

## Impact case study (REF3)

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| <b>Institution: University of Derby</b>  |                                  |  |
| <b>Unit of Assessment: 4</b>   |                                  |  |
| <b>Title of case study: Impact of compassion-based interventions on health and wellbeing</b>   |                                  |  |
| <b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2003–2019</b>   |                                  |  |
| <b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>   |                                  |  |
| <b>Name(s):</b>  | <b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b> | <b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> |
| P. Gilbert   | Professor                        | 1992–present                                 |
| F. Maratos   | Associate Professor              | 2006–present                                 |
| K. McEwan (UoA 3)  | Researcher; Senior Fellow        | 2004–2012; 2016–present                      |
| J. Elander (UoA 3)   | Professor                        | 2007–present                                 |
| J. Stubbs  | Professor                        | 2013–2016                                    |
| <b>Period when the claimed impact occurred: 1 August 2013–31 December 2020</b>   |                                  |  |
| <b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No</b>  |                                  |  |
| <b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)   |                                  |  |
| <p>Mental health problems are the largest single source of global economic burden (MHF, 2015). Our pioneering research at the University of Derby (UoD) is addressing this burden. Compassion Focused Therapy (CFT), developed by UoD researchers, is now an established treatment in over 20 UK NHS trusts, with over 11,000 individuals benefitting from the therapy via just two trusts alone. Use of the therapy has spread throughout the world and it is now practiced across 25 countries, covering every continent. Additionally, our development of 'Compassionate Mind Training' (CMT, the non-clinical equivalent) has been incorporated into professional development curriculums spanning education and commercial sectors worldwide. In Denmark, for instance, Mindwork has utilised CMT in over 40 organisations with more than 12,000 employees.</p>   |                                  |  |
| <b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)   |                                  |  |
| <p>Since 2014, the UoD team researching compassion-based interventions (CBIs) has grown substantially, with over 15 staff, 4 postdoctoral researchers and 7 PhD students currently working with, or under the guidance of Gilbert, Maratos and Elander. Additionally, Gilbert and Maratos have supported a growing number of international research and PhD supervision partnerships across Asia, North America, Australia and Europe. Gilbert has held a research chair at UoD since 1996. He is the originator and world lead in CFT, developing the therapy to address aspects of shame and self-criticism observed across a wide range of psychopathologies. His authority in CFT and CMT led to an OBE for services to mental healthcare in 2011; a plethora of successful grants/collaborations; and the mentoring of further staff in their research, including Stubbs [G3.3]. Maratos has worked closely with Gilbert since 2006, bringing expertise in neuro and psychobiological methods, and the application of theory and experimental methodology to practice. Since 2014, Maratos has spearheaded the compassion in schools movement, including its internationalisation [G3.4]. McEwan, supervised by Gilbert and Maratos, has worked with both to advance research into CBI methodology and practices, including as a postdoctoral fellow [G3.1]. McEwan re-joined the University in 2016 and has continued to produce impactful research in CBI methodology, practices and scale development. McEwan alone contributed to over 25 such published studies. Specifically, our research, including RCTs, quantitative, qualitative, neuroimaging and physiological studies, consists of:</p> |                                  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Development, implementation and multi-language validation of measures/constructs targeted in CFT and CMT to further advance understanding of CBI efficacy. [e.g. 3.1.]</li> <li>● Advancing knowledge related to how self-compassion, self-reassurance and self-criticism confer protection from/vulnerability to psychological disorders. [e.g. 3.1; 3.2.]</li> <li>● The provision of a practice framework for the implementation of CFT in clinical practice worldwide, including refinement of the theoretical analyses of evolutionary ('tricky brain'), functional and motivational ('three circles/systems' - drive, soothing and threat) emotion systems key to CFT. [e.g. 3.2; 3.6.]</li> <li>● Advancing understanding of neural and physiological changes related to compassion-based interventions (CBIs)/practices, including psychobiological indices of wellbeing. [e.g., 3.3; 3.4.]</li> </ul>  |                                  |  |

- Tailoring and evaluation of CFT for a broader range of patient groups (including PTSD/ trauma; alcohol; long-term conditions such as chronic pain; and body-dysmorphia/obesity). [e.g. 3.5.]
- Effective development of additional CBI therapeutic techniques including imagery, attentional bias and app-based interventions. [G3.1; G3.2.]
- Successful application of CFT to improve wellbeing in non-clinical sectors; e.g. educational and commercial settings through the development and trialling of CMT. [G3.3; G3.4.]

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

UoD researchers are indicated by black, underlined text:

**3.1** Gilbert, P., Clarke, M., Hempel, S., Miles, J. and Irons, C. (2004) 'Criticizing and reassuring oneself: An exploration of forms, styles and reasons in female students', *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 43, 31-50. [This is one of 23 scales developed by the UoD team. Now translated/validated in over 5 languages, it is a gold-standard CBI measure both in terms of evaluating intervention efficacy and vulnerability to mental health problems.]

**3.2** Gilbert, P. and Proctor, S. (2006) 'Compassionate mind training for people with high shame and self-criticism: overview and pilot study of a group therapy approach', *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 13, 351-379. [This was the first pilot of what became known as CFT and the impetus for: i) clinicians worldwide to train in CFT; and ii) its implementation in NHS practice. It has led to a plethora of further effectiveness and RCT studies of compassion-based therapies.]

**3.3** Rockliff, H., Gilbert, P., McEwan, K., Lightman S. and Glover, D. (2008) 'A pilot exploration of heart rate variability and salivary cortisol responses to compassion-focused imagery', *Journal of Clinical Neuropsychiatry*, 5, 132-139. [This was the first research to utilise the physiological measure of heart-rate variability in the context of CBIs. It provided evidence that compassionate imagery impacts peripheral nervous system activity and has led to the use of HRV as a new gold-standard physiological outcome measure across established CBI research groups worldwide.]

**3.4** Longe, O., Maratos, F.A., Gilbert, P., Evans, G., Volker, F., Rockliff, H. and Rippon, G. (2010) 'Having a word with yourself: Neural correlates of self-criticism and self-reassurance', *Neuroimage*, 49, 1849-1856. [This collaborative work with Aston University provided the first evidence that self-reassuring (i.e. compassionate) and self-critical thought processes are associated with distinct neural activity. This knowledge has informed our CBI practice content, including corrective self-talk across CFT and CMT curriculums worldwide.]

**3.5** Gale, C., Gilbert, P., Read, N. and Goss, K. (2014) 'An evaluation of the impact of introducing compassion focused therapy to a standard treatment programme for people with eating disorders', *Clinical psychology & psychotherapy*, 21(1), 1-12. [This research evidences effectiveness of CFT for a new patient group (eating disorders). It was the impetus for CFT to be implemented for eating disorders by the Birmingham and Solihull NHS Trust and Slimming World.]

**3.6** Gilbert, P. (2014) 'The origins and nature of compassion focused therapy', *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 53(1), 6-41. [This paper provides theory (e.g. evolutionary functional analysis) and concept definition (e.g. 'tricky brain') updates as well as practitioner guidance/examples. It is the current CFT 'go to' reference paper across clinicians, practitioners and researchers.]

#### Grant funding

**G3.1** 2010–2012, Leverhulme Trust: Evaluation of a Novel Compassion Visual Search Task to Reduce Self-Criticism. Gilbert, P., McEwan, K., Maratos, F.A., and Elander, J. GBP82,345.

**G3.2** 2012–2014, MRC: Overcoming Self-Critical Attitudes in Virtual Reality. Brewin, C., Slater, M., Gilbert, P. and King, J. Ref: MR/J009210/1. GBP447,488 (GBP11,968 to UoD).

**G3.3** 2015–2020, Horizon 2020: NoHoW: Evidence based ICT tools for weight loss maintenance. Stubbs, J. GBP853,819 (GBP60,666.89 to UoD between 2014-2017).

**G3.4** 2017–2020, Reed Foundation: Charity donation for implementing 'The Compassionate Mind Training Schools Programme'. Gilbert, P., Maratos, F. A., and Matos, M. GBP106,000 (GBP33,000 to UoD) in collaboration with University of Coimbra (Portugal).

**4. Details of the impact** (indicative maximum 750 words)

● = Clinicians trained, ● = CMT in education, ● = RCT's and published CBI evaluations, ● = affiliate and training organisations

**Impact in clinical sectors worldwide [5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, CBIs map]**

The World Health Organization reports that, globally, mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression cost the economy USD 1 trillion per year. As such, it has called for improvement in the availability of “scalable psychological therapies”. Our UoD research is meeting this need. CFT is one of the fastest growing efficacious therapies internationally. In the UK, it is now practiced in over 20 NHS trusts and, in the Midlands alone, over 11,000 patients have benefitted from this therapy via the Birmingham and Solihull, and Coventry and Warwickshire, NHS Trusts. One client noted, “I’m far more compassionate to myself than I used to be, I feed myself now, I may have a meal a day” [5.1]. Worldwide, CFT is used to treat a variety of conditions including: depression, anxiety, social anxiety, self-harm, psychosis, eating disorders, body dysmorphia/weight management, alcohol abuse, PTSD, trauma, as well as long-term physical health conditions such as chronic pain, cancer, diabetes, dementia and HIV [5.2]. As a Canadian clinician has stated: “My clients find the model easy to understand and the concept of accepting that what they are experiencing is not their fault comes through very strongly. They can then empower themselves to work with their ‘tricky brain’ rather than feel like they are not able to do anything” [5.3].

Gilbert has additionally grown an international network of CFT professionals and practitioners. Since establishing the Compassionate Mind Foundation (CMF) in 2006, and now with over 9,000 members, it provides an excellent model for the research, practice and training established at the UoD. Since 2014, affiliate organisations have been set up in Ireland, Italy, Australia, Canada and the USA. These organisations have, “directly resulted from Prof. Gilbert’s work” (Co-founder Compassionate Mind, Ireland). In South America, following a visit by Gilbert in 2019, hundreds of clinicians now have access to CFT. As the co-founder of Motivacion Compasiva has stated: “The extent of the reach of CFT and his presence in Buenos Aires has encouraged us to coordinate a Compassionate Mind Foundation network in South America with Paul Gilbert’s support to continue to promote this teaching” [5.3].

At the UoD, an active programme of training, the PGCert in CFT, is now in its ninth year. Via this route 68 healthcare professionals have achieved certified CFT practitioner status since August 2013. In addition, over 1,400 healthcare professionals have attended short-course and international/national training events in conjunction with the UoD/CMF. Thus, CFT can now be accessed across every continent. Clinicians trained to deliver the Derby CBI model operate across 28 countries allowing thousands of clients worldwide to benefit from the research, training and practise expertise originated and developed at the UoD [5.4]. In 2015, in recognition of his eminence in clinical psychology, including CFT, Gilbert was awarded the prestigious MB Shapiro Award by the British Psychological Society.

**Impact in educational sectors [5.5, 5.6]**

Teacher and pupil stress is endemic. In the UK alone, 30% of teachers leave the profession within five years of employment (Carmichael, 2017). In addressing this, Maratos and colleagues have trialled, tested and developed a 6-module CMT continuing professional development (CPD) course bespoke to the needs of those working in education [5.5]. Over 580 staff across the East

Midlands and Portugal have now received this CPD training (e.g. via experimental trials) and school staff have reported promising results. For example, the Headteacher of Cherry Tree Hill Primary, Derby has stated: *“The education sector are currently facing a recruitment and retention crisis ...teachers feel overworked, under-appreciated and stressed. The partnership work carried out with the University of Derby has enabled us to invest in our staff’s mental health and wellbeing. This project has come at the right time for us. Never has it been more important or needed. I cannot thank the University enough”* [5.5]. Similarly, the Vice-Director of Agrupamento de Escolas de Nelas (Portugal) has asserted: *“The Compassionate Mind Training program truly helped our teachers to deal with problems that cause them great emotional distress and stress, providing them with skills to accept and face what is difficult in their profession and personal life”* [5.5]. A pupil PSHE curriculum has also been developed and trialled with 148 pupils undergoing, for instance, transition from primary to secondary school. Students who participated found it helped them deal with stress and anger by sharing their feelings and using relaxing visualisation. One UK student stated: *“The wellbeing PSHE curriculum made me feel active. I got to express my feeling in a calm way. I got to know my classmates better. It has helped me understand my own expressions very well. I have learnt the ‘three systems’ (drive, soothing, threat), thank you”* [5.5].

In November 2019, a stakeholder event which attracted 80 plus educators found that over 70% would apply the practices learnt from the day to help staff and pupils in their school. Additionally, a new partnership with T. Gilbert (Herts), to evaluate compassionate approaches to teaching in the HE sector has been adopted by a number of universities. Videos prepared by UoD have been shared with HE institutions in Northern Ireland, Southampton, Oxford and Bristol to help students use compassionate communication in group work. Demonstrating public recognition of her expertise, articles featuring Maratos and this research have appeared in general readership magazines such as *The Psychologist* and *FENews*. These articles explain key theory, concepts and the applied techniques/ practices used. Maratos also serves as one of 28 experts and 15 steering committee members on a Mindfulness Initiative education policy consultation for the UK government [5.6].

#### **Impact in health, occupational and commercial sectors worldwide [5.2, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10]**

Traumatic work experiences affect the health and wellbeing of those working in high emotional labour jobs (e.g. the armed services, fire service and healthcare professions). Poor mental health costs UK employers up to GBP45 billion a year (Deloitte, 2019), with NHS staff sickness accounting for over GBP1.1 billion of this figure (NHS Digital, 2017). Our CBI research has impacted such groups. For example, and accrediting Gilbert for the models used, Wellbeing Works have provided interventions to a wide range of businesses, including NHS, Police, Fire and Rescue and manufacturing. This training has resulted in notable savings of over GBP380,000 at Barts Health NHS Trust, via reduced labour turnover of nurses; and GBP600,000 at Manchester Metropolitan University, because of improved staff wellbeing and reduced labour turnover. The Chair of Emergency Care at Barts has stated: *“The data and reports have enabled us to transform how we work in the Emergency Department to the benefit of staff and patients. We are now rolling this out across all our Emergency Care Departments.”* [5.7]. Another workplace wellbeing company based in Denmark (Mindwork) has utilised CMT in over 40 organisations (with over 12,000 individuals), including lawyers, engineers, mental health workers, pension companies, union workers, and the largest Nordic bank (9,000 employees). Mindwork’s CEO has observed that benefits reported by their clients have included improved listening and communication skills among their employees, particularly in relation to organisational change [5.7].

CBI knowledge proliferation and dissemination from research papers, book/book chapters, workshops and keynotes produced by the UoD team has permeated politics, global industry and public health businesses. Gilbert has been appointed to the ‘Compassion in Politics’ steering committee, a major international group seeking to create opportunities for improved compassion in society. This includes, most recently during the COVID-19 pandemic, the provision of free hotel rooms to 136 women and child survivors of domestic abuse. Relatedly, Gilbert has keynoted a cross-Parliamentary meeting on the topic of moral behaviour/compassion in politics and business and, with CMF funding, hosted a landmark Leadership and Business Conference, attended by D. Blood (ex-CEO, Goldman Sachs), T. Henry (Co-founder and Trustee of Conscious Capitalism inc) and B. Dalsey (EMEA Vice-President of Twitter) [5.8]. Set up by Philip Zimbardo, Martin Heineberg and Daniel Martin, the American firm Brightsity offers various compassion-based programmes.

Notably, Heineberg trained under Gilbert and Martin attended Gilbert's training courses. The content of their courses are based upon Gilbert's training and research. Kolts, Welford and Irons were all trained under Gilbert, and have become extremely influential in the field, commercialising CFT research. Kolts has introduced CFT into the US penitentiary system, including a related TEDX talk that has over 290,000 views; and Welford has published *CFT for Dummies* a self-help guide for all, based on her training with Gilbert. Irons has collaborated with public wellbeing organisation School of Life (London) to deliver CMT workshops to the general public to improve wellbeing [5.9].

Finally, and recognising that obesity is at crisis levels, in collaboration with UoD researchers, Slimming World have trialled 'treatment as usual + CMT' in a major RCT involving 800 members. As the CMT treatment arm proved effective, the company is now utilising these interventions across their 400,000 membership. A press release stated: "*Slimming World has been working with the University of Derby and the Compassionate Mind Foundation...developing tools to help people be more reassuring to themselves, and to calm their inner critic...[helping]...them to better manage their eating behaviour for the long term.*" The company's introduction to IMAGE therapy on its website continues: "*Slimming World's unique group support system...avoids any criticism... and uses elements of techniques including...Compassionate Mind Theory, to help individuals overcome their own personal barriers to change and to avoid relapse.*" The company has also produced and evaluated a compassion-based app in a large-scale trial. This app reduced weight-loss program drop-out rates by 10%, significantly impacting on treatment effectiveness [5.10].

To summarise, CBIs are efficacious in improving health and wellbeing across a wide, and ever increasing, range of sectors and populations. Treatment models and curriculums developed at UoD are disseminated and utilised globally. As one Dutch team recognised, following a large scale, long-term trial, our CBIs can serve, "*as a public mental health strategy for enhancing wellbeing and reducing psychological distress*" [5.2].

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

**5.1 NHS evidence group:** factual statements (FS) from Psychotherapist, Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (30-01-20); the Head of the Eating Disorder Clinic, Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust (21-02-20). CFT trial patient quotes (27-02-20).

**5.2** List of published trials demonstrating efficacy of CBIs (inc. Sommers et al., 2018, quote).

**5.3 Compassionate Mind Foundation evidence group:** link to [Compassionate Mind Foundation](#) charity; names of global affiliate organisations founded since 2014; and FS from co-founders of Irish Compassionate Mind (09-05-19), Motivacion Compasiva (12-12-19) and Canadian Network of CFT (23-07-20).

**5.4 Clinicians evidence group:** list of clinicians trained using UoD model of CFT, including number of graduates from PGCert; workshop and training events run by UoD/CMF; and the results from a Qualtrics survey of 246 CMF members during October–December 2019.

**5.5 Compassion in schools evidence group:** initial trial of the staff educational curriculum utilised (Maratos et al., 2019); [website](#) detailing available resources/programmes; FS from Headteacher, Cherry Tree Hill Primary School (UK, 06-11-20); Vice-Director of the Agrupamento de Escolas de Nelas (Portugal, 11-11-20); and Year 7 pupil, Roundhill Academy (UK, 9-11-20).

**5.6 CBIs in education evidence group:** feedback from a conference; use of UoD videos for HE group work; press articles and evidence of contribution to UK educational policy via the Mindfulness Initiative steering group (formed 03-03-20).

**5.7 Workplace wellbeing evidence group:** FS from the Chief Executive of Wellbeing Works (21-01-20) and the CEO of Mindwork (13-04-20).

**5.8 Politics and business leadership evidence group:** FS from co-director of '[Compassion in Politics](#)' (16-10-20); evidence of opening hotel rooms during COVID-19; and keynote at [Leadership and Business Conference \(May 2018\)](#).

**5.9 Occupational and commercial sectors evidence group:** Evidence for use of CBIs in: [brightsity](#); US penitentiary system and [TEDX talk](#) (published: 28 September 2015); publication of "CFT for dummies" (Wiley & Sons, 2016); and collaboration with [The School of Life](#).

**5.10 Slimming World evidence group:** Published trial with UoD and Slimming World investigating the effectiveness of online CBIs in weight loss programmes (Duarte et al., 2019); press articles from [Slimming world](#) evidencing work with UoD.

All URLs available before 31-12-20 and last checked as accessible on 07-01-21.