Power of mentoring

In 2020 we launched the iO mentoring platform to provide a space to help achieve professional support networks. We speak with four mentees, Joss Barratt, Zoë Clark, Emily Coombes and Benjamin East, who have used mentors to help navigate their careers and transform their practice.

Zoë Clark

I would definitely recommend the mentoring platform to a colleague. It was a really supportive process and very beneficial.

My mentor helped me look at career development, clarifying my future career goals and how I could personally and professionally develop in order to pursue the opportunities I wanted to. During the process I followed a clear, focused plan to develop my personal and professional skills which led to successfully securing a job which enables me to help more people in an area I’m passionate about.

Relaxed and easy to follow, I received a lot of information and advice, but in a way that empowered me to make changes and follow next steps. My mentor was very approachable, supportive and encouraging.

Mentoring has actually scaled back my practice! I now split my time between clinic and an employed non-clinical role for a charity. The balance is a great fit for me personally, allowing me to help more people with a health condition that I have myself. It’s very rewarding work, which is aided by my osteopathic skills.

Benjamin East

I was mentored when applying for a role as an osteopath in the NHS. Having someone with NHS experience was invaluable in helping me develop the appropriate skills and navigate the recruitment process. As a recently qualified osteopath, being able to receive support from an experienced colleague was beneficial and I would recommend it to all osteopaths exploring the platform.

As well as supporting me through the recruitment process, mentoring helped highlight areas of personal development in relevant areas, which has led me to enroll on an NHS Leadership programme. I also got offered the role within the NHS!

Being able to learn from experienced colleagues, especially as a recently-qualified graduate, can really help spotlight areas of personal and professional development and guide your learning.
Before starting the mentoring process, I was renting a room in a GP surgery – feeling very lonely, and out of love with osteopathy. Being told to leave in March 2020 (due to COVID) left me feeling like my career was over. Through reaching out to my mentor I realised all I needed was the courage to set up a practice, and see that it was within the realms of possibility. Now it has happened, and my patients love my new premises, as do I. I have created a multidisciplinary surgery, where there are now two osteopaths, two podiatrists and an acupuncturist!

The mentoring platform helped my career progression. Through the initial COVID-19 lockdown I had to leave the surgery where I was working. My mentor helped me get all the things in place that are needed for running my own clinic, for example ensuring I understood and had copies of safeguarding policies, and upskill on my use of technology. They were also there with encouraging words, a listening ear and invaluable top-quality advice - it was nice not being judged for feeling lost and unsure despite at the time being qualified for 10 years.

An unexpected outcome is that I feel less alone – this job which I love can be lonely at times. Often, we work alone and only touch base with colleagues on CPD courses. Mentoring will give you a big step up and it was good to have someone to speak to (other than patients) to help with isolation. It also gave me a big boost in confidence and energy levels.

I came into the mentoring process after reading a statistic that babies who receive osteopathic care get discharged five days earlier from intensive care units (on average). This triggered my interest in learning more about this topic and paediatrics in general. After reading about the mentoring process in Osteopathy Today I decided to sign up.

I started with questions including things I wanted to explore and was also sent a SWOT questionnaire by my mentor (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) to help identify how to get the most out of mentoring.

Over two and half months and three calls, I was signposted lots of useful resources and information so that I could take action on the areas that I wanted to get into. My mentor was able to signpost me to the IO Business Handbook which includes lots of information on how to set up a clinic and what you need to address to get started. On a personal level it helped introduce me to professional contacts including the National Council for Osteopathic Research (NCOR) and the Osteopathic Centre for Children.

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