

Training Whilst Recovering from M.E.

Dear reader,

As a patient of The Optimum Health Clinic, the chances are you have heard about the clinic's psychology based professional training courses in hypnotherapy, neuro-linguistic programming, life coaching and EFT. About to enter their sixth year, these courses have trained a number of exceptional therapists, several of whom have even gone on to join the clinic team.

In addition to their focus on professional development, the courses have also been extremely popular with patients of the clinic to help accelerate their own healing journey. If you've been listening to Secrets to Recovery, you may well have noticed how many of those interviewed have actually been students on the courses. Without doubt, patients on the clinic's professional training courses seem to have a significantly accelerated recovery rate. Just some of the advantages to attending the training courses as a support, or even replacement of private sessions, include:

1. In depth training in psychology tools

There is only so much detail that can be gone into during one-on-one sessions. The level of depth taught at the training courses is considerably deeper, and when you are learning how to teach the techniques to others, your knowledge for using with yourself goes to a whole new level.

2. Significantly increased ability to use tools with oneself

A major emphasis on the professional training courses is also how to apply what you are learning to yourself, as we work on the premise that the best practitioners are always those that have worked through as much of their own "stuff" as possible.

3. Monthly support through a focused group on the same path

Meeting up with the same group of people each month, apart from being a great source of friendships with likeminded people, is an incredible resource on the healing journey.

4. Significant steps towards a rewarding future career

Not everyone that does our Level 1 and 2 training courses does so with the intention of going on to become a practitioner. However, for those that do, it is one of the most rewarding careers you can imagine. Working with people to change their lives and to make a fundamental difference at their time of need is about as good as work can get. And, if you are not looking to become a full time practitioner, the tools you will learn are still invaluable for your own personal development, and are transferable to a multitude of different careers.

5. A great reduction in the number of one-on-one sessions required

Because of the ongoing monthly contact with the clinic team, the swapped sessions with other students practising the tools, and the opportunities to work with myself and the clinic team as we demonstrate techniques on the course, the number of one-on-one sessions is of course dramatically reduced.

The chances are at this point we have created a whole bunch of questions for you, so have a read through the following...

My recovery is the most important focus this year, what if I'm not able to focus completely on the course?

In response to having a number of patients attend the courses, we have actually changed the structure of the courses over recent years, so they can be completed over a two year period as opposed to the standard one year format. This effectively means that students attend the ten weekends comprising Levels 1 and 2 in year one, do some reading, and practice with friends and family between weekends (how much you do would be dictated by your current energy levels at that time). Then in year two, you can re-attend Levels 1 and 2 (at no additional charge), whilst also undertaking Level 3 (the clinical component of the course) if you wish to go on to become a practitioner.

This structure effectively means that year one is primarily about personal development, and year two more about learning to become a practitioner. This format works for several reasons. It means that in year one you can really focus on yourself, but it also means, that when it comes to year two, you really understand the material from your own point of view, and so are much more effective when working with others.

What if I start the course and I feel unable to complete it?

Many people have this concern, but the reality has actually been that delegates have consistently found that by learning the material on the courses, and applying it to themselves, their improvement has accelerated. We've actually had a number of patients (who you might have heard being interviewed on www.SecretsToRecovery.com) view the course as the key factor in their recovery. There is something quite extraordinary that happens when you immerse yourself in such powerful material with likeminded people over several years!

However, if for any reason you felt the course was doing anything but accelerating your own healing process, you would be allowed to defer your place to a future year, at no extra charge.

I'm concerned about having enough energy to last the weekends, should I not wait until I am almost fully recovered?

If you are concerned about being strong enough to do the course, please discuss with us in more detail. Having treated well over 3,000 people with M.E./C.F.S./Fibromyalgia, we have a great deal of experience helping patients decide when to "push" a little, and when to "hold back." And, having recently taken on our own dedicated training centre, we have designed it to be "M.E. friendly", benefiting from a fully equipped kitchen and a separate "quiet room" during the lunch breaks for those who might need to rest during this period.

It's also worth noting that both Alex and Anna undertook professional training in these fields during their recovery processes, both finding it to be a key factor in their eventual recoveries. Many of our assistants have also had M.E. themselves and they will also be there to support you in listening to your body and getting the most from the course.

I'm not sure I necessarily want to work as a practitioner, so is it still appropriate for me to do the course?

We very passionately believe that learning to master your own psychology is one of the most important things we can ever learn in life. The course has applications to virtually every area of life, from health and healing, to relationships and career, to finances and education. We have therefore structured our courses so that you can go up to Level 2, without having to decide if you still want to go to the advanced levels of practitionership (which is Level 3 where the written work and supervisions take place).

Do I have to have completed all of the Home Study Courses before starting Level 1?

No. The purpose of the Home Study Courses is to assist learning beyond the classroom, and having started some of the material before commencing the weekends can help, but we let students know before commencing training which parts it is helpful to have studied.

To get your final qualification it is of course necessary to have completed all of the Home Study Courses, but this can be done in a timescale that feels manageable for you.

What if I miss a weekend due to ill health or I have prior plans on one of the weekends?

All sessions of the training course are recorded to a very high quality. Recordings are then loaded into a private students' area of the clinic's website within a few days of the course, and you can catch up in your own time. And, because many patients of the clinic elect to do the course over two years, it means you can easily catch up the modules you miss the following year.

Do you offer any payment plans?

We have a limited number of scholarship places available which patients of the clinic can apply for. These equate to a 40% total discount on the courses, with the option to pay in instalments. To find out more, or to apply for a scholarship place, please e-mail

alex@TheOptimumHealthClinic.com

This truly is a unique opportunity which we are offering as a one off. If as you are reading this you are wondering if this might be the path forwards for you, please do e-mail me at alex@TheOptimumHealthClinic.com and we can arrange a time to chat through on the telephone.

You can also view the prospectus and read more about the courses at www.TheOptimumHealthClinic.com/training

Warm wishes,

Alex Howard.

P.S. Please accept my apologies if this all feels a bit overwhelming at this point, but we wanted to do all we can to make this as enticing as possible. These courses really do change lives.

Testimonials from previous students:

Lisa Morgan-Davies

It's funny that I have just been asked to write about my experience as I have just been doing a practice session with a friend (someone who also does the course) and she was just saying how hard it is to imagine where we were 2 years ago at the start of the course to where we are now. Our analogy was, 'it's like the distance from here to the moon!' We had just spent the last few hours doing therapy with each other so were in a pretty good space (no pun intended).

I decided to do the course as I had gained so much from the individual sessions with Anna, but was still far from being 'normal.' In fact I had gone from being more or less housebound with no work or social life to doing a few social things and spending more time outside the house, so I was quite apprehensive about whether I'd be able to do a weekend or not.

I decided to challenge my beliefs and thought I could use some of the basic techniques Anna had taught me whilst there. The first weekend I completed successfully, in fact I seemed physically to have more energy at the end of it as things were making sense to me. I must admit, the first weekend was a little tiring in terms of me trying to grasp the new information, but knowing that there was no pressure to take everything in, that I could repeat it if I missed it, and that there was the course information online helped loads.

It was so nice to be surrounded by people with M. E, who were more or less in the same situation as I was in, many not knowing if they could make it either. It was great that I could do whatever I wanted, take quiet time to myself or rest or be with the others. If someone had any big challenges come up, including myself on the second weekend, there were previous students there to help us get through any difficulty including Anna who was able to take me aside for half an hour during the lunch break.

Being on the course was different to any other learning environment I had experienced as, due to the nature of the course, we spent a lot of time being in different states such as calm, relaxed states and other beneficial states allowing plenty of 'down time.' There were many 'aha' moments and even after the first weekend there were many shifts taking place that hugely affected my life.

Being the therapist has been a real journey of not having a clue to building up many personal skills and qualities that make me who I am today. The course and tutors tend to guide and mould you into being more of yourself as a therapist rather than an NLP robot whilst providing the space for you to do that.

Now I am working part time as well as spending the other 'part of my time' starting my own business as a therapist. I am starting my supervisions in a few weeks time and cannot wait to start using this stuff officially. Oh, and you make a lot of friends doing this, both on the course and from the changes you'll start to see as you progress with your life outside of the course.

Emma Tierney

When I first began the practitioner course it was very shortly after I began my personal therapy sessions with Alex. I was experiencing the beginning stages of what was to become my recovery from years with M.E, but was still very ill at the time. Some weeks were extremely challenging due to factors such as being out of the house all day, being away from home and having to sit up and concentrate for longer periods of time than I was used to, however, knowing I was surrounded by people who understood what I was going through made this all much easier to handle. I was free to lie down whenever I needed to and there was no pressure in anyway shape or form. At the lunch breaks its not unusual to see people lying in 'the quiet room' or doing a meditation.

That first year was difficult due to still being quite unwell, and I ended up missing quite a lot of the weekends, but the great thing was, I was able to do the course again the following year (and the year after that!) with no extra cost.

I know I couldn't have physically coped with the demands of any other course, but the environment and understanding on the OHC practitioner course made it possible. Over the months on the course, it helped me re integrate back into society on a social level and also built my confidence in my ability to use my mind and stay out all day! By the end of my time on the course, I wasn't only managing to stay awake all day (a huge achievement in itself!) but also going out with friends on the evening after a full day studying!

I am now completing the final stages of level 3 and feel I have grown so much as a person since beginning the course a number of years ago. The tools and techniques I have learned over the past three years are invaluable as a therapist, but also will continue to be of huge value for my own personal growth.

Thea Anderson

Before I became ill I really wanted to train in Psychotherapy but could never find the time or money. Then I became too ill to work, let alone think about that so my dream got sadly put on hold. I had no idea that in going to see Anna as a patient that doors would also open again for me in this way.

Very quickly after I'd begun seeing Anna she asked if I might be interested in the Practitioner's course. And I was! But I had certain fears and doubts. The first was would I have enough energy to be able to travel to London and attend the weekends. My second, big fear was about being in learning environment again when it had been so long and the most I'd done in years was the odd evening class whilst feeling ill.

Fortunately, both of these fears were proved to be just that....fears in the end. I won't say that I wasn't nervous and sometimes felt tired/or had symptoms whilst I was there. But the course helped me hugely in so many ways. Firstly it enormously improved my confidence about what I was physically capable of doing because I made every single weekend except one because I went on holiday! Secondly, it tangibly aided my recovery. I learnt so many fantastic &

fascinating tools that I applied to myself along the way. And thirdly, I learnt about psychology and emotion in a way that not only gave me confidence in my own ability to learn again but also started my new career. Some things feel fated and this course did for me. I realised that I gained so much more out of this course than I would have done from the Psychotherapy training I was originally intending because of the practical tools I learnt.

The other side of the course was the people I met. I made lasting and supportive friendships with people on my wave length. I also found there was a great degree of support and encouragement from Alex, Anna and the other trainers. Unlike other training courses they really understand ME, so were understanding if I had a slightly wobbly day.

They were also really warm and encouraging around acting as the therapist for the first time with each other as clients. I was a little nervous about this at first but realised that everyone is at first and the point is to just have a go! And I did and started really enjoying myself.

Without doubt, the Practitioner's course positively contributed to my recovery, new career, friendships and life generally. I remember feeling so happy and excited every time I came home after a weekend from all that I'd learnt and experienced. I would recommend it to anyone who is even only a little interested in the subject matter and also wants to get better. My life would be very different now had I not followed my heart, despite my fears and gone for it.

Frances Goodall

"I thoroughly enjoyed the Practitioner training and found it really beneficial in terms of integrating back into the world after the journey ME took me on. It helped me develop my work as a Bowen Therapist and ultimately provided me with more tools to benefit others in my work. I feel this course would be great for anyone, in recovery from ME or just someone who wants to do a comprehensive and up to date therapy training course. I loved learning from Alex, Anna and the other tutors on the course. The course gave me the space to develop my role as a therapist while also working on some past issues that were still affecting me- one thing that amazed me was clearing a trauma that had been passed down from my ancestors in the 'time-line' work! Practically though, I noticed differences in my work and behaviour- I got more clients, I was more focused, and most importantly I was happier and more whole and integrated as a result of this training course. I also made some close friendships, which is always valuable. I would highly recommend this course to anyone."

Alexandra

After I had started doing some work with the psychology side of the clinic, I heard of the practitioner training course and was tempted to do the course because I was fascinated by the tools which I had been learning, and which had allowed me to make so much progress in a relatively short space of time. I was concerned that I might not have enough energy for the course, as my energy was still very limited at the time and what energy I did have was going into working part-time. The financial investment also worried me slightly as I

wasn't sure at the time how long it would take me to be able to get my health back fully.

I was soon reassured when I started the course, as although we learnt a lot over the first few weekends the atmosphere was very calm and supportive, which meant that it took a LOT less energy than being at work, or even spending time around friends. The tutors were obviously very used to creating a learning environment which is suitable for people still recovering from ME, and it was considered entirely normal to have a nap at lunch time. I found it invaluable learning more about the processes which the psychology department use with patients, as it allowed me to understand much more fully how to work with my own mental and emotional state to give myself the best chance to recover physically. Being surrounded by others who were also learning this material, and many of whom were also working on their own recovery, was also a very supportive experience, which helped me to stay positive when I was finding things difficult.

The material I learnt from the course helped me not only to recover physically, but also to view the experience of being ill as something from which I had learnt a lot, and also to integrate those insights into the new life which I started building as my health returned.