



UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM



The Jubilee Centre  
for Character  
& Virtues

# Discover Forgiveness Landscape Review

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# Executive Summary

The aim of this landscape review is to initiate a gear change in enhancing and expanding the Science of Forgiveness globally. Drawing on empirical data and expert opinion, the report provides recommendations for strategically scaling the Science of Forgiveness, paying particular attention, and using as a case, the Discover Forgiveness campaign. The Discover Forgiveness campaign, launched in 2020, focuses on reaching key professionals—mental health practitioners, educators, and faith leaders—who are best placed to support individuals on their forgiveness journeys. Through curated research, the website ([www.discoverforgiveness.org](http://www.discoverforgiveness.org)), and targeted events, TWCF aims to empower these groups with tools and knowledge to share within their communities.

An eight-month landscape review involving 53 participants across 13 countries aimed at providing an overview of the current state of play in disseminating the Science of Forgiveness as well as identifying key players, trends, gaps, challenges, and opportunities for the Discover Forgiveness campaign. The report also contains insights from a strategy workshop with experts in forgiveness research and practice held in Canterbury, UK in July 2025.

The report marks a pivotal step toward broader global awareness and collaboration, encouraging and equipping trusted professionals to lead the way in advocating for the Science of Forgiveness and its application as a transformative tool in their fields.

## Overarching Findings

The main findings, implications, and recommendations presented below are an adapted version of those in the full report. For practical reasons, they have been simplified to ensure they can be more easily understood and applied. A pathway-to-impact diagram is included at the end to summarise the key recommendations.

- i) Mental health professionals, educators, and faith leaders report the existence of a strong, cross-sector “community” of Science of Forgiveness champions within their professions. This validates the campaign’s hypothesis that these groups should be at the forefront of advancing Discover Forgiveness.

**Implication: The campaign should intentionally position these groups as core ambassadors and leaders of the DF movement.**

- ii) Awareness of the DF website is currently low across all three groups. However, once introduced, participants consistently describe the site as the best global portal for Science of Forgiveness research and resources they know of. This demonstrates the website’s perceived high quality and underscores the need for broader dissemination and promotion.

**Implication: Targeted promotion and outreach are essential to expand awareness, increase traffic, ensure research is up to date and maximise the site’s global potential.**

- iii) Currently, champions of the Science of Forgiveness often work independently or in small groups, meaning that synergies and opportunities to build a coordinated

“critical mass” are not fully leveraged.

**Implication: The campaign should foster a more organised and visible network that unites individual efforts into a stronger, collective force for impact.**

- iv) Key workers stress the importance of linking the Science of Forgiveness with other networks, research fields, and professional sectors. They highlight the potential of building a “community of partnerships” to amplify reach and impact.

**Implication: The DF campaign should actively pursue cross-sector partnerships to extend its network and establish the website as a central hub for collaboration and global engagement.**

- v) Mental health professionals, educators, and faith leaders identified ways the DF website could be enhanced to improve usability and broaden engagement. This shows that the website has strong potential for growth and refinement.

**Implication: Ongoing investment in user-centred improvements will help ensure the site remains engaging, accessible, and relevant to diverse professional audiences.**

- vi) Each group outlined specific suggestions for making the website and campaign more appealing and appropriate for their professional contexts, which are detailed in the main report.

**Implication: The DF website should continue to expand and adapt its content to resonate with the distinct needs of different professional audiences.**

- vii) Key workers highlighted the need for new research on forgiveness that addresses contemporary and emerging issues such as technology, faith, and diversity. While the current body of research is strong, they see a gap in forward-looking work.

**Implication: The campaign should champion and spotlight future-focused research to ensure forgiveness remains a vital and relevant virtue in modern society.**

## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendation 1: Fund New Research in Future-Focused Priority Areas**

There is a need to develop a list of priority research projects that address key gaps in the literature, alongside a list of potential funders. Priority areas include interdisciplinary research on forgiveness in the age of AI, forgiveness in law and justice systems, forgiveness in diverse cultural and faith contexts, the relationship between forgiveness and other core concepts and practices (e.g. flourishing, restorative justice, or guilt) and self-forgiveness. Additional areas of focus could include forgiveness in education and youth development, forgiveness and mental health with particular attention to trauma recovery and resilience, as well as forgiveness in prisons and peacebuilding in conflict and post-conflict settings.

### **Recommendation 2: Develop the Discover Forgiveness Campaign**

The Discover Forgiveness campaign should be strengthened to ensure that its website becomes the global hub for accessing and communicating forgiveness research and resources.

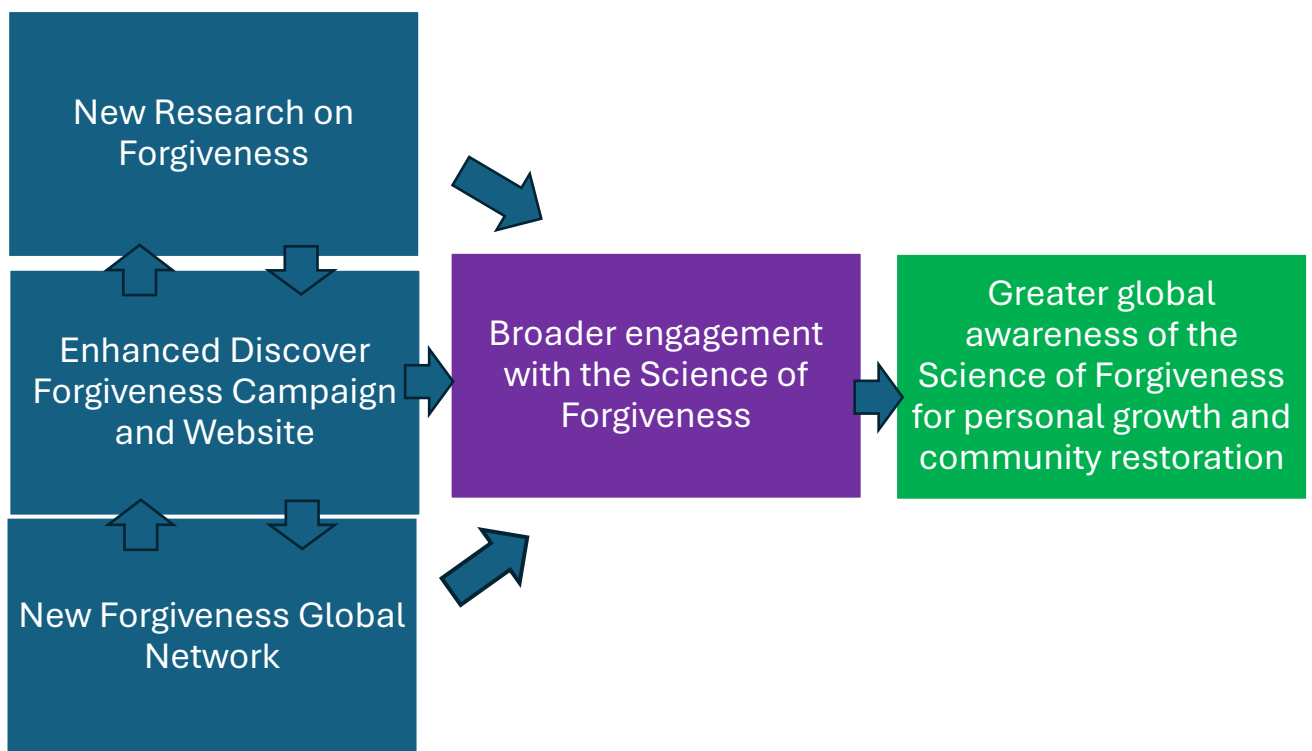
Important developments include the translation of resources, with initial priorities being Chinese and Spanish. The campaign should also more clearly foreground the personal, relational, and societal benefits of forgiveness, expand its use of multimedia content such as videos, podcasts, and infographics, and provide tailored toolkits for educators, healthcare professionals, and policymakers. In addition, a stronger digital and social media presence will be essential to extend the campaign's reach and impact.

### **Recommendation 3: Establish a New Forgiveness Global Network**

A new Champions of the Science of Forgiveness global network should be formalised and coordinated to support both the Discover Forgiveness campaign and new research initiatives. This network could connect with the emerging Global Character Alliance to enhance impact, effectiveness, and efficiency. It would align the Science of Forgiveness more explicitly with influential leaders and global movements beyond those already engaged in forgiveness research and practice. The network would also initiate an annual programme of targeted presentations on the science of forgiveness at major national and international conferences, thereby inspiring new audiences and creating opportunities for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and advocacy across regions and disciplines.

### **Pathway to Impact**

We recommend that funders and champions of forgiveness collaborate to (1) initiate new research, (2) further develop the Discover Forgiveness (DF) website, and (3) coordinate and disseminate these efforts through a new global forgiveness network, as outlined in the chart below. Taken together, these actions will provide the necessary step change to position the DF campaign to achieve its stated target of reaching a global audience of more than 100 million people.



# Discover Forgiveness Landscape Review

## Main Report

### 1 Introduction

The Science of Forgiveness experienced a significant change when the John Templeton Foundation funded a range of research projects that aimed to illuminate the psychological processes involved in forgiveness. At the time, the topic of forgiveness had received very scant empirical attention. The goal of the research was both academic and emancipatory. While forgiveness was widely understood as an important virtue, the question of *how* people forgive others was largely unexamined. The grants made available by the John Templeton Foundation enabled models of forgiveness to be developed and tested in specific populations, notably Everett Worthington Jr's 'Pyramid' Model<sup>1</sup> (later called the 'REACH' Model), and Robert Enright's 'Process Model'<sup>2</sup>. Alongside the development of interventions like these, measures of trait and state forgiveness were created to help track individuals' and couples' progress in realising the goal of forgiveness.

In the past thirty years, the scientific study of forgiveness has grown rapidly, and more and more people have benefited from its findings, with participation moving beyond primarily clinical to more general contexts. There has been an important shift in terms of understanding forgiveness in cultural context too, since the predominant models referenced above (which remain highly influential) both emerged from USA. As with the study of other virtues, elements of the understanding, experience, and expression of forgiveness are culturally shaped.

Initial research in forgiveness science focused on interpersonal forgiveness. A major development in the field of forgiveness science has been the evolution of research on self-forgiveness.<sup>3</sup> Self-forgiveness has been accepted as a viable and worthwhile area for research, despite earlier concerns that 'self-forgiveness' (though it is a common enough human experience) represented a logical conundrum that coalesced around the question of how a

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<sup>1</sup> See Worthington, E.L., 2024. REACH forgiveness: A narrative analysis of group effectiveness. *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*, 74(3), pp.330-364. ; Worthington, E.L., 2019. An update of the REACH Forgiveness model: Psychoeducation in groups, do-it-yourself formats, couple enrichment, religious congregations, and as an adjunct to psychotherapy. In *Handbook of forgiveness* (pp. 277-287). Routledge.

<sup>2</sup> See Freedman, S., Enright, R.D. and Knutson, J., 2007. A progress report on the process model of forgiveness. In *Handbook of forgiveness* (pp. 417-430). Routledge.; Enright, R.D., 2014. The moral development of forgiveness. In *Handbook of moral behavior and development* (pp. 123-152). Psychology Press.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Wohl, M.J. and McLaughlin, K.J., 2014. Self-forgiveness: the good, the bad, and the ugly. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 8(8), pp.422-435.; Hall, J.H. and Fincham, F.D., 2008. The temporal course of self-forgiveness. *Journal of social and clinical psychology*, 27(2), pp.174-202.

person could be simultaneously perpetrator and victim. The John Templeton Foundation has more recently funded research on divine forgiveness; that is, the correlates of feeling forgiven by God, further expanding the locus of scientific research beyond the interpersonal domain.

The benefits of forgiveness for the person seeking to forgive have always been at the forefront of clinical studies. However, as forgiveness science expanded beyond clinical populations, the importance of forgiveness science for both physical and mental wellbeing has received even greater emphasis, with forgiveness (and 'unforgiveness') linked to stress, depression, anxiety and other mental health problems in the general population. The advent of positive psychology and the creation of the VIA inventory of 24 strengths (including forgiveness) in 2004 may have further contributed towards research linking forgiveness to subjective wellbeing.

The field of forgiveness science has grown to include neuroscientific studies and accounts of forgiveness from the perspective of evolutionary psychology. This demonstrates the impressive reach of the Science of Forgiveness in a little over thirty years. However, there remains something of a gap between forgiveness 'experts', who know that forgiveness isn't about condoning, excusing, pardoning, or forgetting an offence and that forgiveness is compatible with justice, and professionals working in health, education, and faith sectors who fear that misunderstandings about what forgiveness *is* and *involves* act as potential barriers to the use of the Science of Forgiveness in their sector.

### 1.1 Discover Forgiveness Campaign

Discover Forgiveness stands as a core, leading resource for the collation and sharing of research on forgiveness. Launched in 2020 and including the curation of scientifically validated research on forgiveness onto the website, Discover Forgiveness provides:

*A digital hub on the benefits of forgiveness. It showcases academic research on the science of forgiveness and accessible tools to reach forgiveness. Our goal is to share how the science of forgiveness is interwoven across cultures and contexts, geographies and traditions. Discover and explore the threads of this tapestry, and learn how forgiveness research can be made accessible and actionable for people around the world - in their individual lives and within their communities.*

(<https://www.discoverforgiveness.org/about>)

The Campaign's previously developed theory of change held the vision that the following three professional groups are the most likely to have the legitimacy, trust, and professional expertise to guide individuals in their forgiveness journeys:

- **Mental health professionals** who provide therapy and counsel to clients so that they can use forgiveness to mend interpersonal relationships and potentially reduce anger, stress, and trauma.

- **Educators** who use the concept of forgiveness in classroom management and as a key component of character development within social and emotional learning.
- **Faith leaders** whose religious traditions uphold the importance of forgiveness, to support the faithful on *how* to go about the task of forgiveness.

## 1.2 Purpose of this Landscape Review Report

This report is based on the findings from an 8-month landscape review in which 53 participants drawn from the three keyworker categories took part in either interviews or focus groups which aimed to identify the most appropriate pathways to help professionals across three keyworker groups – mental health professionals, educators, and faith leaders – to incorporate previously identified scientifically validated forgiveness tools and practices through and into their professional praxis. In addition, the report includes voices and outcomes that arose as part of a three-day forgiveness strategy workshop held in Canterbury, UK in July 2025 which brought together leading experts on forgiveness from a number of countries. The project aimed to:

- Gain a better understanding of each of the three keyworker groups and their motivations for learning about the Science of Forgiveness.
- Learn what channels each of the three keyworker groups draw on to learn about new developments and novel methods and approaches in their fields.
- Determine what would motivate these three keyworker groups to use the Science of Forgiveness in their professional practice, including those tools and applications made available through the Discover Forgiveness campaign, including any recommendations regarding how these motivations might be catalysed.

The review aimed to answer the following main research question, and sub-questions:

**RQ:** How can educators, mental health professionals, and faith-leaders be leveraged as force multipliers for the Science of Forgiveness?

**SubRQ1:** How best can educators, mental health professionals, and faith-leaders understand and share knowledge about the Science of Forgiveness in their professional capacity?

**SubRQ2:** What productive pathways exist to help educators, mental health professionals, and faith-leaders use and implement the Science of Forgiveness, including tools and practices within the Discover Forgiveness campaign, in their professional practice?

A fundamental goal of the Science of Forgiveness as a field and as a general endeavour is to reach professionals across the world. For example, the ambition of the Discover Forgiveness campaign is to reach 100 million people by making evidence-based approaches to forgiveness more easily accessible to those professionals who could most benefit from them, and by building a global coalition of partners who might act as “forgiveness champions” and be committed to raising awareness of the Science of Forgiveness globally.

The findings and recommendations presented in this report aim to bring about a further “gear change” in the Science of Forgiveness to help ensure research and associated tools reach new and larger audiences around the world, impacting positively on the professional practice of keyworkers and, ultimately, benefitting those they serve.

### **1.3 Landscape Review Methodology**

A landscape review is a form of purposeful research – it has a defined aim. This eight-month landscape report is based on qualitative research conducted with representatives from the three keyworker groups. Data were collected from mental health professionals, educators, and faith leaders between November 2024 and March 2025, through interviews and focus groups. Initially a purposive sample was employed to recruit participants from across the three keyworker groups and also to involve participants from a range of countries and contexts. As the data collection process progressed, further participants were recruited using snowball sampling, with existing participants identifying other professionals who were then contacted by the project team and invited to participate. Participants included current and former TWCF Forgiveness grantees and forgiveness experts as well as keyworkers in the three sectors who had no prior knowledge of the Discover Forgiveness Campaign before their involvement in this landscape review.

Given the global scope of the Science of Forgiveness, the landscape review engaged key stakeholder groups in the following countries: Argentina, Colombia, Indonesia, Israel, Kenya, Mexico, Singapore, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, UK, USA, and Zimbabwe. Interviews and focus groups were all conducted online, except for one focus group of educators in the UK which was conducted in person. Interviews and focus groups followed a semi-structured format, with schedules shared with participants prior to interview, and were conducted by members of the research team, jointly in the first instance to ensure consistency and fidelity across the interviews and focus groups. To further ensure consistency and fidelity, the project team met regularly to consider the interviews and to discuss and clarify any matters that might impact on consistency. In the final analysis, 43 individual interviews, and three focus groups were conducted and included in this review with a total sum of 53 participants.

Permission was granted by the University of Birmingham research ethics committee in advance of the data collection phase. Participants were invited to take part via email. Those expressing an interest in taking part were sent a Participant Information Sheet (which

included details of the research project) and a Consent Form to provide informed consent. Participants were advised that they could withdraw at any stage during an interview and that they were not obliged to answer any questions they did not want to. Participants were also informed that they could withdraw their interview data up to two weeks from the date of completing the interview consent form by emailing the named researcher and confirming they wished for their interview data to be withdrawn from the study. Due to their group-based nature, focus group participants were informed that once the focus group conversation had begun, withdrawal of any data collected would not be possible. No participants withdrew from the study once they had taken part.

The interviews and focus group meetings were recorded and transcribed using the Zoom cloud-based video communications platform. Given the nature of the research questions and of the data collected, analyses of the data included both deductive and inductive approaches. Elements of the data was analysed deductively in order to answer specific research questions and considerations central to the purpose and focus of the landscape review. This noted, the research team were also open to the idea that certain themes or patterns might emerge from the data that were not expected, hence the data were also analysed inductively to ensure such themes and patterns could be ascertained.

Once the transcripts of the recordings had been downloaded from Zoom, the transcripts were coded by two members of the research team. Six transcripts were coded by both researchers to establish consistency in applying the codes, and the remaining transcripts were coded individually by one of the two researchers. The codes were discussed by the full research team as the coding of transcripts progressed to ensure that the codes remained appropriate and useful. The following deductive codes (or categories) were used, addressing themes in the research question and sub-questions outlined previously:

- Understanding (of forgiveness)
- Value (of forgiveness science)
- Motivation (for engaging with forgiveness)
- Channels (best channels for reaching practitioners in their sector)
- Communication approaches (preferred in their sector)
- Activities (to promote the science of forgiveness)
- Content creation (novel means of disseminating the science of forgiveness)
- Website (pertaining to comments made regarding the Science of Forgiveness materials available on the DF website)
- Barriers (to engaging with forgiveness science)

Each of the transcripts was uploaded to NVivo14, a qualitative data analysis software that helps organise, analyse, and visualise data from interviews, surveys, and other qualitative data. The transcripts were filed in NVivo by keyworker group (i.e. mental health professional,

educator, faith leader) within which the above codes were created. All transcripts were analysed using the codes, creating data sets by sector for each code, allowing themes and recommendations to emerge.

In addition to this deductive analysis, transcripts were considered by all members of the research team to inductively identify themes that could either (1) add nuance within a particular code and/or (2) could act as a wider, organising theme across the data.

In addition to the approach outlined above for the landscape review, this report contains, and is enhanced by, insights gathered during a forgiveness strategy workshop held in Canterbury on the 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> July 2025. The strategy workshop brought together leading voices and researchers on forgiveness, as well as experts from the health, education, and faith sectors. The event included presentations, discussions, and seminars – each of which were noted by Global Health Strategies. The landscape review team analysed the notes from the event, drawing on key insights and ideas shared to support and elaborate on the findings of the empirical data gathered and analysed.

#### **1.4 Research Limitations**

Limitations of the deductive analysis process include that using predefined codes can introduce researcher bias where the codes are guided by the researcher's initial assumptions or hypothesis. Additionally using a deductive method can limit the opportunity to find new insights, ideas, and themes in the data. To counter these limitations, at the start of the coding process, a selection of transcripts were selected. Both researchers coded these transcripts independently, and then compared results. This ensured rigour and consistency in the coding process. All transcripts were reviewed by both researchers through the process of producing summaries of codes. As part of the coding process, both researchers actively looked for additional ideas, and themes in the data that could add to the defined output codes, these were coded and constituted as the inductive element of the analysis employed in this process. The inclusion of inductive analysis and key insights from the strategy workshop event further limit the risk of researcher bias.

## 2 Findings

The landscape report responds to the three key research questions through the frame of **Activating Advocates**, **Building Bridges**, and **Creating Coalitions**. Rather than organising the findings around each of the three research questions, this findings section is structured around this frame.

### 2.1 Activating Advocates

#### 2.1.1 Summary of Recommendations and Findings

**Recommendation 1: Formalise and coordinate a new “Champions of the Science of Forgiveness” community.**

An extensive community of the Science of forgiveness champions, from diverse backgrounds, were identified in the review who could act as local and advocates for the promotion of the virtue (see appendix 1). Most of these champions work independently or in small groups, but if more formally organised, supported and encouraged, they would work collaboratively to be more than the sum of their parts and to provide a critical mass that could organically and exponentially grow the Science of Forgiveness’ visibility and influence.

Example activities:

- Identifying a core leadership group and administration team to coordinate sharing of expertise and resources of the larger community of champions through regular online and themed sub-group meetings.
- Creating a toolkit of tailored resources for champions to demonstrate how the science of forgiveness can be disseminated through their networks.
- Initiating a new bi-monthly webinar to offer peer-to-peer learning, regular check-ins, storytelling platforms, research sharing, and to foster opportunities for collaboration across regions and sectors.

**Recommendation 2: Double down on efforts to ensure the Discover Forgiveness website becomes the global shop window for accessing forgiveness research and resources.**

The website was found to be well regarded in the review and widely viewed as currently one of the most well-known and established portals for Science of Forgiveness research and resources. Work now should focus on ensuring this research and these resources reach wider audiences through clearer signposting. The website could be adapted and built out in a number of ways to improve user experience, enhance cultural and global relevance, and engage diverse audiences to help support existing advocates and to activate new advocates.

Example activities

- Increase and make new areas for accessible, region-specific content in more languages (priorities Spanish, Chinese)
- Build out sections for each of the professional groups based on evidence from the landscape review and other similar (i.e. GGSC) reviews.
- Present materials in different ways, highlighting the benefits more, to provide clearer “keys to unlock” the treasure trove of research and resources available

**Recommendation 3: Develop a list of priority research projects to address identified gaps in the literature alongside a list of potential funders of them.**

During the review and strategic workshop event at Canterbury, participants and guests identified existing gaps in forgiveness research and tools which would expand the current Science of Forgiveness to new audiences and address concerns of the modern era. There is real potential to activate current researchers, known in the field, to collaborate jointly to address these emerging research areas.

Examples of new areas of research proposed include:

- Interdisciplinary Approaches: Bridging humanities and social sciences to develop a more holistic understanding of forgiveness.
- Intersections of Forgiveness: Investigating the relationship between forgiving others and self-forgiveness, especially in the context of country-specific interventions and resources.
- Forgiveness and Human Flourishing: Analysing data from the Harvard Human Flourishing Study to explore forgiveness’ impact on well-being across cultures.
- Forgiveness and Law: Exploring the role of forgiveness in criminal law—including how forgiveness might be formalised or acknowledged within justice systems.
- Building a Research Base: Creating a secure, evidence-based foundation that informs tools and evaluations for forgiveness interventions.
- Formative Tools for Students: Developing assessments that prompt reflection on forgiveness among students to support character development.
- Forgiveness and Other Virtues: Investigating the complexity of forgiveness in relation to other character traits and moral qualities.
- Guilt and Reconciliation: Studying the dynamics of guilt (especially from the perpetrator’s perspective) and its connection to forgiveness and reconciliation.
- Self-Forgiveness: Re-evaluating concepts of self-forgiveness, including whether external validation is necessary for it to be effective.
- Cultural Contexts of Forgiveness: Exploring how forgiveness is defined, expressed, and understood in different global and cultural settings.
- Policy-Level Interventions: Testing forgiveness-based interventions among middle-level policy actors (e.g., educators) to understand how change can influence broader policy.

- Faith Traditions and Forgiveness: Studying how religious practices and denominations support forgiveness processes, including links to prayer.
- Forgiveness Campaigns and Crisis Contexts: Analysing shifts in forgiveness narratives during conflict (e.g., Ukraine) and identifying new approaches post-crisis.
- Narrative Theology and Peacebuilding: Synthesising narrative-theological resources that use forgiveness stories in reconciliation and peacebuilding, especially those informed by empirical or interview-based data.
- AI Comparison: Consolidation of all forgiveness research from DF into a comprehensive model to compare with AI-generated alternatives.

### **2.1.2 Activating Advocates Findings**

A clear theme and commitment that can be identified through an analysis of the data – one which cuts across mental health professionals, educators, and faith leaders – was the need to cultivate (or “activate”) a wider group of advocates to the Science of Forgiveness. An important consideration conveyed by keyworkers was the question of what would motivate others in their profession to engage with the Science of Forgiveness and to integrate associated tools and practices into their professional work for the benefit of those they serve. Many of those interviewed referenced the benefits of forgiveness to their professional practice and the value of communicating and sharing those benefits with a wider number of keyworkers in order to raise awareness and to break down possible myths or (mis)apprehensions that may be held about forgiveness. During the strategic event in Canterbury, participants identified the need for people to understand what forgiveness involves and actually looks like in practice. Many participants in this research and those who attended the strategic event emphasised that understanding what forgiveness involves engaging with stories, including stories about the challenges and difficulties of forgiveness, and that there is real value in portraying and communicating forgiveness as a process as well as an end goal. Advocates are central to such communication.

Interviewees spoke about the benefits of forgiveness in both general terms (i.e. practicing forgiveness is beneficial to physical and mental health as well as to fostering relationships) and in more specific terms. For example, educators made connections between forgiveness and its alignment with current crucial work in education on wellbeing, character, and flourishing. Educators also made reference to how forgiveness is of fundamental importance to restorative practices and to some of the mental health challenges being experienced by children and young people today. In doing so, educators saw a vital role for “forgiveness champions” who could act as advocates for the Science of Forgiveness and who could not only role-model and exemplify the integration and implementation of the Science of Forgiveness in their institution/work, but could also serve to further widen the pool of advocates, actively engaging others in the use and benefits of the Science of Forgiveness. One interviewee stated, for example, that “once you train some people, they get it, they train others. Then there is that trickle-down effect”.

The clear view conveyed was that if the benefits of forgiveness could be aligned with the challenges faced in schools, there would be greater motivation to adopt forgiveness into school policy and practice (we return to this point in more detail later in relation to both Building Bridges and Creating Coalitions).

Mental health professionals identified specific clients and patients for whom forgiveness and, indeed, self-forgiveness would be of particular benefit, including survivors of abuse, persons with a substance use disorder, those in prison, and those receiving end of life care. Those mental health professionals working with these and other clients and patients stand not only as beneficiaries of the Science of Forgiveness, but as potential advocates if they can be activated. In advancing these thoughts, it was clear that different mental health professionals would have different motivations to, as it were, come to the Science of Forgiveness and would have different ways of utilising associated tools and practices. As an example, one mental health professional provided an interesting perspective when they highlighted that clients are likely to be motivated to forgive for different reasons and that this is something mental health professionals need to account for (and be helped to account for) in their engagement and implementation of the Science of Forgiveness. The professional explained that seeking forgiveness can be motivated by religious beliefs (“theological” reasons), by a desire to feel better (“biological reasons”), by a desire for reconciliation (what they termed “sociological” reasons), or by a desire to make peace with oneself before the end of life (“thanatological” reasons). Once again, recognising and connecting with these different motivations highlights how advocates can be activated in different ways, including through diverse ways of showing how the Science of Forgiveness has and can be integrated within professional practice. One strategy to engage these audiences suggested during the event in Canterbury was through stories that spoke to the different aspects of forgiveness. An example from the 2022 Human Flourishing conference was shared with delegates, for instance, to illustrate how stories can connect with and engage people when it touches them emotionally.

In recognition of this insight an important task is to connect the Science of Forgiveness with the motivations and goals of professionals and their clients/patients. If greater numbers of advocates for the Science of Forgiveness are to be activated and are to serve as force multipliers, then different pathways and routes into and through the available research, tools, and practices are needed – including, perhaps, structuring these pathways around goals (theological, biological, sociological and thanatological). In other words, as motivation implies goal-related behaviour, motivating people to engage with and use the Science of Forgiveness materials means aligning with specific needs.

The need to link forgiveness to specific motivations was also highlighted at the Canterbury strategy meeting where it was suggested that forgiveness needs to be aligned with specific contexts and needs in relation to particular populations. For example, when talking about forgiveness in the workplace, forgiveness can be identified as a means of increasing empathy and perspective towards colleagues. In contrast, for young people forgiveness could be

proposed as a means of combating loneliness and handling emotions. Linking forgiveness to desired outcomes not only motivates individuals to forgive, but it also makes the concept of forgiveness more generally 'accessible' to people who might previously have been confused about what it means.

In addition to aligning with motivations, goals, and needs, many of the keyworkers engaged with conveyed that there was a real need for, and a potential of, developing greater applied resources that illustrate and exemplify how the Science of Forgiveness has been implemented by professionals in their work. As one mental health professional stated, there is great value in 'making the intangible more tangible'. Others suggested that while forgiveness is often an important part of therapy the process through which forgiveness can be operationalised, forgiveness itself is often poorly specified. It was suggested that "scaffolds" for making the intangible tangible could include offering clients ready-made resources to take away and work on at home:

*"I think there's definitely things there that I could use in in everyday clinical practice. Because, you see, as a psychiatrist, I am meant to assess, diagnose, and make a treatment plan, and often what that involves is sending people away to read something .... "*

Similarly, one educator talked at some length about how other educators could be activated to understand and use forgiveness in their work through clear and relevant case studies and illustrations of actual practices. When such comments were made, particularly when they were made by health care professionals and by educators, they were often accompanied by recognition of the time pressures that act upon professionals (whether generally or in terms of time available to spend on an intervention with a client/patient/student). For this reason, many of the professionals suggested that tools and resources offered need to be targeted and brief. This does not mean, of course, that those brief resources are not underpinned by deeper and more detailed research, but rather that the targeted and briefer materials can act both as a more manageable connection and also as a stepping stone on the path to more detailed exploration and understanding. A further, not unrelated, common view expressed by mental health professionals, educators, and faith leaders was that to engage and activate other professionals, Science of Forgiveness materials need to be accessible in multiple languages to fully extend and secure a global reach. This finding was echoed during the Canterbury event in findings from the Greater Good Science Center (GGSC). GGSC reported that the translation of resources was critical to engagement across all sectors, language and framing matters and resources need to be culturally sensitive and non-dogmatic. We return to this point in the Section 3 of this report.

One additional theme that came through in analysis of the data and which also speaks to connecting with possible advocates and force multipliers is the potential for training and continued professional development courses that make use of the Science of Forgiveness research, tools, and resources. Though this suggestion came through most strongly in the

conversations with mental health professionals, it has resonance and applicability for all three keyworker groups.

A further important suggestion that came through to some extent during the interviews and focus groups, but which was more firmly conveyed during the strategic workshop event was the recognition that many potential advocates for the Science of Forgiveness work beyond the fields of mental health, education and faith. One participant described, for instance, how highly respected “unofficial leaders” may be particularly important in bringing the message of the Discover Forgiveness campaign to rural communities. This point was made specifically in reference to Africa, though it could apply elsewhere. These “unofficial leaders” could be identified and engaged as critical force multipliers.

Finally, during the strategic workshop the following list of activities were suggested to help activate advocates.

### *Wish List of Tools and Activities to Enhance a Forgiveness Campaign*

- A multilingual starter pack that includes infographics, maps, and a compendium of resources.
- A video-based toolkit with a leaders’ guide that can be shared and used globally.
- A directory or guide to forgiveness training institutes and workshops, especially for educators, therapists, and community leaders.
- The translation of forgiveness workbooks into different languages, with implementation through churches and networks of study centers.
- The adaptation of the forgiveness workbook for children.
- Resources that explore the connection between giving and forgiveness, emphasizing how giving is foundational to the practice of forgiveness.
- The development of a forgiveness-focused mobile app that supports users through a personal journey.
- The integration of AI tools to customize and personalize forgiveness learning experiences.
- Exploration of virtual reality applications for immersive forgiveness experiences.
- Creation of a custom GPT-style model for forgiveness, inspired by resources like Greater Good’s curiosity tools.
- Development of guiding questions to ensure that the exploration of forgiveness remains grounded in human experience, even as technology evolves.

## **2.2 Building Bridges**

### **2.2.1 Summary of Recommendations and Findings**

**Recommendation 4: Develop a global common language of forgiveness adapted for different, sectors, audiences, and contexts.**

Example activities:

- Dial up or down the emphasis on the “Science” of Forgiveness to align with different audience preferences to foster broader engagement and resonance.
- Highlight empirical evidence in ways that will appeal to academic, policy, and clinical audiences (i.e. emphasising stories, evidence, benefits as appropriate).
- Recruit leaders to advise on appropriate language, benefits, and communication strategies for health, education, and faith sectors.
- Key into individuals being open to understanding their own wellbeing, linking to a forgiveness message that connects the ordinary person with forgiveness for wellbeing.

**Recommendation 5: More clearly delineate and foreground the core benefits of forgiveness, including for professionals who might initially be sceptical about the relevance of forgiveness to their professional.**

Benefits mentioned most commonly during the review:

- Championing a non-deficit, character strength-based approach to wellbeing with forgiveness being a core virtue.
- Emphasising benefits for improved general health – not just mental health
- Emphasising benefits for strengthened relationships and reduced stress
- Emphasising enhanced emotional resilience
- Connecting forgiveness with virtues central to, and for, restorative justice

### 2.2.2 Building Bridges Findings

A further organising theme identified from the data was the potential for, and need to, *build bridges*. In focusing on building bridges as an overarching theme, we have in mind the building of connections and bridges with those who might not ordinarily consider or immediately “see” the relevance of forgiveness to their lives (whether professional or personal lives).

A leading subtheme that came through in the data was how the terminology of the “Science” of forgiveness is and might be received by others who are not fully knowledgeable about the field. There was a real sense across the professionals that the concept of a “Science” of forgiveness was a somewhat surprising one, and one that needed to be handled with care. For some of the interviewees, the concept of “Science” jarred. To give an example, while accepting that forgiveness *can* be construed as a science, one mental health professional expressed their concern that the idea of a “Science of Forgiveness” was reductive and that measuring forgiveness detracts from its complexity. The professional stated, instead, that “*forgiveness is a state of grace and it’s an emotion, not something that needs to be measured*”.

In many fields – including those represented in this report – concepts are not static or uncontested. Concepts are often essentially contested and open to different conceptualisations

– and, crucially, different conceptualisations impact on acceptance, use, and subsequent operationalisation.

Generally, across the professionals interviewed the extent to which studies on forgiveness were viewed and valued as a Science rested on whether or not the perception that forgiveness exists as a psychological process was held. In other words, if psychology is a science, then so too is forgiveness. On this reading, which was particularly prevalent among the mental health professionals in the sample, the existence of measures of forgiveness and of the impact of forgiveness interventions serve to further support the idea of forgiveness as a science. It is also important to note that the professionals largely took a critical and reflective stance regarding the use of the term “Science of Forgiveness”. For example, during a focus group with educators one participant shared that the juxtaposition of forgiveness (which they saw as old and traditional) with science (which they defined as modern and cutting edge) was ‘*intriguing*’, motivating within them a desire to ‘*know more*’.

Some professionals questioned whether forgiveness might better be described as an “art” than a “science” and whether the unique human experiences involved in forgiveness are compatible with (what they saw as) the rigid and repeatable processes typically associated with science. One, for instance, reflected that the concept of science “*can be off putting for practitioners and educators and church personnel. I always call it forgiveness studies because it’s broad, and it doesn’t seem to turn people off... it engages them*”. Additionally, at the strategy meeting in Canterbury a mental health worker shared that she called her workshops on forgiveness “Letting Sh\*t Go” because the title draws more people in. This sentiment was echoed in the presentation from an experienced campaign builder who highlighted the importance of finding a ‘hook’ to engage audiences. Other ‘hooks’ suggested included ‘Are you angry?’ and ‘It’s not your fault’ (to tap into forgiveness a different way)

Others interviewed highlighted nuances *within* their profession in relation to dominant ways of thinking and working. A case in point was conveyed by some mental health professionals who suggested that the concept of a Science of Forgiveness would be received differently by different practitioners and that, for instance, this reception would be impacted upon by the dominance (or otherwise) of the medical model of mental health research and practice. Such a view is illustrated by the following remark from one professional: “*If someone were a clinical psychologist, instead of a counsellor, then science is... like, oh cool! It’s...evidence-based practice. But as a counsellor, they have an entirely different network...and entirely different way of looking at things and science is just not as big in the counselling field as it is in...clinical psychology, or even counselling psychology*”.

Other professionals suggested that the nomenclature of the “Science of Forgiveness” was to be welcomed for removing forgiveness from a solely or mainly faith-based concept and practice. This noted, some faith leaders explained how endorsements from religious leaders were needed to build bridges to other faith groups and leaders (and indeed with a wider range of different faiths) and to break down possible barriers of terminology, including reassuring

other faith leaders that secular materials were credible and not in contention with a strong religious position.

To be clear, the suggestion in the interviews and in this report is not that the term “Science” should be jettisoned. To do so would be counter-productive, even if it were indeed possible. Rather, there is a need to recognise that different professionals and audiences will receive the concept of a “Science” of forgiveness in different ways, and that dialling up or down the emphasis on “Science” may help to build stronger bridges with certain professionals, as well as better foregrounding the benefits of forgiveness to professional practice.

The data and analysis reveal a need for targeted approaches to different professions – and even within professions – which take account of the differential status of the concept of science. In addition, in order to build bridges with those who have hitherto not engaged with the Science of Forgiveness and who might have some initial scepticism, there is a need to be cognisant of, and attentive to, the professional and therapeutic worldviews of professions/professionals. The potential for scepticism was something those interviewed were often well aware of and was commonly framed in terms of requiring an awareness of the scepticism and its roots. Some professionals identified potential concerns about revictimization in relation to understanding and willingness to engage with forgiveness. Others saw a tension between forgiveness and justice, though one participant shared how this apparent tension was – in their opinion - misplaced:

*“They need...that restorative justice, but they cannot use the word forgiving because it is religious...They [are] prepared to use the word ‘second opportunity’. Which if you explore, they mean forgiveness.”*

Two potential solutions – both critical to activating advocates and building bridges – were recommended by interviewees. The first was to extol clearly in communications what forgiveness *is not* as well as what forgiveness *is*. For example, one interviewee spoke of how perceptions of ‘*getting over*’ an offence or of forgiveness entailing a ‘*forgive and forget understanding*’ can be countered by a comparison of forgiveness with grief: “*I liken forgiveness sometimes to grief in that it’s not linear*”. The second, and related solution was to ensure that forgiveness was located in leading models in the field of the Science of Forgiveness. For instance, an interviewee cited Enright’s Process Model as one that counters the view that forgiveness is not commensurable with justice:

*“They are taught what forgiveness is not...It’s not justifying what happened. It’s not forgetting what happened. It’s not minimising the injustice. It’s not suppressing the pain... actually, it’s talking about the pain, and then acknowledgement that the pain and the suffering, you know, could be changed to something else.”*

Despite the theoretical work of Robert Enright connecting forgiveness and justice in his Process Model, many of those interviewed expressed the perception that forgiveness was simply incompatible with justice. By extension this perception had implications for the allied

concept of 'restorative justice' with the sentiment expressed that those engaged in restorative justice work might be averse to the idea of forgiveness as result. Mental health professional participants who had worked directly with Enright's Process Model did not experience a disconnect between forgiveness and (restorative) justice but the data we collected highlights that this tension remains to at least some extent. Furthermore, given the widespread use of restorative practices in education globally, the disconnect was also remarked upon by educators, who reflected in their interviews that they had not considered their restorative practice with children as being linked to forgiveness previously, though they could clearly see how these practices could build a bridge to forgiveness.

As well as considering the potential for building bridges within the keyworker professions some of the interviewees pointed to potential cross-profession work that would serve to build bridges to further engagement and use of the Science of Forgiveness. An example came in reference to Islamic psychology, which emphasises an holistic approach encompassing physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual components. One participant remarked how Islamic psychology is booming all over the world. It was her feeling that forgiveness would be an excellent topic to be presented at such events, which would '*gain a lot of interest among Muslim mental health professionals.*'

## 2.3 Creating Coalitions

### 2.3.1 Summary of Recommendations and Findings

**Recommendation 6: More explicitly and intentionally align the Science of Forgiveness with influential leaders and global movements beyond those specifically working on forgiveness and / or currently engaged.**

Examples of organisations to build coalitions with:

Character education – Character.org, ACE, ECVA, Educating character initiative, Africa character network, Centre for Character and Citizenship Singapore, Association of Moral Education,

Wellbeing – World Health Organisation, Global Wellness Institute, Action for Global Health, Mental Health Foundation, Centre for Mental Health, The Mind Research Foundation, Wellcome Trust.

Restorative Justice – Prison Fellowship International, The European Forum for Restorative Justice (EFRJ), International Fellowship of Restorative Justice Practitioners (IFRJP), National Association of Community and Restorative Justice, Restorative Justice Council,

Peace and reconciliation – International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR), Conciliation Resources, Peace Direct, Centre for Peacebuilding and Reconciliation, United Nations, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation (IHJR)

Social-emotional learning – Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), PSHE Association, UNESCO MGIEP, Early Intervention Foundations (EIF), National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (SEAD), Friends

Faith networks – Inter Faith Network, Faith-based Regeneration Network, World Health Organisation.

**Recommendation 7: Initiate an annual programme of targeted presentations on the Science of Forgiveness at national and global research, practice, and policy conferences and events to connect with and inspire new audiences.**

Some example events include (see appendix 2 for extensive list):

- Symposium at Jubilee Centre annual conference
- Presentation at annual ECVA conference
- Presentation at annual educators' conference in Singapore.
- Presentation at the Vatican Centre for Education.
- Keynotes at the Association for Moral Education annual conference.
- Presentation at the American Psychology Association (APA) conference

### **2.3.2 Creating Coalition Findings**

The third overarching theme that analysis of the data led to was the value of *creating coalitions*. Across the interviews, professionals from each of the keyworker groups spoke of the varied and exponentially beneficial potential for engaging the Science of Forgiveness with influential actors and networks around the world beyond those immediately and precisely engaged in forgiveness research and practice. A core view conveyed with this more general sentiment was the vitality of establishing a network of force multipliers who can work together to forge sustainable coalitions within and across professions.

Such a community of partnerships could be created within and for particular sub-sectors. For instance, educators conveyed how a community of partnerships between schools might be developed to share and further extend the impact of the Science of Forgiveness. Education provides an example of an interesting duality visible in the interview data; namely the importance of creating “on-the-ground” networks and relationships on the one hand, and of generating high-level policy impact on the other. Whether the Science of Forgiveness should focus on “bottom-up” or on “top-down” work to create coalitions for multiplying the impact of forgiveness is not, of course, a binary choice – both stand as crucial pathways to grow further the use and impact of the Science of Forgiveness.

As is well-known, and not surprisingly given the standing and work of those interviewed, many interviewees highlighted how existing organisations and networks working in spaces adjacent to the Science of Forgiveness could be leveraged effectively to further promote forgiveness work and to act as force multipliers – whether these be organisations and networks working on character and virtues, on mental wellbeing, on interfaith relations,

social-emotional learning, trauma-informed practices, or indeed some other area. A core idea that underpinned interviewees' suggestions in this regard were that these organisations and networks could also serve as "mediators" as well as "multipliers" for the Science of Forgiveness, highlighting ways through which the Science of Forgiveness could be operationalised by professionals in their practice. A case in point was provided by educators who identified that organisations and networks could take elements of the Science of Forgiveness and offer practical resources and suggestions for the teachers and parents about what the operationalisation of forgiveness might look like in practice (and could meet a real professional need in doing so). Moreover, these associations and networks were identified as a possible way to better distribute Science of Forgiveness resources to audiences on the ground (for instance, in different languages, in different forms (i.e. hard copies rather than online)).

A further benefit of creating coalitions of networks and associations is the potential for such coalitions to forge ongoing communication between researchers, professionals, and communities, including with professions beyond the three that formed the focus of this landscape review. One interview envisaged the development, for instance, of a global map allowing stakeholders to connect with others working on forgiveness projects internationally and further reinforcing the credibility and reach of forgiveness research:

*"...just imagine a global map, a map of the world with pins of projects where forgiveness is studied or practised, and then [stakeholders] can get into this pin and look at the project and see who the people are and learn about the project ....".*

The importance of such a map was also highlighted at the strategy meeting where the ability to connect with contacts in specific regions was deemed central to progressing the ambitions of the Discover Forgiveness campaign and of the Science of Forgiveness more generally.

During the strategy meeting attendees also suggested opportunities for the Science of Forgiveness that go beyond the three sectors that were the focus of this landscape review. It was suggested that mental health professionals be broadened to health professionals, to encompass all those working in health who would benefit from engaging with forgiveness and with self-forgiveness in their work and in being able to support others to forgive. Other professions with which to create coalitions with cited included lawyers and those working in human resources. In addition, creating connections with global initiatives such as the UN sustainability goals and the OECD learning competencies, and even with social media influencers who reference forgiveness in their work, were also cited as affording beneficial possibilities.

These views were also apparent in the empirical data collected, in which professional sectors other than those that were the focus of this landscape review came to light as offering fertile opportunities for integrating and benefitting from the Science of Forgiveness. It was noted, for instance, that family and criminal lawyers were in a unique position to propose forgiveness

as a means of enabling clients to move forward with their lives once legal redress had been achieved:

*“You know other areas of horrible disputes or/and bitterness is...is..often marital breakup. So...family lawyers, you know...I can see that an enlightened family lawyer helping someone divorce might also at the end of it, say...you know, you’ve got your...you’ve recovered things financially. But do you want to recover your sense of well-being? Here’s...something I can point you in the direction of”.*

Human Resources was another professional sector highlighted as of significance in terms of disseminating the message of forgiveness. Workplace environments can be toxic, and professional disputes occur. Some interviewees, as well as attendees at the strategic workshop, identified a clear role for forgiveness in helping people to put negative interpersonal experiences behind them when appropriate disciplinary procedures have taken place. Social work was another profession cited, as was the work of business and/or charity leaders who could serve as (perhaps unexpected) champions of forgiveness. One attendee, for instance, shared that the CEO of a Cancer Centre dedicated a great deal of pastoral resource to forgiveness within the Centre. Such leaders have the capacity to drive campaigns forward and could be hugely effective force multipliers at scale.

## 3 Sector Focused Findings and Recommendations

### 3.1 Mental Health Professionals

Some mental health professionals emphasised that the therapeutic potential of forgiveness should be introduced to clients and patients gradually to avoid any resistance or concern. As one professional noted, *"I think if you say, do you want to come to a forgiveness talk, people will say no. But if you say, do you want to come to a talk about how to recover after injustice and mistreatment, including bullying..."*. Aligned with the need to offer different, and appropriately graduated pathways into the Science of Forgiveness, some mental health professionals interviewed advocated that offering flexible ways for clients and patients to engage in tools and resources was vital and could serve to overcome barriers to engagement. For instance, through offering both synchronous and asynchronous opportunities to engage with Science of Forgiveness tools. Another mental health professional spoke of the value of self-help tools: *"I think you include some self-help tool, right? It's like, for if someone is interested in just helping themselves go through the process, they should be able to find something there, like, step by step"*.

Linked to the notion of "pathways into" tools and resources, across the interviews mental health professionals spoke of the importance of targeting specific "market segments" and tailoring dissemination strategies accordingly. For instance, through materials designed for those working with: individuals in palliative care and/or with those processing grief; those incarcerated; those living with addictions; and, indeed, for mental health professionals themselves. Findings from the GGSC presented at the strategic workshop reinforced the empirical data of this landscape review, and further emphasised the specific importance for mental health professionals to focus on determining what is most healing for their patients and clients.

**Recommendation 8: Develop tailored forgiveness materials for healthcare professionals** including: those for use in corporate workshops, NGOs, and for people living with HIV; creating targeted resources for those in palliative care, prison populations, and those with addiction; and, support healthcare professionals with forgiveness materials to help others and to help manage their own stress and to practice self-forgiveness.

### 3.2 Educators

More so than mental health professionals and faith leaders, educators placed great importance on the availability and accessibility of ready-to-use, downloadable content and resources, including those that could be implemented into their professional practice easily (for example, those working in schools cited the value of whole school assembly materials, curriculum resources, and the provision of clear links to connected endeavours, such as social and emotional learning). Materials that support the integration of forgiveness across the curriculum that were (or could be made to be) culturally responsive, specific and adaptable were also deemed important.

Not dissimilarly to mental health professionals, educators also suggested that having resources that could be used by those educators serve would also be beneficial – though in doing so were aware of the associated need to create and provide physical materials for use by those in areas with limited access to online technologies. Mindful of the need for age-appropriate content, educators identified value in providing Science of Forgiveness materials that could be used by students themselves or (in terms of school-age populations) in homes by families to enable parents and caregivers to build-on and support work undertaken in school. As one educator remarked: *“I... want to involve parents as well, because I think [this is important] for this [forgiveness education] really, truly, to land”*. Once again, findings from the GGSC presented at the strategic workshop reinforced the specific needs of educators to be provided with simple, easy-to-use in practice materials on forgiveness that also have explicit connections with key agendas and priorities within education.

**Recommendation 9: Develop easy-to-use, downloadable resources for schools, universities, students, and parents**, including: assembly materials and worksheets that support social and emotional learning (SEL); age-appropriate content for students and/or parents/carers to engage with; materials and practices that connect with key events, such as World Forgiveness Day or Anti-bullying; and, materials and schemes of work to support educators to integrate forgiveness within various subjects and/or fields (such as character education or wellbeing education) and which are attentive to different cultural contexts.

### 3.3 Faith Leaders

Though faith leaders were encouraged by the way that Science of Forgiveness materials unpack the process of forgiveness, lifting the lid on the *‘how’* of forgiveness, some faith leaders suggested that the *‘why’* of forgiveness needs particular emphasis in communicating reasons to forgive. One faith leader noted, for example, how important it is to engage with and demonstrate *“the need, the reason... the anthropological, psychological, spiritual, emotional reasons to forgive”*.

An insight shared in interviews with faith leaders in terms of communicating the Science of Forgiveness was the suggestion that trusted religious and non-religious figures could endorse the key campaigns and materials (such as Discover Forgiveness). Such endorsements were identified as helping to counter any concerns among those who might implement the Science of Forgiveness in their work that resources were aligned with a specific faith or, indeed, were *“secular”*. As one participant suggested, *“...lay people, you know. They might be wondering. Oh, yeah, it talks about. You know Christianity, Judaism, Islam, you know what I mean. Maybe they don't see any distinction, and they might take that as an offense. You know what I'm saying, but... endorsement from, you know well-known people, respective figures in each tradition”*.

A number of faith leaders also suggested that a key channel through which religious leaders could encounter and engage with the Science of Forgiveness is through their religious training and development. Connecting theological colleges, seminaries, and other places of religious

training and development with Science of Forgiveness materials and tools could, they suggested, act as a real force multiplier. One faith leader, for example, cited the lack of engagement with the Science of Forgiveness in theological colleges currently as a real gap but one that could be filled, stating, *“I’m just surprised at how forgiveness education... curriculum. It’s not part and parcel of what they consider to be Christian education”*. Findings from the GGSC presented at the strategic workshop highlighted that for faith leaders the benefits of the Science of Forgiveness need to connect explicitly with their work navigating deep polarization within communities and needed to affirm justice alongside forgiveness.

**Recommendation 10: Engage trusted religious figures to endorse the Science of Forgiveness generally and key features of forgiveness more specifically**, including: building trust in the materials and countering perceptions of secular resources being untrustworthy; making more explicit the reasons for forgiveness alongside the process of forgiveness; highlighting the anthropological, psychological, spiritual, and emotional benefits of forgiveness; supporting the better integration of the Science of Forgiveness within the training, education, and professional development of faith leaders.

## Appendices

### Appendix One: List of individuals who could be invited to be Science of Forgiveness champions.

The landscape review identified the following as significant individuals who could make valuable contributions to the development and growth of the science of forgiveness campaign and mission. The names are drawn from the following three sources;

- Guests at the Canterbury Workshop
- Individuals identified in the landscape review interviews
- Selected Individuals from the Discover Forgiveness master contact list.

#### Guests at the Canterbury Workshop

	Name	Institution	Location
1	Agustin Porres	DFAC/ Varkey Foundation	Argentina
2	Suzanne Freedman	University of N. Iowa; DFAC	Iowa
3	Roger Bretherton	clinical psychologist and counsellor	UK
4	Juidth Janssen	Counsellor and coach	Madrid
5	Tyler Sim	Family therapist	Singapore
6	Austin Tiffany	Good faith project	UK
7	Loren Toussaint	Luther College/DFAC Chair	Iowa
8	Ev Worthington (grantee)	TWCF grantee/REACH workbooks/ Forgiveness Expert	US
9	Pamela Wadende (grantee)	Forgiveness and reconciliation rituals: Pathways to depolarization for adolescents in rural Kenya, Cameroon and Ethiopia	Kenya
10	Peter Kingori	Association for Character Development in Africa (ACDA)	Kenya
11	Fr Leonel Narvaez	Foundation for Reconciliation	Colombia
12	Marina Cantacuzino	The Forgiveness Project	UK
13	Sergiy Tymchenko	Ukraine (Realis) Site Director REACH	Ukraine
14	Shaun Joynt	South Africa Site Director REACH	South Africa

15	Ni Made Taganing Kurniati	Indonesia Site Director REACH	Indonesia
16	Lauren Lee	Berkeley University	NYC
17	Richard Cowden	Harvard Human Flourishing Program	US
18	Elaine Fulton	UoB Chaplain	UK
19	Tali Gal	Professor in Law and Criminology, Chair in Child and Youth Rights	Israel
20	Daniela Augustin	Professor of Theological Ethics	Balkans
21	Laura Blackie	Associate Professor in Psychology	UK
22	Clara Molinero	Clinical Psychologist UFV	Madrid
23	Mariele Wulf	Dr. phil. Dr. theol. Former Professor Saint Paul University and Tilburg University	Switzerland

Individuals identified in the landscape review interviews as promising champions of forgiveness.

1	Erin McFee	Corioli Institute	USA
2	Santiago Espinosa	Ed High school Principal	Columbia
3	Peli Galiti	Forgiveness Expert	Wisconsin, USA
4	Karla Poggi	Mas Futuro Org	Washington DC
5	Lucia Acurio	CEO Edutec	Peru
6	Santiago Bellomo	Dean school of Ed, Universidad Austral	Argentina
7	Florencio Sanches	Chaplain UFV	Madrid, UFV
8	Boaz Feldman	Clinical Psychologist and trainer	USA

Selected individuals from the Discover Forgiveness master contact list.

1	Charlotte Witvliet	Hope College	USA
2	Christian Miller	Wake Forest University	USA

3	Tyler vander Weele	Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and Harvard Flourishing Program	USA
4	Jörg Schulte-Altedorneburg	Wider Sense (formally Porticus)	Germany
5	Frank Fincham	Florida State University	USA
6	Fred Luskin	Stanford University Forgiveness Projects	USA
7	Zoe Gallou	Greek Ministry of Education	Greece
8	Andreas Schleicher	OECD	Based in Paris, France
9	Margaret Holmgren	Iowa State University	USA
10	Glen Pettigrove	University of Glasgow	UK
11	Robert C Roberts	Professor Emeritus, Baylor University	USA
12	Daryl van Tongeren	Hope University	USA
13	Jo-Ann Tsang	Baylor University	USA
14	Joshua Hook	University of North Texas	USA
15	Steven Sandage	Boston University	USA
16	Julio Rique	Federal University of Paraiba	Brazil
17	Don Davis	Georgia State University	USA
18	Caroline Lavelock	University of Illinois, Chicago	USA
19	Mark Rye	Skidmore College	USA
20	Kofi Marfo	Professor Emeritus Aga Khan University	South-Central Asia, East Africa, and UK
21	Hina Jilani	Member of the Elders	Pakistan
22	Sonia Carillo	Universidad Nacional de Colombia	Colombia
23	Lola Kola	Visiting Research Associate KCL and University of Ibadan	UK and Nigeria
24	Nisha Ligon	Co-Founder Ubongo Entertainment (Africa's leading edutainment company)	Tanzania (and global)
25	Mbuso Zamchiya	Luminos Fund (global)	Based in Boston, USA
26	Vishal Talreja	Dream a Dream Org	India
27	Bishop Kortu Brown	Liberia Forgiveness Education Program, Former Chairman of the Liberia Council of Churches	Liberia
28	Imam Mohamed Magid	Religions for Peace	Virginia, USA

## Appendix Two: List of Conferences and Events where the Science of Forgiveness could be promoted at.

### Health

- International Conference on Developmental Psychology and Adolescence (ICDPA):
- International Conference on Clinical Psychology and Psychopathology (ICCPP): December 11, 2025, in New York, United States.
- 39th Annual Conference of the European Health Psychology Society (EHPS): August 26-29, 2025, in Groningen, The Netherlands.
- International Conference on Psychiatry and Mental Health (ICPMH): 20<sup>th</sup> September 2025 Austin USA
- International Conference on Trauma and Mental Health (ICTMH): 13<sup>th</sup> September San Antonio USA.
- International Conference on Mental and Physical Health (ICMPH): 4<sup>th</sup> October Kathmandu Nepal.
- International AIDS Society conference (IAS): 25-30<sup>th</sup> July 2026, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
- International Conference of the International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS):
- Minnesota association of marriage and family therapists. New letters, courses, training, emails. MAFT – Annual Conference, October 22-24<sup>th</sup> 2025 Minneapolis USA
- International coaching federation ICF – training for coaches. [ICF Events | Coaching Events, Workshops & Conferences](#)
- Hawaii conference on forgiveness connected to department of human services from the government of Hawaii. August annually. [Hawaii Forgiveness Project](#) (nothing listed for 2025).
- American Association for Christian Councillors world conference (AACC) [AACC United World Conference](#) September 23-27 2025, Nashville Tennessee USA.
- Christian association for Psychological Studies (CAPS), International conference
- [Christian Association for Psychological Studies East Regional Conference](#) – October 24-25, 2025
- [Southeastern Psychological Association Annual Meeting](#), March 2026
- [European Conference on Positive Psychology](#)
- Catholic psychotherapy association CPA [Home - Catholic Psychotherapy Association](#) (further training opportunities)
- American counselling association ACA – print publication, expo and conference. April 9-11 2026, Columbus Ohio [Learn, Share and Connect at the ACA Conference & Expo](#)
- Midwestern psychology association (MPA) March? 2026 [MPA](#)
- Lutheran Pastor development events; Peace with creation season of creation 2025 1 September – 4 October [Events | The Lutheran World Federation](#)
- NGO's – worker support and training, possible opportunity to offer forgiveness content - [Training and Events | NCVO](#)

- WHO world health organisation – webinars and events [Events](#)
- Aleph trust [Transformative Education in Transpersonal Psychology - Alef Trust](#) training courses to collaborate with.
- University chaplains. European conference June 2025 Belgium [CEUC](#)
- BACP International research conferences. May 2026 [BACP International Research Conference](#)
- Hospice UK channel to bereavement support works for training. [Grief & Bereavement Counselling Training – Accredited Diploma Course](#)
- Cruse – bereavement support charity. [Training - Cruse Bereavement Support](#)
- Pan African Council [Pan-African Council - Building Our Common Destiny](#) collaboration opportunities.
- CeSHHAR Zimbabwe (Centre for sexual health aids research) [CeSHHAR ZIMBABWE](#)
- ICASA conference every two years [ICASA 2025 Ghana Official Website, 23rd Edition of the ICASA Conference. Africa in Action: Catalysing Integrated Sustainable Responses to end AIDS, TB & Malaria.](#)
- Islamic Psychology area of increased interest and growth. February 2025, [Solace Islamic Psychology Conference 2025 – Relationship and Mental Health, An Islamic Perspective – Solace](#)
- National police suicide foundation, share resources with [National Police Suicide Foundation - The FSU Toolkit on Healthy Relationships](#)The FSU Toolkit on Healthy Relationships
- First responders' association [MyUSFRA - First Responders Resource & Commerce](#) look to connect and collaborate with.
- British association of Christians in Psychology (BACIP) events [Christians in Psychology UK | BACiP](#)
- British Psychological Society (BPS) events [Events](#)
- Royal college of Psychiatrists – annual international congress June UK. [International Congress 2025](#)
- General Medical Council UK [Home - GMC](#)
- Forgiveness institute Madrid Universidad Francisco de Vitoria conference on forgiveness. [International conference Forgiveness and Reconciliation | UFV](#)
- [American Psychological Association](#) – August 2025

## **Education**

- ITE curriculum leads at universities -
- Perspectives in Teacher Education: Challenging the Standard Education Model 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at Leeds Beckett University, UK.
- The 2025 BERA Conference will be held 9th-11th September 2025, [BERA Conference 2025](#), University of Sussex

- 10th International Conference on Research in Education, Teaching and Learning. 21-23 November, Copenhagen, Denmark, <https://www.icetl.org/teaching-conference/>
- 9th International Conference on Advanced Research in Education, 12 – 14 December 2025 | Cambridge, UK, <https://www.educationconf.org/teaching-conference/>
- NPQH training providers (headteacher qualification) Institute of Education, UCL
- UCL, London International Conference on Inclusive Education (LICIE), 28 Jul 2025 - 30 Jul 2025, <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/events/2025/jul/london-international-conference-inclusive-education-licie>
- Inner development goals UN, align with forgiveness May 2025 [May 26-27: Inner Development Goals ENLIGHT Conference in Groningen – CEMUS](#)
- [Catalyst 2030 General Assembly](#) – October 2024
- 
- Head teacher conference UK Spring and Autumn annually [Conferences Hub - HMC \(The Heads' Conference\)](#)
- Multi Academy trust association events [Events - Multi Academy Trust Association](#)
- National Institute of Education Singapore NIE events [News & Events | National Institute of Education \(NIE\) | NTU Singapore](#)
- Greek forgiveness education program. [Greece Forgiveness Education Program | International Forgiveness Institute](#)
- Centre for character and leadership. Based in Kenya. [The Centre for Character and Leadership](#)
- Varkey foundation events [News & Events | Varkey Foundation](#)
- Fundacion para la reconciliacion. Latin America. – national peace initiatives [Fundacion para la Reconciliacion – Peace Insight](#)
- Education for Church of England [Education and Schools | The Church of England](#)
- Flourishing Trusts network - a network of about 80 multi-Academy trusts. And we host regular events with that with that network. [MAT Leadership Network - Foundation For Educational Leadership](#)
- Leora Cruddas - The confederation of school trusts. – conference, [Speech by Leora Cruddas CBE to CST Annual Conference 2023](#) program of events and conferences.
- Association of character education ACE [Association for Character Education](#)
- Schools and academies show. May 2025 London [Schools & Academies Show London | May 2025](#)
- [ICERI2025 - International Education Conference in Spain, 10-12 November](#)
- TES, online publication digital and paper copy [TES centenary special | Tes Magazine](#), events: [THE Events | Times Higher Education \(THE\)](#)
- Chartered college of teachers – Impact publication [Chartered College of Teaching - Chartered College of Teaching](#)
- Summa lab – Argentina – strategic partnership? [Our institution – Summa](#)
- [SEL Exchange \(hosted by CASEL\) Annual Conference](#), Minneapolis, MN, USA – November 2025

- [Educating Character Initiative Annual Conference](#)
- [Jubilee Centre for Character & Virtues Annual Conference](#)
- [Association for Moral Education Conference](#)
- Festival of Education <https://educationfest.co.uk/about/>
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### **Faith leaders**

- Church websites
- Amani Counselling Institute Kenya [Amani Counselling Centre and Training Institute 2025- Courses, Fees & Contact](#)
- Circles of forgiveness [Circles of Forgiveness | Healing the wounds of the heart | ritual from Olivier Clerc](#)
- program which is called Education for peace. [Peacemakers – Educating for Peace](#)
- Vatican centre for education, [Dicastery for Culture and Education](#)
- [One Day, One Step 4<sup>th</sup> annual event](#), Richmond, VA, USA – September 6, 2025
- [Global Church Mental Health Summit](#) – October 10, 2025

### **Forgiveness experts**

- Association for Moral education, journey JME and conference. [51st Annual AME Conference 2025 – Association for Moral Education](#)
- Forgiveness project [The Forgiveness Project](#)
- The British Associations of criminologists, [Conference – British Society of Criminology](#)
- American Associations of Criminologists, [News & Events – The American Society of Criminology](#)
- European, the European Association of Criminology [Upcoming conferences – European Society of Criminology](#)
- [Intellectual Humility Science](#), Palm Springs, CA, USA – March 2026