

# Book review

## Give and Take

How timebanking is transforming healthcare

**Category:** Book Reviews / Non-fiction

**Author:** David Boyle, Sarah Bird

**Year:** 2014

**Publisher:** Timebanking UK

**ISBN:** 9780993057908

**Audience:** For Mental Health Workforce

**Summary:** A review of time banking, the practice of sharing time and services to build community and improve health care



David Boyle and Sarah Bird's most recent publication, *Give and Take: How timebanking is transforming healthcare*, tells real stories of individuals and medical practices who are using timebanking in the UK. There are lots of books on self-help – but how do you help the system which is designed to help people, and which is itself being crushed by the weight of demand? It turns out the answer is deceptively simple; by releasing our greatest untapped resource – ourselves.

*Give and Take* helps you understand the concept of timebanking through meeting people like Geoff from Blackpool, who has been better able to cope following his wife's death because of his relationships with others in the timebank. These stories show how timebanking can be used to improve both individuals' lives and the services that can assist them.

### Isolation as bad as smoking

Recent research shows that isolation is as dangerous to health as smoking. Timebanking is a tool for community building which incorporates all of the Five Ways to Wellbeing by encouraging people to share their skills and talents in an equal time-based measure – one hour equals one hour. From chronic pain to heart attacks to depression, *Give and Take* shows timebanking is linked to better outcomes.

*Give and Take* is an incredibly engaging and easy-to-read account of the research. It provides anecdotal and statistical evidence showing the use of timebanking in health – and particularly mental health – delivers real results for the NHS, health service providers and centrally for the people using the services, whose skills, it turns out, are just what the doctor ordered.

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The book not only recommends embedding timebanking into the health system but provides a guide for how to do it. The small steps taken in hundreds of small towns across the UK, and documented in *Give and Take*, are fascinating and inspirational and show a way forward for ailing health systems.

This is an invaluable book for anyone aiming for better outcomes for patients or interested in the sustainability of the health system, as well as for individuals who have an interest in mental health and the idea of service users as co-producers of future health outcomes.

**Reviewed by Genevieve de Spa, Ambulance Officer for St John, Timebank Co-ordinator and Masters student**

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