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The Foundation Course Team

Updated December 2022

General Manager



Lisa Smith

Lisa Smith is recognised as a passionate business manager with many year's experience managing large teams across multiple sites in the healthcare sector and, as a registered manager for the Care Quality Commission. Lisa has a proven track record in maximising service development opportunities and has extensive experience in all aspects of management. Lisa has created and developed various strategies since joining Heartwood in 2018 including financial reporting and management and student liaison.

Course Administrator



Nikki Harrison

Nikki Harrison worked in administration and marine underwriting for 12 years for a Lloyd's Syndicate. For several years she lived in the US, working in veterinary care before returning to the UK and raising a family. She joined Heartwood as Course Administrator in 2018.

Course Leaders



Anita Ralph

Anita Ralph, MSc, MNIMH, MCPP, began full-time training to become a medical herbalist in 1987, graduating as a member of the National Institute of Medical Herbalists (MNIMH) in 1991. She completed an MSc in herbal medicine in 2006. Realising there was a need to bridge the gap between people unfamiliar with professional herbal medicine and herbalists themselves, she opened her own

herbal dispensary in 1997. Since 2006, she has treated patients at the Integrated Gynaecology Clinic with consultant Gynaecologist and Obstetrician Anne Henderson, providing much needed help for women with complex gynaecological problems. Anita is a member of the College of Practitioners of Herbal Medicine, and has lectured at the Scottish School of Herbal Medicine's BSc and MSc courses.



Mary Tassell

Mary Tassell, MSc, MNIMH, commenced training to become a medical herbalist in 1996. On graduating she became a member of the National Institute of Medical Herbalists (MNIMH) in 2000, subsequently taking over editorship of their in-house magazine for a number of years. Her professional career has also included teaching at both Western Herbal Medicine training clinics and for the Northern College of Acupuncture, where she taught Anatomy and Physiology and herb/drug interactions. Mary completed an MSc in Western Herbal Medicine in 2006, and currently practices as a consultant Medical Herbalist in Bridport. She also runs a variety of informal courses, walks and workshops in the area.

Course Tutors



Delphine Sayre

Delphine Sayre, Dip Phyt, NIMH, graduated from the School of Herbal Medicine in 1989 and has been a practising herbalist in Sheffield ever since. In 1997 she completed a 3 year training as a psychotherapist to enhance her working style, and has been part of a supervision group since then. She runs her private practice from The Lodge House in Sheffield, and shares the space with a range of therapists. Her other main area of work is for a charity called Cavendish Cancer Care which supports patients, carers and families affected by cancer and which offers a range of complementary therapies free of charge. Dee has run WEA courses on herbal medicine for about 20 years and she has been a guest teacher for the Scottish School of Herbal Medicine, amongst others.



Sue Bottomley

Sue Bottomley, NIMH, studied herbal medicine at the School of Herbal Medicine in East Sussex and has practiced as a Herbalist in Sheffield since 1994. She works from a multi-disciplinary clinic, sharing a well-stocked dispensary with two other herbalists. She has taught pharmacology to Herbal Medicine students for ten years, and is currently a member of a small team that delivers a module on Complementary and Alternative Medicine to final year medical students at the University of Sheffield. Her background as a pharmacist informs her interest in using herbs safely alongside conventional medicines, as well as on their own.



Victoria Kearns

Victoria Kearns, BSc, qualified as a Medical Herbalist from Westminster University. She supports clients with a range of issues affecting the digestive, endocrine and reproductive systems, in particular IBS, IBD, endometriosis, PCOS, pelvic pain and fertility. She teaches and supervises Herbal Medicine students at the Westminster University Polyclinic and practices in London and from her clinic in Watford where she also grows herbs for her clients. Victoria also holds post-graduate qualifications in Psychosexual & Relationship Therapy and clinical massage.



Pieter Meiring

Pieter Meiring, BSc, qualified as a Medical Herbalist from Westminster University. Working from his home-based practice in Watford, he treats clients with a range of conditions including BPH, menopause, osteoarthritis and auto-immune conditions. He is passionate about creating the best quality herbal medicines from seed to tincture, cream or distillate and grows many herbs in his garden and allotment. Pieter has won awards for achievement and innovation in herbal medicine and botanical pharmacy, and has featured in a number of publications promoting herbal medicine and growing medicinal plants.

Rasheeqa Ahmad



Rasheeqa (Hedge Herbs) is a herbalist in her community in Walthamstow in north London. She has been practicing since 2012, offering treatment with herbal medicine and teaching about its many aspects, alongside a wider mix of work whose aim is connecting us as communities with the potential of this knowledge and craft as a way to develop healthier living systems and relationships.

Rasheeqa is inspired by her early involvement with the Radical Herbalism Gathering in exploring how to make plant medicine accessible and restore balance to its practice in the contexts of systemic inequalities and oppressions that are part of our shared histories. She comes from a family lineage of herbal medicine practitioners in Unani Tibb, who continue to practice this in northern India. She is an instigator of the Community Apothecary in her locality, a project that brings community members together around a patchwork of medicinal herb gardens where we can learn about growing, wildcrafting and making medicines together, which are then available to the community. The vision is to co-create thriving mutual healthcare systems, sharing knowledge, peer support and the model so that we can create landscapes of healing everywhere.

Alongside these community based projects she offers a clinical practice two days a week from her home in Walthamstow. Central to this is connecting up emotional and physical health, and offering support through the community activity as well as with herbal and nutritional treatment. Regular areas of treatment include hormonal and menstrual health, psycho-emotional balance.

Zoe Naylor

Zoe's picture and biography will be coming soon.

Amanda Rew

Amanda's picture and biography will be coming soon.

Sophie Outen

Sophie's picture and biography will be coming soon.

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