

## ...with Shivani Sharma

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### One inspiration

Many people have inspired me for different reasons, most notably, my PhD supervisor, Professor Ben (C) Fletcher [see 'One on one', July 2011]. His commitment to transforming lives swayed me into my field. He has helped me focus on what really matters by being open and generous with his knowledge and experiences. I've yet to meet anyone like him!

### One moment that changed the course of your career

A chance involvement doing research with renal patients. It sparked my interest in how people from different ethnic groups make sense of chronic illnesses and has led to some exciting projects that are ongoing.

**One book that you think all psychologists should read**  
William James' *Principles of Psychology* because it shows how good psychologists can be outside a narrow box of thinking.

### One challenge you think psychology faces

Improving public understanding of what psychologists do. If only I had a pound for every person who has asked me if I know what they're thinking!

### One link between bullying and autism

Autism is a complex condition and one that requires understanding and acceptance of behaviours that may seem unusual. Many individuals are bullied because there is an intolerance of difference. Bullying in part reflects an inability of others to adapt their own thinking and behaviour.

### One way to boost the employability of psychology graduates

Academics realising that around 80 per cent of psychology graduates pursue careers outside of the field. Our curriculum and assessment strategies need to



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reflect the nature of work most graduates will be involved in. It doesn't all need to be essays, lab reports and exams.

### One proud moment

Receiving a quality enhancement award for my role in developing a completely novel online tool called FIT {student} that helps with personal development. Going to university should be about leading a better life, not just becoming more 'intelligent'. It's great to be a part of something that is

helping students feel less stressed, more confident, and better prepared to make the most of the opportunities ahead.

### One nugget of advice for aspiring psychologists

For those who want to get on in research, you need to develop a thick skin. The peer review process is not as objective as it should be and can be quite disheartening. You have to persevere and realise how much the negative stuff is the norm.

### One cultural recommendation

Sanjay Leela Bansali's Hindi movie *Black*. The plot revolves around the life of a deaf and blind woman and her teacher's efforts to rescue her from an inner vacuum of distress. The film is based on the *The Miracle Worker* and is a creative endeavour to bring psychology to the forefront of Indian cinema.

### One alternative career path you may have chosen

Dancer. I recently started training in an Indian classical form called Kathak. Fortunately, I've been able to pursue this alongside my academic career.

**One great thing that psychology has achieved**  
Greater understanding of the impact of psychological processes on physical health.

### One hope for the future of psychology

That more psychologists are recognised for the impact of their work on the lives of others as opposed to the impact factor of the journal their work features in.

#### resource

[www.go.herts.ac.uk/fitstudentcasestudy](http://www.go.herts.ac.uk/fitstudentcasestudy)

'The FIT {student} programme, based on Do Something Different. It helps students with personal development. Contributing to it is a highlight of my career so far.'

#### coming soon

**A special issue on humour, laughter and comedy. No, seriously...**

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