

“Mentorship has been invaluable for me”

NAME: Angela Baldi MacRitchie.

WEBSITE: www.essenceofthesoul.co.uk.

QUALIFICATIONS: nutritionist, naturopath, herbalist and complementary therapist (covering: Reiki, reflexology, crystal therapy, bodywork, Autistic Spectrum healing, fertility massage, plus Feng Shui and space clearing).

TRAINING: College of Naturopathic Medicine, The College of Light/Hope Centre, Robert Gray Feng Shui Academy and Trafford College.

How long did it take for you to qualify?

Six years with The College of Light/Hope Centre, Robert Gray Feng Shui Academy and Trafford College for various Complementary therapies. Five years with CNM (college of Naturopathic Medicine) for nutrition, naturopathy and herbal medicine.

Where do you practise?

Glasgow. Manchester and Newton Stewart, Dumfries and Galloway.

What’s your main therapy/modality and why?

I cannot say I have a main therapy or modality. The clinics are very mixed and clients vary considerably – from a young boy of 24 months for autism that sees me for nutrition to a 35-year-old lady trying to conceive using nutrition and fertility massage, to a 75-year-old golfer who sees me for sports massage.

I guess it is using the tool from the kit that most suits the client with where they are at in that present moment.

Why did you decide to become a practitioner?

I was in fashion for a long time, and after 20 years felt that there



was more to life than “a frock”, and wanted to facilitate people to make positive changes in their lives.

But behind that story...

I was a county-class gymnast, but at the age of 19 my knee swelled up and I could only walk with the help of crutches. Over the next 20 years I had six operations, took heavy pain-killers and was often bed-ridden with the pain. After the sixth operation my consultant said, “No more operations, I’m referring you to the rheumatology clinic”.

I was prescribed a cocktail of powerful anti-inflammatory drugs which, despite making

me feel very unwell for the first three months, ultimately brought down the swelling dramatically and meant that I could dispense with the crutches, though I was still in pain. I was told that I was likely to have to take the anti-inflammatory drugs for life, but I began to investigate other, natural methods.

When I told the rheumatologist that I was no longer taking drugs, but I was detoxing, which herbs I was taking and what other changes I was making to

my lifestyle and diet, he was unimpressed. I told him that I had challenged myself to do a triathlon in two years’ time, to which he replied that there was “No chance”.

It felt like my body increasingly began to wake up again and to respond to all the changes I had made. Two years later, at the age of 46, I successfully completed my first triathlon.

I’m 48 now. It’s been four years since I’ve taken any kind of medication and my knee is fine. I’m pain-free, and enjoy more mobility than I’ve had since I was a teenager. The only reason I haven’t done more triathlons so far is because I’ve been so busy at CNM, where I’ve been studying for three diplomas: nutrition, naturopathy and herbal medicine.

I learnt such amazing facts at CNM, which really helped my own health. It turned out that my blood had no markers for rheumatoid factor, so rheumatoid arthritis had never been the



After 20 years of surgery and pain-killers, Naturopathic nutritionist Angela MacRitchie (left), decided enough was enough. When she told her rheumatologist she was coming off pharmaceuticals and intending to complete a triathlon – he said, “No chance!”.

problem. As a naturopath, I know that the body is always trying to return to balance, and the importance of giving it the help it needs for healing.

I started studying at CNM when I was 43. It's been a tough call studying for three diplomas and working full-time, but everyone at CNM helped me with the challenges, and when I moved I was able to transfer my nutrition studies from CNM Manchester to CNM Edinburgh. Then I embarked on my herbal diploma, for which I've been commuting to Manchester, all unthinkable at one stage of my life.

I now have clinics in Manchester, Glasgow and Newton Stewart, offering my clients a complete package for wellbeing. It's wonderful being able to inspire people to make positive change in their lives.

I don't have the words to express how much studying at CNM has changed my life. It's been awesome.

How long have you been in practice?

Complementary therapies – part-time for ten years and full-time with studying for five years since 2012.

Nutrition – since October 2015, naturopathy April 2016 and will add herbal medicine now that I have qualified.

Who or what has been the main influence/inspiration on your practice?

There have really been so many and each person feeds a different part of the puzzle. They are vast:

My friend Jacqui Waldron (My Reiki master) and Sonia Greeves, who started the herbal medicine spark that led me to study with CNM; Dee Brereton- Patel, who is an inspiration and amazing mentor and nutritionist; Peter Jackson-Main, who is awe-inspiring – my herbal mentor and guru.



To those who have shown me a more spiritual path and understanding of life – Dr Anna Rewilak, John Astbury and Alison Sargent. An understanding that we are multi-faceted is vital.

Sam Gardiner, who helped me with rehabilitation and allowed me to see that my body did not have to experience pain.

All my friends and family that are supportive and feed all aspects of myself.

What conditions or types of client do you see most of?

My clinic is very varied – it can range from autoimmune conditions, others who have emotional difficulties, chronic fatigue or children with autistic spectrum disorders. It includes stress-related conditions – that are endless, as well as women with hormonal imbalances and food allergies and sensitivities all

being part of what clients come in with.

What do you find the easiest to work with?

A client who is hungry to change and really takes all your recommendations on board. I suppose an easy description is a compliant client.

What is your favourite type of client?

A client who comes back and cannot believe how much the changes have impacted on their lives in a positive way. The one who cannot believe the symptoms have improved or completely gone. This is when I feel elated.

What is the most challenging type of symptoms/illness/problem that you get presented with?

At the time, I find it difficult dealing with a client who makes an excuse for every

recommendation you make. Why have they come to see you if they have a "but" for every suggestion? I find this very frustrating, however sometimes these are the clients that surprise you.

What one thing is essential to you in your practice?

Having a good relationship with my client – a sense of trust and belief between us is vital. Seeing the client as a whole is vital for me – it is mind, body and spirit.

Sometimes a client will arrive for a nutrition consultation and end up having a counselling session, and this may be what's needed to move forward for them.

And a sense of humour always goes a long way!

Do you enhance your business with any projects outside of your clinic?

Yes, I do monthly talks at Napier's in Glasgow on various topics, and have started doing articles for CNM.

Patricia Clark and I put together a detox program in its entirety for Napier's online through Facebook, with daily posts.

I have joined the assistant supervisor program at CNM to work with the next year's herbal medicine students.

I do talks for the Arthritis Care society Scotland.

Which CAM book has helped or inspired you most?

I have two bookcases full of amazing books – difficult question, but I cannot do without *Blood Chemistry and CBC Analysis* by Dicken Weatherby and Scott Ferguson. My new love – *Herbs and Natural Supplements – an evidence based guide. Vol 2* by Lesley Braun and Marc Cohen; and *Principles and Practice of Phytotherapy*, by Simon Mills and Kerry Bone.

An old school favourite is the *Encyclopedia of Natural*



We know our practitioners are quietly getting on with changing people's lives, every day – and we want to celebrate and share the inspiration. *In Practice* is coordinated by regular contributor Rebecca Smith, who runs a successful practice of her own, established 20 years ago. Contact her direct to be part of the feature: rebecca@newportcomplementaryhealthclinic.co.uk, and follow her on Twitter: [@NCHHealthClinic](https://twitter.com/NCHHealthClinic).



→ *Medicine*, by Michael Murray and Joe Pizzorno.

Why do you do what you do?

When clients come in feeling helpless or lost and by the end of the session, the most wonderful feeling is when they feel positive and full of hope!

I love to know that a small change can make a difference in someone's life. There is no better reward than someone thanking you for making it possible to have a positive change in their life.

If money, time and effort were no object, what one thing would you change about your practice or complementary and alternative medicine in general?

I know this is idealistic, but I would like to see allopathic doctors working together with complementary and alternative medicine. An integration of all medical approaches would be the perfect answer to health.

On a personal level, I would take more holidays and spend time with my husband and our Jack Russell Roxy Dawg.

What advice would you give to newly-qualified practitioners who are just setting up a business?

Dream what you want and let the reality follow – so believe in yourself and anything is possible.

Secondly, ask someone you admire in your field of study to be your mentor. Mentorship has been invaluable for me.

What is the biggest challenge you face as a practitioner?

The paperwork is the biggest challenge – that and getting enough fun time in my life.

There is always loads of research to check out or topics to read up on, but this is what keeps me going – the open-ended learning is awesome. ॥॥॥॥

Case study

30 years of migraines associated with heavy periods: a case history

Lady L, 58, had been migraines for the last 30 years that were regular every month for three days before her period. Her periods were heavy and she would spend three days in bed unable to do anything.

She was pre-menopausal around 48-49 and there was no longer a pattern with the migraines: they started hitting at any time. She had been put on Triptans – tryptamine based drugs – and had been on them for 11 years.

After she experienced a severe panic attack, her doctors put her on Citalopram (10mg a day in the morning); she had been on it eight years by the time she saw me.

She wanted to come off the medication and decided to stop it four-five days before coming to see me.

At the same time, her migraines were still once a month for three days, but she had developed cluster headaches on alternate days. Due to this, the doctor had put her on Epilim 200, an anti-convulsant, anti-epileptic drug, and was finding this made her feel spaced out and gave her horrendous diarrhoea. The doctor wanted her to trial them for a month. She decided to take one 200mg a day instead of the recommended three-four 200mg a day.

Assessment

Her aims were:

- to at least reduce the migraines
- to feel healthier
- to lose weight.

My aims for the initial consultation were:

- to clean up the diet to remove foods that are acting as triggers
- to balance her blood sugars and support her nervous system
- to recommend various tests to provide an insight to how her systems are functioning and where there is disease.

Interventions

I always start with the diet, as I feel the power of food is immense and sometimes small changes can make a massive difference.

We reduced caffeine with the aim of removing it completely.

I suggested an elimination diet for

three weeks, getting the most common allergens out of her diet, while ensuring 70% of her plate consisted of vegetables at every meal.

We took out quite a lot of foods in this phase, including nightshades (white potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, aubergines, chilli); dairy and eggs; nuts; soy products; gluten and so on. I have a hand-out that makes it easy for clients to follow.

She had to make sure she never went hungry and to have a protein with every meal to keep the blood sugars stable and not let them dip.

I recommended Epsom salts baths three times a week for relaxation, removal of toxins and to help increase magnesium levels.

I suggested keeping up walking the dogs daily out in the fresh air.

Supplements were minimal: Viridian's high-potency magnesium at 600mg a day in a split dosage, and Wiley's fish oils at 1000mg a day.

I wrote to her GP requesting routine blood tests such as liver function, kidney function, thyroid function, full blood count, B12, folate, serum calcium, magnesium and potassium and Vitamin D. All the results came back normal.

I called Genova and spent time on the phone with them going through the case and what tests would be best. This was most helpful – Genova were fantastic. As a result, I recommended the END14 – Menopause Plus, a saliva and urine test. It includes an adrenal profile, melatonin, beta-estradiol, estrone, estriol, progesterone and testosterone. The client never took this test, as the results seen with the initial dietary changes were profound enough for her to not consider it.

Reintroducing foods

In her second consultation, we started introducing foods for four days at a time. We'd felt that

Eggs, tomatoes and red peppers might be the main migraine-triggering foods for her. Eggs turned out to be fine, as well as peppers, but tomatoes had to be taken out the diet completely.

I also recommended Sole solution – a super-saturated, salty water – made with pink Himalayan salts, as

this can help to balance sugars in the blood, provides 84 essential ionised minerals and is vital to nerve cell communication.

We went through breathing exercises for the stress and when she felt panic coming on to bring her attention to that area (be mindful of it) almost as a third party.

We introduced Nutri Advanced B-Complex – one capsule a day.

The power of food

The client felt the elimination diet was difficult, but she stuck to it and noted her stomach bloating had completely disappeared.

After the first visit she was migraine-free for five-six weeks and then she had a white bread roll with butter and within two hours felt a migraine coming on. For me it shows the power of food!

Progress

I saw this client for a period of four months and have kept in touch via email since then.

She has stayed wheat-free, dairy-free and doesn't have tomatoes. She told me:

"I have had no migraines for about eight weeks, not even a little pain, which is amazing. Still not eating bread, chocolate, coffee, tomatoes or pasta. Being migraine-free is just wonderful after all these years – I can't believe it".

For the future, I would have liked to work on a 5R gut protocol with her, but unfortunately have not seen her again.

Conclusions

I learnt from this client that we can over-complicate things, and simple measures are all that is needed sometimes. I wanted to introduce testing from the start, but the results gained from only dietary changes was enough.

Resources

For this client I used much of the knowledge gained in my training with CNM.

I also worked closely with my mentor Dee Brereton-Patel, who has been an immense part of my learning with suggestions and guidance in complex cases. Having Dee as a mentor has been invaluable.