

# Want a Career in Holistic Healthcare?



## **Jobs & Income**

If you need an income as soon as you come out of your training, it is advisable not to take a program that requires you to start your own business of practice.

There are no schools that can guarantee you successful job placement or employment when you leave their program.

Every year, people graduate from traditional careers, such as law school, and can spend months or years, searching for a position. It is important for you

to ask yourself what is realistic to expect in terms of income. While you **can** develop a practice and following, it takes a lot of time, effort, experience and knowledge to create a successful practice. I recommend asking your massage therapist, acupuncturist, herbalist, Reiki practitioner, aroma therapist, life coach or hypnotist how easy it is to create a practice or earn a living in the holistic health field. Having honest, realistic feedback from those already working in the field is a great resource and can help enormously in career planning.

## **Be Passionate**

Choosing to enter this field requires that you understand this is more than just a career – this is also a calling and a vocation. The holistic health field is about Mind, Body and Spirit awareness, and it will ask this of you as well as your clients. Providing any form of health care, guidance or treatment comes with legal, ethical and even moral responsibilities. It is important for you to feel confident and secure in the quality of your education and training, so that you can provide the very best information or care to your clients.

## **Taking the Plunge**

Once you have clearly made the decision to move ahead and commit yourself to the field, you need to have a plan to identify the program or training that is best for you. One of the key approaches in starting your search is to flesh out what specifically you want to focus your training on. The more specific your interest, the easier it will be to find the

right program to fit your needs and goals.

For instance, if you are looking to train as a homeopath, do you want a program in traditional, constitutional or general homeopathic care? You also want to discern what kind of education or training will best suit your lifestyle, time commitments, family obligations, current budget or job schedule. Do you want only a college degree program, a focused certification program, or a skills training? Do you want strictly in-person classes, or a distance-learning program that is flexible and allows you to work at your own pace? Or, maybe you would prefer a program that offers a combination of these ways of learning?

The more specific you are about what you want to do with your training after you complete the program, or why you want to re-train, the clearer you will be about which program will suit your needs and goals.

## **Be Aware**

Below are suggestions and questions relating to the school, program, organization, course work or training you are considering you should consider when evaluating the quality of the many programs you will find offered around the country.

Many states do not require educational programs, other than degree-granting schools, to be licensed by their state Department of Education or regulated by an oversight organization. In many states holistic health training schools are classified as businesses and do not come

with the imprimatur of oversight regulation, which can present varied concerns for the consumer. By the same token, many degree-granting schools offer programs without being licensed. An unlicensed school or program, which is not approved by a national oversight organization, can mean that the school or program may not be meeting the educational standards in their training programs.

It can also mean:

- 1) You may not be able to receive a refund if you withdraw.
- 2) You can lose your money should they close or fail.
- 3) The training you have received may have little value in the job market or in working in the HH field.

The following questions identify important areas to examine or investigate when you consider purchasing a training or educational program for a career in holistic health.

Are they licensed by their state Department of Education or are they accredited by a national organization recognized as an expert in the field of study they offer? Is their license or accreditation on display or available for your review?

Unlike degree granting institutions, career-training programs are not required to have accreditation, but may be required to be licensed by the Department of Education in the state in which they reside. If they are not licensed by the Department of Education, are they approved or endorsed by a nationally recognized organization that is a regulating or overseeing

body for that particular specialty?

A certification program or “degree program” can deflect from the fact that they are not licensed or well credentialed by purchasing an “accreditation” from a fee-for-membership organization. These organizations have no credibility other than the assumed credibility they attempt to imply. Organizations that would offer such a “credential” should be looked at carefully. The danger to you is that these “pseudo-credentialed” programs are not accountable to an oversight organization and this can be a real problem that can, on many levels, “come back to bite you”.

Also, unless a school or program’s core faculty have been approved or licensed to teach their specific course, by the state Department of Education or a nationally recognized organization, you have no confirmation that they have authentic credentials or experience in that field of study or practice. Unless an oversight organization or Department of Education can guarantee that the teacher has been evaluated, there is no way for you to know if the information you are being given meets the standards for that discipline or practice.

Lastly, credible schools or training programs are bonded or demonstrate appropriate fiscal soundness. You may wish to ask if the school or program you are interested in is bonded – to guarantee the safety and security of their students’ tuition payments in the event of a shortfall or bankruptcy.

2. Is the organization approved for Sallie Mae or other government career training

student financing?

If the program you are looking into cannot offer career training loans to finance your education or training, you may want to re-think investing your money with a school or program that is not approved in this very important way. If your only option is to pay out of pocket, and there is no oversight organization regulating the financial relationship you have with this organization, you could discover you have little or no recourse if you want a refund.

Also, what is the organization's refund policy? A critical requirement for all legitimate educational or training organizations is – what are the specifics of their refund policy? And is it clearly stated on their printed materials, registration forms, and/or website? Unless you have a guaranteed statement of their refund policy, and have been given either a contract or written guarantee that you could use to facilitate the return of your funds, you could find you have no recourse in getting your tuition payments refunded should you leave the program.

3. What organizations or agencies have endorsed or have a professional relationship with the program you are considering enrolling in, and what is the validity of their stated accreditation?

What other educational organizations or health care institutions endorse or have a professional relationship with the program you are considering? Does the massage program you are considering have a clinical relationship with a near by community hospital or health

care facility?

Ask a professional in the field you are considering about the reputation of the endorsing organizations or better yet, learn how to cross search the Web and get as many facts as you can about the program's affiliations.

Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is! Throughout this entire process, continue to ask yourself, "Would I seek and purchase advice, health care, or treatment from an individual whose training or education is limited to the program I am considering?"

*Georgianna Donadio D.C., M.Sc., Ph.D., has conducted a private practice in Whole Person Health Care since 1976. She is the Founder and Director of The National Institute of Whole Health, the pioneer of Whole Health Education and a provider of patient and healthcare professional education since 1977. For more information, visit [www.niwh.org](http://www.niwh.org) or call 1-888-354-HEAL (4325).*