



naturopathy: *a fresh approach to health*

HOW NATUROPATHS SUPPORT CLIENTS' WELLBEING.

by Lucy Drennan

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"Thanks to your support, my health is now on the way up." These were the best possible words that I could have heard on a follow-up consultation with my very first real-life client. The thrill of this regular feedback hasn't lessened despite completing hundreds of hours of clinical practice, first as a student of Naturopathic Nutrition at CNM, and now as a practising Naturopathic Nutritional Therapist.

My choice to study the naturopathic approach to health was based on my personal experience of seeing different practitioners for help with my own health. I benefited from a better outcome when a Naturopathic Nutritional Therapist gave me a new understanding of my own body and wellbeing. It was a profoundly different approach that I

hadn't encountered previously. So what is it that makes the naturopathic approach different?

Looking for clues

Rather than simply suppressing symptoms that can later recur or manifest differently, naturopaths view symptoms as signals from the body that something is out of balance and needs attention. Their aim is to identify and address the underlying causes of symptoms. Naturopaths acknowledge that causes can be both physical and emotional. Our twenty-first century modern lifestyle often incorporates poor food quality, an increased number of environmental toxins, abnormal social living and high stress, all of which can contribute to

nutrient deficiencies that lead to ill health.

Naturopathic training teaches us to take a deep look at their clients, noticing things like a receding hairline, thinning eyebrows, bulging eyeballs, the iris, sclera and colour of their eyes, the shape, size, colour and geographical map of the person's tongue. We also take careful notice of a client's hair, skin and nails. All of these provide enormous clues about their digestive health and possible nutrient and mineral deficiencies.

Every client is unique

At a naturopathic consultation, time is taken to ask clients in-depth questions about not just their diet, but also their lifestyle. As part of a holistic approach,

naturopaths gain an insight into the person seeking help. One of my favourite quotes from Hippocrates – the father of medicine – is: “It is far more important to know what person the disease has, than what disease the person has.”

The person is not a number on a graph whose physical cells are not functioning. Everyone is unique and has their own story with varied experiences and their own genetic profile. They will therefore react differently both to causes and to therapies. Having knowledge about the person guides naturopaths in further questioning and investigation into the root of present symptoms.

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Naturopathy looks to Ayurveda (Indian medicine, 3000-1000BC) and Traditional Chinese Medicine diagnostic

skills and tools to broaden the picture of a client's health status. For example, if the client has lots of 'heat' in the body, this might express as inflammation. Or, is this client more prone to sluggishness with poor digestion, and slow metabolism? Incorporating these and other naturopathic skills provides a clearer understanding of the person seeking help.

Naturopathy recognises the body's amazing capacity for self-healing. For this, the body needs the right conditions, such as good food, clean air and restorative rest. Naturopathically trained practitioners create a completely personalised diet and lifestyle plan which is practical for the client to achieve in his or her circumstances.

Prevention is better than cure

Prevention is always better than cure. Many people consult naturopathically trained practitioners to optimise their wellbeing and to avoid developing health issues.

One of the fundamental naturopathic principles is “First, do no harm.” Naturopaths are not physicians. They are educators, explaining to their clients the mechanisms of better health,

the reasons behind their suggestions and the expected outcomes. This empowers clients to make changes which support their own health goals, so they can take greater control of their health in their own hands. As naturopathic practitioners, we provide support and guidance, and use only natural therapies to support health. We can also work alongside conventional medical practitioners to ensure that any recommendations do not clash with conventionally prescribed medication, and to monitor changes and improvements.

I think more people are realising that we need to address all aspects of health to promote true wellbeing. I'm excited to be part of this growing movement and its vast potential for improving public health.

Lucy Brennan is a Naturopathic Nutritional Therapist who graduated from CNM. You can train at CNM for an exciting career based on the Naturopathic approach to health. Choose from Nutrition, Herbal Medicine, Acupuncture, Homeopathy, or Natural Chef Training. Attend CNM's next Open Evening for more information. Visit www.naturopathy.ie or call 01 672 5036.

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