

Working together to provide team-based health care

Dr. Natasha Montroy, ND
(Class of 2004), on the roots
of collaborative care
on Canada's west coast





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Canada’s west coast

The images and sounds of majestic, snow-capped mountains and the mighty crash of ocean waves on the rugged shore are captivating and inspiring for countless people who plant their roots out west. Farms, parks, and all sorts of year-round sporting activities makes it simple to live a healthier lifestyle.

For Dr. Natasha Montroy, ND, practising naturopathic medicine comes easily in this environment. She and her team of 10 health-care professionals work together to look after their patient’s health needs. Her practice, Vancouver Island Naturopathic Clinic in Victoria, BC, is an example of a successful, multidisciplinary clinic in which health care is truly collaborative.

“I measure success by a happy and healthy work environment,” she says. “In some naturopathic community, there may be a sense of competition between practitioners. I don’t feel as though that exists in Victoria.”

The gift of health care

After graduating from CCM in 2004, she returned to Victoria and began seeing patients while taking care of her young children. When she hired the ND who covered her maternity leave to a permanent position, Natasha promptly searched for a bigger space to accommodate her team’s burgeoning practice.

“Within a couple of years, we relocated to a clinic we designed in a local shopping centre and added more practitioners,” she explains. “Integrative health care is our primary goal and it was a group decision to incorporate counseling, registered massage therapy and acupuncture.”

Natasha’s own path to naturopathic medicine was stirred by her mother and grandmother, who ingrained the concepts of preventative health and food as medicine from an early age.

In Thunder Bay – where Natasha grew up before moving to Victoria at the age of 13 – the three would drive to a farm every Sunday on the city’s outskirts and purchase meat, dairy, and vegetables for the week. Then they would complete their trip at the local spring where they obtained fresh water.

Not surprisingly, her individual practice centres on women’s, pediatric and reproductive health, viewing them as one. “Ground zero” of a healthy society starts with a healthy mother, Natasha believes.

“As a child I didn’t understand fully the gift I was given. My family was ahead of our time,” she says.

Media know-how

Viewers of Breakfast Television in Victoria have seen Natasha on the program many times, discussing a variety of health topics and the benefits of naturopathic care. She has also been featured in Best Health magazine, CBC radio, Shaw Daily, Saanich News, and is a regular guest on CFAX, a local radio station. Additionally, she is a guest lecturer for the UBC Island Medical Program, presenting on naturopathic medicine and integrated health care.

Natasha fully embraces her role of community educator, eagerly spreading the message about naturopathic medicine. She first became familiar with speaking to the media at 18 when she worked for a local parks department as a lifeguard.



L-R: Dr. Shalini Hitkari, ND, Dr. Natasha Montroy, ND, and Dr. Jasmine Wong, ND. All three are practitioners at Vancouver Island Naturopathic Clinic.

“Part of our job involved public education so I often gave TV and radio interviews on water and sun safety. I quickly realized I was able to reach a large amount of people this way,” she recalls.

Now, thanks to her regular appearances on TV and radio, she receives new patients and ensures that the practitioners in her clinic stay continuously busy.

“Media really allows for people to get the opportunity to meet you in the safety of their own home,” she says. “TV and radio are very effective methods of reaching a broad audience who may not be exposed to naturopathic medicine otherwise.”

The importance of learning from others

Natasha’s commitment to creating a collaborative environment extends beyond her colleagues. She provides highly sought-after externship opportunities for CCNM students, confident that the best learning stems from hands-on experiences with patients and mentorship from teachers.

“I remember being a student and the things I was exposed to,” she says. “We have so many seasoned practitioners with varied practice focuses. Even now I complete externships two-four times a year with MDs. There is still so much to learn.”

Her advice – for both new grads and NDs who have been practicing for a longer time – is to gain experience and wisdom by pursuing residencies or locum opportunities, or joining a team of seasoned practitioners for a few years. Don’t pass up the chance to learn from others – collaboration is essential to success. *

Learn more about Vancouver Island Naturopathic Clinic at:
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