



What is Homeopathy?

Homeopathy is a form of alternative medicine that is holistic, scientifically based, safe to use, inexpensive and curative of chronic disease. It was founded by Samuel Hahnemann over 200 years ago, although the principles on which it is based have been utilized in healing for 1000's of years. Homeopathic remedies work through activating the body's own powers of self regulation and self-healing. Since its inception, homeopathy has benefitted people from all walks of life and of any age, in countries all over the world.

The word homeopathy comes from the Greek "homios" (meaning similar) and "pathos" (meaning suffering). One of the basic principles is the "Law of Similars" which states that substances which can cause certain symptoms in healthy people can cure those same symptoms when they occur in an ill person. This is already known in conventional medicine through treatments such as allergy desensitization shots and vaccinations. Hahnemann rediscovered this ancient principle when he took quinine (a substance noted to treat malaria) and began to develop all the symptoms of malaria. Over time, he began to do 'provings' in which he would give homeopathic substances to healthy people and carefully record the symptoms of the remedy.

Another important principle in homeopathy is that each of us is unique. The same diet, the same advice and the same homeopathic remedy will not necessarily help everyone with the same disease. Homeopathy treats the individual and not the disease. Through striving to find the unique remedy that fits the individual, the door is unlocked to their own self healing.

Classical homeopathic treatment only uses one remedy at a time to treat and cure chronic disease. A homeopathic evaluation generally takes several hours and focuses on deeply understanding an individual on all levels of his/her being (physical, emotional, mental and spiritual). The homeopath is also concerned with symptoms that are idiosyncratic of the person or uniquely define who they are. Examples include sleep position, food cravings, favorite hobbies, dreams, fears and many others. Based on the symptoms that are elicited when the case is taken, a single remedy is then chosen which most closely matches those symptoms. Homeopathy is not only effective in treating chronic disease, but also highly effective in treating acute disease and in first aid.

There are over three thousand homeopathic remedies from which to choose. These consist of herbs, plants, minerals, metals and animal products



which are prepared in such a way to bring out the healing power of the substance. They are quite safe, gentle and do not produce side effects. They are also quite inexpensive compared to the cost of standard medical treatment.

Homeopathy brings the individual to a greater level of health and more resistance to disease. Health in homeopathy is defined as freedom-freedom to express oneself on all levels of being.

Why Study Homeopathy?

People choose homeopathy as a career for many reasons. My personal journey into homeopathy began in my last year of medical school. I was interested in learning more about alternative medicine and spent one month studying with a homeopathic physician in Chicago, Illinois. In his practice, I saw rapid and highly beneficial responses to acute illness. I also saw remarkable cures of patients with chronic illness, many of whom were considered untreatable by conventional medicine. The experience transformed my view of health and healing. Most important, when I found homeopathy I felt like I had finally come home. As a result, I chose to pursue homeopathy as a career.

Why is there such passion for this field? I celebrate every day that I am a homeopath. It is a labor of love and filled with much joy. For me it is more than a vocation. As a psychiatrist I enjoyed my work, but as a homeopath I have found my calling. I find that clients are attracted to health care practitioners that love their work, for whom it is more than just a job. In a fast paced managed care era, so many health care practitioners are becoming burned out with their work and turning to the more relaxed and intimate pace of alternative medicine.

This love of homeopathy is not true just for myself, but for many other homeopaths as well. This is the reason why historically, so many homeopaths have worked up until the moment of their death, “dying in the saddle”. Over the years, I have found in many patients and students intense dedication and devotion to homeopathy.

There are many reasons for this joy in pursuing homeopathy as a patient or as a career, but listed below are some that I have found most common:

- Holistic

A homeopathic practitioner treats individuals on all levels of their being. This includes the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual levels. In this way,



homeopathy has the capacity to get to the root cause of illness. Many homeopathic patients will express that they had never previously experienced this totality of care. Good homeopathic practitioners also use all of themselves in their work and in doing so become more whole.

Homeopaths take the time to connect with their patients and homeopathic clients respond by feeling deeply understood. Initial visits with a homeopath often last two hours, while a follow up is typically 30-45 minutes. Many practitioners are attracted to the slower pace of homeopathy and the opportunity it affords to spend more time with their patients.

- Intrinsic Beauty

Homeopathy is a beautiful field of study. It is a complete healing system within itself. It is a tremendously rich tapestry that captures the hearts of those who study it and touches them deeply. It explores the harmony and resonance that occurs between individuals and their world. Homeopathy ultimately involves the study and learning of all life.

- Plus Factor

Many practitioners pursue a variety of forms of healing before learning homeopathy. With each field of study, they struggle until they can integrate it before moving on. Yet when they came to homeopathy, they find it to be boundless. They are unable to fully encompass the field. They find it to be much more than what they are and this is accompanied by feelings of wonderment. In this way homeopathy represents a “great thing”. The poet Rilke once said that “community is held together by the power of the grace of great things” (Rilke 1986). It is this “great thing” around which students and teachers gather in the pursuit of homeopathy.

- Nurturing the Spirit

Many homeopaths find homeopathy deeply satisfying and fulfilling. It captivates their minds, fires their imagination, holds their hearts and frees their spirits. In their work, they feel part of a supportive and nurturing tradition that stems back for several hundred years. There are also many opportunities for students and practitioners to be part of a strong and vibrant homeopathic community.

- Need



Presently, the demand for homeopathic care far exceeds the number of practicing homeopaths in most areas of the world. This need will only grow over time as the demand for alternative medicine and homeopathic care increases. There is considerable room for expansion (see the next section).

- It Works

Homeopathy works. Many students come to homeopathy because they or their family were successfully treated homeopathically. Many great homeopaths were converted to homeopathy in this way. This experience can turn a skeptic into a believer. There is also substantial research demonstrating the efficacy of homeopathic treatment.

- Science Balanced with Art

Homeopathy is both an art and a science. It has a considerable and growing body of empirical medical evidence supporting its efficacy (see appendix). Homeopathy is founded upon principles that are in turn founded upon natural law.

Homeopathy also requires considerable artistic skills in actual practice. This art is embodied in a series of qualities, skills and knowledge necessary for practice. Homeopathy uniquely marries both the science and the mystery, the technology and the humanism.

- Philosophy

Homeopathy has clear laws and principles on which it is founded. This is not as true of allopathic or conventional medicine. Unlike traditional science where 50% of what is held true will eventually be proved untrue, homeopaths maintain a firm foundation while continuously adding to their existing body of knowledge.

A main philosophical principle that attracts students is the non-suppressive nature of homeopathy. Homeopathy, unlike allopathic medicine, does not tend to suppress illness deeper into the organism. It is expected that many diseases of the 21st century will not respond well to allopathic treatment (e.g. antibiotic resistant organisms, multiple chemical sensitivity) but will respond to the many forms of alternative medicine that are better suited to address these conditions.

Another fundamental principle of homeopathy that attracts students is individualization. Homeopathy does not treat patients as diseases but as



individuals. Classical homeopathy only uses one medication at a time. The average American is commonly thought to be taking on average eight allopathic medications at any given time.

- Possibility of Cure

Response to homeopathic treatment can be powerful and life changing. Homeopathic medicines have the capacity to enter deeply into the vitality of the individual leading to deep cures of chronic disease.

Much of conventional medicine is concerned with managing rather than curing disease. Homeopathy offers the possibility of cure. This includes for example, conditions such as hypertension, asthma, anxiety disorders and chronic allergies.

Homeopathy also offers treatment for chronic conditions that are not treatable by conventional methods. This includes for example, conditions such as multiple sclerosis, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome or environmental sensitivity.

- Lack of Side Effects and Low Cost

Unlike conventional treatments, homeopathic medicines do not have the same toxic side effects. When prescribed correctly, homeopathic medicines are quite safe and well tolerated by patients. Many seek homeopathic treatment because it works in the gentlest of ways.

In addition, homeopathic medicines are relatively inexpensive compared to conventional medicine. The average cost of homeopathic medicine is about \$10 per month.

- Love for the Natural World

One of the things that distinguishes homeopaths is their capacity to love life. This is more than simple curiosity. It involves a deep wonder, appreciation and enjoyment of all that life holds.

Every substance in life holds the capacity to heal, and homeopaths have found the key to unlock this healing capacity. This necessitates a deep understanding of our patients, our world and of ourselves. This includes an exploration of geology, botany, zoology, physiology, pharmacology, psychology, sociology, literature and many other fields of study.

This capacity allows homeopaths to see life differently than others. Who else but a homeopath will sit with someone and become entranced with the



nuances of their bowel habits or be excited to hear that their patient only sleeps with their arms raised above their head? Who else but a homeopath will burn the midnight oil studying the subtleties of the Ericaceae plant family or the toxicology of the poison strychnine?

This fascination is not just with the large things in life, but also with those that are most small. Homeopaths are interested in the small details about their patients' lives, those details that are unique to them. They also wish to explore the small details of the natural world, those that are often overlooked by contemporary science. It is these subtleties which often provide the key which unlock a given case. The philosopher Espinoza said that "God is in the details."

When coming from a place of love and openness, life speaks to you. In the consulting room, homeopaths have the capacity to deeply listen and hear their patients' stories. In the natural world, homeopaths listen to the voice of plants, animals and minerals, developing a deep understanding of their nature. Life reveals itself to us, if we only have the capacity to truly listen.

- Self Growth

True learning gets to the heart of what it is to be human. It gives us the capacity to recreate ourselves, to do what we never could do before and to change our relationship to the world. Homeopathic education changes the student, providing new ways of seeing and perceiving the world.

- Second Career

Some individuals choose not to study a discipline such as homeopathy, feeling that they are too old to learn. This is not substantiated by clinical evidence or experience. Many successful homeopaths only came to the study of homeopathy late in their life. There are differing and unique challenges to studying homeopathy for both the young and the old. Many who choose to embark on the study of homeopathy do this as a second career. Growth is a never-ending process.

The Need for Homeopathic Practitioners

There has been an explosion of interest in alternative medicine in the last ten years. The public has embraced the usage of alternative medicine and are seeking out practitioners. A study was done in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 1993 which showed that one-third of Americans routinely used



alternative medicine, paying for it out-of-pocket to an average of \$600-\$700 per year. A recent update to this study showed this figure is now up to 40% with 90% of these individuals not telling their physicians of this practice. Americans now spend nearly one trillion dollars on alternative medicine and wellness per year.

The budget of the Office of Alternative Medicine of the National Institute of Health has tripled in the last seven years to \$20 million in 2001. There is a tremendous increase in the number of alternative medicine books in the book stores, nationwide, and some are on the best seller list (ie. Dr. Andrew Weil). Thirty four of the nation's medical schools have added alternative medicine to their curricula. Many prominent hospitals are now offering alternative medicine programs to their treatments.

- Popularity

Homeopathy is thought to be the fastest growing form of alternative medicine in the world today and the third most common. It is well represented and popular in countries all around the world. What attracts many is its low relative cost. The cost to patients for homeopathic treatment is generally much less than that of conventional medicine. Increasingly, its students are finding it to be a solid and satisfying career choice. Most medically-trained homeopathic practitioners find that they can make a salary equivalent to their allopathic colleagues in private practice.

- Need

In the homeopathic field, there is tremendous need. There are few homeopaths and the demand is far larger than the supply. In India for example, the number of homeopaths per capita is at least 100 times that of the United States. Alternative medicine and homeopathy are also extremely popular in today's health care climate. Increasingly people are unsatisfied with conventional health care and are looking to alternative medicine.

- Insurance

Third party payers (insurance companies) increasingly are offering plans in alternative medicine. For example, AARP recently began to offer alternative medicine discounts to its members. Medicare and Blue Cross/Blue Shield cover homeopathic services. In 1996, Washington state required all health insurers to add coverage of alternative treatments to the coverage of



standard medical care.

Levels of Practice

There are many levels of student involvement in homeopathy. Students often begin at the first level and gradually progress from one stage to another over time. This progression for some is smooth while others stop at certain stages for years before progressing on to the next. Others are happy to stay at one stage and never move on. Some students find it hard to stop once they embark on their homeopathic journey.

- The Appreciator

There are students who contact homeopathy or begin training and then drop out, realizing that homeopathy is not right for them. There can be many reasons for this, but ultimately there proves to be a lack of resonance between homeopathy and their nature.

These individuals may develop a deep appreciation for what homeopathy is, but have no wish to study it further. Homeopathy can enliven their work and leave them changed. They may refer friends, family and patients to homeopathy, embark on homeopathic treatment themselves or work with someone who does practice homeopathy.

- Casual Practitioner

This level of practice involves the casual usage of homeopathy. This can be learned in a few hours of self study or a weekend course. The usage of remedies is mostly focused on first aid prescribing. Examples include the usage of Arnica montana after trauma or Aconite napellus for shock.

This level applies to both home care and medically licensed practitioners. In simple home care, the practitioner is generally treating friends and family. For the medical practitioner, their work is primarily focused on their original field of study, but there is a wish to experiment with homeopathy.

- Acute Practitioner

This level of practice is focused on acute prescribing. The practitioner can learn this level of prescribing in a typical 40 hour course or more serious self study. An example would be using remedies such as Pulsatilla nigrans, Belladonna, Aconitum nappelus, or Mercurius vivus in the treatment of otitis



media (ear infections).

The home practitioner uses a home remedy kit to treat friends and family. The medically-licensed practitioner uses remedies to treat simple acute conditions, while reserving conventional medicine for more serious conditions, or referring to a more skilled homeopathic practitioner.

- Integrative Practitioner

This level involves a deeper level of commitment to homeopathy. The practitioner learns more “constitutional” prescribing in a 100-250 hour course. The prescriber learns a limited number of "constitutional remedies" that can be used in the treatment of deeper chronic conditions. This generally cannot be learned by simple self study, but requires a more intensive training program (whether in a classroom or by distance learning). An example of treatment at this stage is the usage of the remedy *Natrum muriaticum* in the cure of a patient whose syndrome of illness includes chronic migraine headaches, constipation, intermittent herpetic infections, and a tendency toward depression.

For the non-medically licensed practitioner, this stage involves integrating homeopathic practice with their other work. For the medically licensed practitioner, the third stage involves the deeper integration of conventional and homeopathic practice. At times, the practitioner may elect to pursue one modality of treatment vs. another or to combine them. The mixing of practices can lead to confusion for some practitioners. More serious cases need supervision by an experienced homeopath or should be referred. The key is always knowing one's limits. Some practitioners find it very difficult to integrate their practices and experience a need to move on to the next level (homeopathic practitioner) as a consequence.

Homeopathic training in naturopathic schools is at this level. For medical doctors and osteopathic doctors at this level of involvement, it is possible to become licensed to practice homeopathy in certain states (Arizona, Connecticut and Nevada). Licensure as a homeopathic physician is not required for a MD/DO to practice homeopathy in other states. Reimbursement at this stage from insurance companies for homeopathic treatment is also possible.

- Homeopathic Practitioner

The last level involves a deeper level of integration and commitment. One's identity at this stage becomes that of a homeopath. The study of



classical homeopathy is every bit as complex as that of conventional medicine. Practitioners who are serious about the practice of homeopathy generally require a minimum of 500 didactic hours, although homeopathy is more accurately a lifetime of study. Distance learning courses are insufficient in themselves at this level without accompanying clinical training. An example of this level of practice would be the usage of the remedy Stramonium in the cure of a child with attention deficit disorder, night terrors, rage attacks and Tourette's disorder.

Practitioners may elect to practice only homeopathy at this stage or to have a more deeply integrated practice. Some practitioners choose to separate their practices to avoid confusion. What differentiates these practitioners from integrative practitioners is a much deeper level of commitment to homeopathy and a well-established identity as a homeopath.

At this stage, certification becomes possible. Entering the homeopathic community becomes increasingly important and helps the practitioner to become a member of the homeopathic profession and to avoid isolation.

Learning homeopathy is difficult. It is a complex field, every bit as difficult to master as conventional medicine or acupuncture. It fully engages one's being, rather than simply the intellect. There are levels of learning and some students elect to stop after reaching a certain degree of proficiency in their training.

Learning is a verb. It is active and hard work. Effective learning does not come from passive absorption. It is necessary to wrestle with everything that one is exposed to. It requires the focusing of attention, and active listening. Learning must be integrated with what one already knows. Only in this way is knowledge given "roots". It also means opening oneself to new ideas, to one's patients and to the world.

The Homeopathic Community and Profession

The practice of homeopathy is diverse. There are many practitioners who are medically-licensed and many who are non-licensed. Quality varies greatly from those who take a weekend course and hang up a shingle, to those who have seriously studied homeopathy for many years and are certified in their practice. In addition, there are many styles of practice ranging from classical homeopathy to complex homeopathic approaches.



There are a variety of community organizations (see below) that serve to bring the homeopathic community together. Although coming from many backgrounds and schools, students of homeopathy come together around the “great subject” of homeopathy.

- Legality of Practice

Licensure denotes the legal right to practice. Licensure to practice homeopathy is complex and varies depending on the individual’s background and location. Consult with local authorities (see appendix) for up to date information about licensure in your area.

Currently there are three states in the country that license the practice of homeopathy for medical physicians or osteopathic physicians-Arizona, Connecticut and Nevada. There are thirteen states in the country that license naturopathic physicians and homeopathy is included within their scope of practice. There are several states in the country that include homeopathy within the scope of practice for chiropractic physicians and acupuncturists.

There are two states in the country where it is possible to legally practice as a registered homeopathic medical assistant. These are Arizona and Nevada. A Homeopathic Medical Assistant practices homeopathy under the auspices of a licensed homeopathic physician (MD or DO).

- Freedom Legislation

Since 2000, several states have adopted legislation conferring freedom to practice for anyone who gives full disclosure of their training and background. These states are California, Minnesota and Rhode Island. There is currently an effort to adopt this legislation in other states as well.

- Certification is an important step in the development of the homeopathic student. In the past, most homeopaths would know each other and would know who was good in practice. As homeopathy grows, this is no longer possible. Certification increasingly is viewed as necessary to demonstrate minimum quality standards as well as to promote the growth of the profession. The certification process helps the student take another step into formation of an identity as a homeopath.

Certification does not confer the legal right to practice, but rather is an indicator of the quality of an individual practitioner’s practice. National certification may be obtained through the Council for Homeopathic Certification



(for both non-licensed and licensed health professionals), National Board of Homeopathic Examiners (for both non-licensed and licensed health professionals), American Board for Homeopathic Therapeutics (for MD's and DO's only) or the Homeopathic Academy of Naturopathic Physicians (for ND's only). See the appendix for further details on these organizations.

- Income

Income varies greatly amongst practitioners. This is dependent on factors such as licensure status, part time vs. full-time practice, location, and experience.

Typical fees from a new visit (90 -120 minutes) ranges from \$100 to \$400. Typical income from a follow up visit (30-45 minutes) ranges from \$40 to \$120. Most full-time practitioners average 4-8 follow ups per day and one or two new visits per week.

- Pharmacies

There are numerous homeopathic pharmacies available throughout North America. Homeopathic medicines are readily available from these pharmacies as well as from most health food stores and many conventional pharmacies.

- Homeopathic Organizations

There are many organizations that support the practice of homeopathy in the United States. These include the following (contact information is found in the appendix):

- a. The Academy of Veterinary Homeopathy (AVH): This is a membership organization for veterinarians who are practicing homeopathic medicine. They also provide certification for their members. A member listing is available.

- b. American Association of Homeopathic Pharmacists (AAHP): This is a membership organization which includes manufacturers, marketers and pharmacists. They provide information on regulations, quality, manufacturing and pharmacy education.

- c. American Board of Homeotherapeutics (ABHt): The American Board of Homeotherapeutics is the certifying body for medical and osteopathic physicians. It was established in 1960 and awards the DHt-Diplomate in Homeotherapeutics.

- d. The American Institute of Homeopathy (AIH): This is a membership



organization for medial and osteopathic physicians. It is the oldest homeopathic organization in the United States, established in 1844.

e. Council for Homeopathic Certification (CHC): This is a certification body for the entire homeopathic community (whether licensed or unlicensed). It is the largest homeopathic certification organization.

f. Council on Homeopathic Education (CHE): This is an accreditation organization for homeopathic schools and homeopathic seminars. It also is active in preparing standards of practice for homeopathic education.

g. Homeopathic Academy of Naturopathic Physicians (HANP): This organization is a membership organization for naturopathic physicians who practice homeopathy. It certifies naturopathic physicians with the credentials DHANP.

h. Homeopathic Action Alliance (HAA): This organization includes representatives from all the other homeopathic organizations. It meets annually to promote communication within the homeopathic community.

i. Homeopathic Nurses Association (HNA): This is a membership organization for homeopathic nurses. It also provides support for nurses studying and integrating homeopathy into their practices.

j. Homeopathic Pharmacopeia of the United States(HPCUS): This was established in 1980. It publishes the Homeopathic Pharmacopeia of the United States.

k. Homeopaths Without Borders (HWB): This organization supports the practice of homeopathy in areas of need around the world. Currently their focus has been on Cuba. It provides humanitarian aid, homeopathic education and treatment for communities in need.

l. The National Center for Homeopathy (NCH): This is the largest homeopathic organization in the United States. Its purpose is to encourage homeopathy to grow and flourish in the United States.

m. The North American Society of Homeopaths (NASH): This is a membership organization for all practitioners of homeopathic medicine (whether licensed or non-licensed). Its goal is to work towards an independent profession of homeopathy.

- Types of Careers

A variety of careers are available in homeopathy. These include professional practice, pharmacy, research, teaching and administrative. Professional practice includes child and adult, veterinary and dental homeopathic



practice.

Homeopathic Training Programs

There are many homeopathic training programs in the United States. These range from short courses that are targeted at training acute prescribers to comprehensive training programs spanning four years. Currently there are 35-40 comprehensive training programs in the United States (see appendix). The length of these programs varies depending on the level of practice at which they are targeted (see above). Almost all programs are weekend-based and are designed for those who are holding down a job to be able to study homeopathy at the same time. Typically these programs meet for 2-4 days per month.

Many of these programs have differing emphases, although still delivering a quality homeopathic education. Most of these programs are classroom based, although there are a growing number of internet and distance learning options.

Choosing a Program for You

There are many homeopathic schools and programs of study to choose from. Students must choose a training program that fits both their style of learning and a faculty with which they are comfortable. Shopping around and comparing programs can be useful. It is important to ask the questions necessary to choose the program that best suits the individual.

Important questions include the completeness of training, how long the school has been in existence and how successful are the program's graduates. One factor to consider is whether the school is licensed, although some states preclude the possibility of licensure for homeopathic programs. Another factor is certification. The Council on Homeopathic Education provides a list of certified homeopathic schools in North America.

Often one of the first decisions is whether to choose a distance learning program, internet based program or a classroom-based program. Many students find that they learn best in an interactive classroom atmosphere. Others find that self learning at their own pace works best. Those who choose a distance learning program and plan on seriously studying homeopathy, must be aware that didactic training is not enough. Quality clinical training is critical to becoming a good homeopath. Ultimately nearly half of the student's education must be clinically-based.



Another important dimension in choosing a training program is the faculty. The student should choose a program with faculty that they feel comfortable learning from. There is an ancient saying that “When the student is ready, the teacher appears.” The problem is that the student does not always recognize the teacher. The best teachers are not necessarily the most popular. Ideally, a good faculty is one that includes both good teachers and good practitioners. Early in training it is much more important to find a good teacher than a good practitioner. As training progresses, the reverse becomes true.

Some programs use a single teacher in their training whereas others use a faculty. With single teacher programs, it becomes critically important that the student feel very comfortable with the teacher. With multiple teachers (faculty), students can learn from a variety of styles and perspectives. When a single teacher training program is chosen, it is more important for the student to attend seminars and other educational experiences in which they are exposed to new ideas and styles of learning. This helps to avoid teacher cloning and ensures that the students develop their own style.

Mentorship is another critical aspect of training programs, especially for those attending distance learning programs. Mentorship provides guidance on the homeopathic journey and helps the students integrate their learning. Good mentors are teachers that the student may not necessarily like the best. Good mentors challenge and push students beyond their self-defined limits.

For more advanced homeopathic training, it is not possible for the student to learn homeopathy on their own. Clinical training provides the vital bridge between didactic training and actual practice. Not only do students need clinical training, but it is also important to have a living teacher who can bring the teachings of homeopathy into the consciousness of the times.

It is vital to have both quality teaching and quality administration for effective homeopathic learning to occur. One is generally not sufficient without the other. Awareness of the qualities of effective homeopathic teaching and of effective homeopathic administration can serve as a guide. Certification and licensure of training programs are often indicators of quality. In North America, certification of educational institutions is achieved through the Council on Homeopathic Education (see Appendix B).

Adult learners are distinguished by two important factors. They have both an inherent need for putting what they learn into practice and a need to be self directing. It is important to find a program that meets both needs.



What to Expect In Homeopathic Training (Content)

There are certain key areas that any comprehensive homeopathic training program should cover. Some programs have a more integrated curriculum while others break out the various components of homeopathic training into separate classes. These components include the following:

- **Philosophy:** Philosophy is one of the central characteristics that distinguishes homeopathy from conventional medicine. The most important book in homeopathic philosophy is the *Organon*, written by Samuel Ha
- **Materia Medica:** Materia medica is the study of the healing properties of homeopathic remedies. Programs differ in their approaches to materia medica, but may include totality of symptoms, toxicology, natural history of the substance, miasmatic influences and family groupings of remedies. Study of materia medica often revolves around observing or reading cured cases where particular remedies were effective. This also includes identifying the most common remedies for particular conditions. Comparative materia medica is the study of how remedies relate to each other.
- **Case Taking:** Case taking is one of the central pillars on which homeopathic practice stands. Consistent and reliable prescribing comes from the ability to take a good case. Important skills that are developed include the establishment of rapport, listening and observational skills.
- **Case Analysis:** Case analysis is the capacity to study a case and to find the correct homeopathic medicine. Some programs explore a variety of case analysis techniques whereas others focus on one or a few.
- **Case Management:** Case management is the study of how to best manage cases during treatment. This includes issues relating to identifying the response to a remedy and how to do careful follow up interviews.
- **Repertory:** The repertory is a book of symptoms associated with listings of remedies that exhibit specific symptoms. The repertory helps to individualize a case to find the right remedy for the right person. The use of computers is an important tool in aiding repertory analysis.
- **Medical Education:** Those who are already licensed generally have had sufficient medical education and do not require further studies. For those who leave the teaching of these areas to others in the form of concurrent courses during the curriculum.



- History: It is important to know where homeopathy has come from in the past, how it has developed over time and where it is going as a health care movement. This includes its status in the world today and the political forces at work within homeopathy.
- Research: There are two types of research in homeopathy. Conventional research e
- Ethics: Ethical knowledge is a critical part of homeopathic training. It is critical that practitioners be trained not only to have a broad knowledge base but to practice in an ethical manner. Students who are conscientiously trying to practice ethically are helped to deal with the increasingly complex problems that face them as homeopaths.
- Practice Management: Practice management includes issues such as the setting up of a practice, fees, case recording, billing, managing a practice and marketing.

What to Expect In Homeopathic Training (Process)

What is the best way to learn homeopathy? This has been a debate that has spanned several hundred years. Should we adopt allopathic (conventional) methods and standards of learning or should homeopathy develop its own model of education?

Much has been written about the need for reform in conventional medical education, although little has been done in recent years. The literature describes a large gap between education and practice. As a medical student, I found that much of my education was academic and not related to what I would see in practice. It also was hierarchical and at times abusive.

The Flexner Report (1909) had a far-reaching impact on medical education that went beyond homeopathy. It helped to create a system of education that was academic in orientation and which poorly prepared students for practice. Training has focused on the mind, leading to increasing intellectualization, reductionism, loss of spirit and loss of heart.

What would it mean to educate homeopathically? Homeopathic education is different from many other fields of education. At bottom, it is learning about all life. By the Law of Similars, it would mean educating in a way that is similar to that which is being studied. Good educators incorporate the material they teach into the process of education itself. The following are some ideas about what quality homeopathic education should entail:



- Individualization: The uniqueness of each learner, teacher and school must be sought and honored. Good educators honor their own and their students' individuality.

- Holistic: Wholeness is an important goal of education. Homeopathic education is more than knowledge (often the focus of allopathic education). It also addresses the actions, heart and spirit. Homeopathic education flows from experience. The emotional side of homeopathic education is often neglected, but is critical to developing homeopaths. It is also practicing basic respect and openness to the world, to our craft, to our faculty, to our students and to ourselves.

- Homeopathy as a Great Subject: There are three models in teaching: a teacher-centered model, a student-centered model and a subject-centered model. In the teacher-centered model, the teacher becomes the center of the classroom, pontificating from the lectern. This is the traditional method of teaching that encourages authoritarianism in the teacher and passive dependence in the students.

In the student-centered model, the student is the center of the classroom, while the teacher is more on the periphery as a facilitator. It encourages independence and self learning in the student, yet in doing so often misses the heart and mystery of homeopathy.

In the subject-centered model, the "Great Subject" becomes the center of the classroom. Here the students, teachers and administrators keep coming back to the greatness of the source, which is homeopathy. "Great Subjects" rest on a firm unchanging foundation that inspires its learners on all levels of their being. Unlike allopathic medicine, homeopathy represents a Great Subject

- Resonance: Resonances of energy occur throughout the educational process. It is this resonance that leads the individual forward on their educational journey. It is also the resonance between students, teachers and administrators that allows effective homeopathic education to occur.

- Less is More: The Law of the Minimum Dose teaches that less is more. Teaching and learning homeopathy mean being comfortable with silence. In an increasingly hurried world, the pace of education has dramatically increased, leaving little time for reflection and self observation. Yet reflection and silence are that part of education where the greatest learning takes place.

- Freedom from Prejudice: Homeopathic education means developing freedom from prejudice. Prejudice prevents educators and students alike from being fully present in their work. To develop freedom from prejudice, one



must first know oneself. This is a never-ending process. Education is a mirror that allows the individual to glimpse their own face. It requires embracing diversity.

- **Succussion, Dilution and Potency:** Homeopathic education is a constant process of succussion, dilution and potentization. It is an ebb and flow, a movement forward here and backward there. Education is a chaotic and non-linear process. Yet with each repetition of the material, the student is brought deeper into the wonder and mystery of homeopathy.

- **Empiricism:** Homeopathy reflects a system of healing based upon the therapeutic tradition of Empiricism, whereas allopathic medicine is based upon the tradition of Rationalism. These two forms of healing have been in conflict throughout the centuries.

Rationalistic education predominates in the world today. Rationalist education focuses on knowledge, rigid logic and pathologic theory. It seeks to put labels on phenomena and strongly separates students and teachers. The rationalistic educator needs to stay in command and becomes the ultimate judge of how education should occur.

Empirical education values experience and careful observation. It seeks to identify the manifest patterns of disease, health and education. It explores the commonality of the educational process.

- **Dynamis:** Homeopathy is a field that is concerned with dynamis (energy). Homeopathic education must also be dynamic, energetic, movement-oriented and transformative. Homeopathic educators bring their dynamic vital force into their work through their energy and enthusiasm for homeopathy.

- **Obstacles:** Effective treatment in homeopathy requires removing the obstacles to cure in the healing process. These obstacles consist of behaviors within the client that prevent homeopathic treatment from moving forward. There are also “obstacles to learn” in homeopathy that must be overcome before the learning journey can begin. Learning cannot be complete until these obstacles are removed.

By teaching within a homeopathic model, both teachers and students are learning homeopathy through direct experience, in addition to the content presented. These principles are a vital part of the homeopathic educational journey.

What to Expect in Homeopathic Training (The Tools)



The most important tools in homeopathic training are books and a computer. In a comprehensive training program, the cost of books averages around \$400 per year. Although it is possible to practice without the using a computer, most homeopaths rely on homeopathic software in their practice. Quality software can immeasurably speed the process of case analysis.

One struggle of beginning students is with homeopathic gluttony. There is a strong temptation to purchase every homeopathic book, tape and software program on the market and to try to cram it all in. This is also often true of homeopathic conferences. Mostly this stems from impatience. Generally it is best to wait. There will be plenty of time later in training to purchase materials that will be helpful to the student and ample time to attend more advanced conferences. A recent study of homeopathic students revealed that 80% of them had purchased materials (extraneous to those required in their curriculum) in their first year that they later regretted purchasing (Rowe, 2000). This is especially true of computer programs. Many schools encourage their students to wait about a year before purchasing a homeopathic computer program.

Post Graduate Education

There are many post graduate seminars and training programs available in North America. Most of these programs are observational and are focused on watching the master homeopath in their work-often through observation of cured video cases. Many of these programs will take on beginning students and they can be a marvelous way for beginning students to be exposed to the depth and richness of homeopathy. However, they are not good places for beginning students to learn homeopathy. Some beginning students go from one conference to the next and never get a basic grounding in the fundamentals of homeopathy. A basic homeopathic education is critical to ensure long-term success in homeopathic practice.

Where Can I Find Out More?

The National Center for Homeopathy (see appendix) provides a resource directory for the homeopathic community. You can also find this information on their website. The Council on Homeopathic Education has published standards



for the community on homeopathic education. You can obtain this information on their website and it is also listed in *The Homeopathic Journey* (see book list).