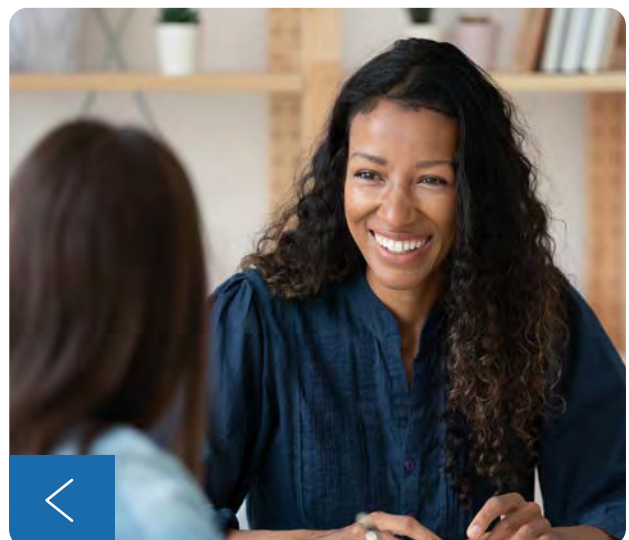
[humangivens.com/publications/](http://humangivens.com/publications/)

## Human Givens Institute

The HGI's professional register of HG therapists is accredited in the UK by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA). Visit [www.hgi.ork.uk](http://www.hgi.ork.uk) for full details, articles, case histories, mental health info and more...

Find a therapist >

[hgi.org.uk/find-therapist](http://hgi.org.uk/find-therapist)



## Podcast Series

Listen to our 'Ask the expert' series to gain new insights and learn how the HG approach is being successfully applied in a wide variety of ways and settings...

[Listen here](#) >

[soundcloud.com/humangivens](https://soundcloud.com/humangivens)



## 20+ years of human givens

Discover how much has been achieved since two psychotherapists first coined the phrase 'human givens' ...

[Read more](#) >

[humangivens.com/human-givens/about/20-years/](https://humangivens.com/human-givens/about/20-years/)

## HG Foundation

The HGF promotes research into the HG approach, public education into the 'givens' of human nature and their application into the treatment and care of those suffering from mental illness ...

[Visit website](#) >

[humangivens.com/foundation/](https://humangivens.com/foundation/)





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