

Finding The Acupuncture Community

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After you graduate from acupuncture school, you may find yourself suddenly alone in your new office with no acupuncture colleagues around. Where you were once among 20-30 other acupuncture students with instant community, you may have to start from scratch. Perhaps you've moved to a new town where you're the only acupuncture for miles and miles. Perhaps you're one of hundreds of acupuncturists in the city you're in.

Who do you turn to for advice on anything from where to order supplies to how to treat a difficult case? Even though you put a lot of useful information into your brain during the years you were in acupuncture school, it's OK to consult with your colleagues on cases once you are out of school. But where do you find them?

Face-to-face

Maybe you do know a few colleagues who live in the area where you've started your practice. Invite some of them out to tea or dinner. Perhaps it's just a social get together, but it might also be a chance to discuss the ins and outs of your acupuncture practice. Some of you may want to give more formal presentations on certain subjects or case studies.

Don't know any acupuncturists in your town? Go to meetup.com and type in acupuncture and your zip code to find "meetups" with other acupuncturists and alternative healthcare practitioners near you. These can be great for both social and networking purposes. Another place to meet other healers is by volunteering your acupuncture services for non-profit organizations. I volunteer at a clinic for women with cancer once a month where I get the chance to work alongside a variety of acupuncturists, massage therapists, Western herbalists, and Feldenkrais practitioners.

We all have to go to Continuing Education classes and conferences to keep our licenses current. If you take classes on subjects that really interest you, you're bound to meet likeminded healers.

From afar you can also begin to build a global community. If you have trusted colleagues or mentors who are no longer nearby, remember that they are just a phone call, email or video chat away. Technology has made it so that we can easily connect with people as nearby as where we live, to those who are clear across the world.

Get Online

Facebook and Google + have discussion forums of some kind whether they're called "groups" or "circles." I have been amazed at how fast I get answers to questions on the "Acupuncturists on Facebook" group, which has nearly 2,300 members. I found a referral for an acupuncturist in another city once in under a half hour there and got suggestions for good brands of smokeless moxa even faster. People also list Continuing Education classes and lectures that they like on this group, which may help you to sort through the constant barrage of course advertisements we get.

A few months ago, I spent the time looking for other acupuncturists on Google + and created my

own circle of acupuncturists there, which is small but growing with just over 300 people on it. I have been added to an "alternative health care" circle as well. Acupuncturists and other healers post links to articles and videos on various social media that we can in turn share with other people, including our current and prospective patients.

Here's an example of how networking on Google + has worked for me: George Monkhouse, an acupuncturist in London who I've never met, responded to one of my posts. He let me know about another online forum for acupuncturists that I hadn't even considered: LinkedIn. I've been on LinkedIn for years but never knew about the discussion group resource. A few of the acupuncturist groups on LinkedIn have between 1,100 & 3,100 members.

There are also some very active mailing lists out there like the Chinese Herb Academy Yahoo group with over 2,000 members. This group also offers an Online Practitioner Directory that herbalists can join for a fee. The Traditional Chinese Medicine Yahoo group has over 1,900 members on it.

These are just some ideas of where to look for other acupuncturists to help you find community. If you are the only acupuncturist in the town where you live, you can also expand your search to other alternative health care practitioners, including massage therapists, chiropractors, physical therapists, doulas, etc. They may have similar insights for issues that come up.

You don't have to know everything about Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine. Really. Nobody does. Finding community is important, both socially and professionally. As acupuncturists, we may have to make an effort to find other acupuncturists and alternative healers in the areas where we live and in the virtual world. Explore your local and online communities and I'm sure you'll find the effort is worth your while.

Useful Links:

[Acupuncturists on facebook group](#)

[Chinese Herb Academy](#)

[Traditional Chinese Medicine yahoo group](#)

[Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Practitioners on LinkedIn](#)

[George Monkhouse](#)

[Find me on Google + and I'll add you to my Acupuncturist Circle](#)

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