

## **Prof. Tommy Hendriks**

**Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) program developer/trainer**  
**Affiliated researcher at Department of Developmental Psychology,**  
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**Visiting professor Positive Mental Health, Anton de Kom University of Suriname**

### **Bio**

Dr. Tom Hendriks is a mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) program developer and researcher. Currently he works for the GZ Healthcare in the Netherlands and has developed a prevention program for refugees which is running at over 60 Dutch asylum centers, and in which over 2200 refugees have participated in. Tom guides students from the master program Global Health of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam with their research internships.

As researcher he is affiliated to the Department of Developmental Psychology, Tilburg School of Social and Behavioral Science, Tilburg University in, the Netherlands. He is a guest professor at the University of Suriname, where he has developed the bachelor program 'Introduction in Positive Psychology' and the master program 'Positive Mental Health. He is also an associate editor at the International Journal of Applied Positive Psychology.

In his research, Tom focuses on the cross –and intercultural application of positive psychology interventions among refugees and migrants. In addition, Tom is a long-time practitioner of Sahaja Yoga meditation. In his work he integrates elements of Vedic psychology and yoga-based meditation in relation to the development of character strengths.

**Keynote address on:**

**Culturally Sensitive Positive Psychology Interventions: Bridging Western and Indian approaches to Increase Mental Well-being**

**Abstract**

Positive psychology interventions (PPIs) have primarily been developed within Western contexts, raising questions about their applicability to non-Western populations. This lecture explores the efficacy of PPIs among non-Western populations and adaptability of PPIs for individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, highlighting the potential benefits and challenges. Drawing from empirical evidence and case studies, the presenter examines the effectiveness of a pioneering program tailored for refugees in the Netherlands which is currently being conducted at over 60 asylum centers, which contains yoga-based meditation.

Furthermore, the lecture delves into the nuances of culturally sensitive interventions, emphasizing the need for customization. The presenter shares insights from a newly developed resilience-building program which will be implemented in Ukraine, which incorporates yoga-based meditation techniques. By exploring the intersections between character strengths and the subtle system of *chakras* and *nadis*, the lecture elucidates how ancient Indian wisdom can be integrated in strengths-based intervention for Western populations.

Finally, the presenter outlines avenues for future research in positive psychology, advocating for interdisciplinary collaborations and the exploration of innovative methodologies. This lecture offers a comprehensive perspective on the evolution of positive psychology interventions, emphasizing the importance of innovative holistic approaches in fostering well-being across diverse populations.