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What started your pathway in naturopathic medicine?

My path was a natural progression rooted in an affinity for natural therapeutics, lifestyle optimization, and self-care. Having already established myself as a licensed massage therapist and a licensed acupuncturist, pursuing naturopathic medicine was the logical next step. It allowed me to bridge my hands-on clinical experience with a deeper, comprehensive framework for health.

Meeting my naturopathic doctor was a pivotal moment. The visit resonated deeply with me, and I knew almost immediately that this was the path I wanted to pursue. That experience helped crystallize my decision to transition into naturopathic medicine.

What skills or experiences have been most valuable in your professional growth - and what advice would you give to early-career doctors?

The most valuable skill I've developed is adaptability. The healthcare landscape is constantly evolving, and success often requires the flexibility to navigate different roles and systems.

My advice to early-career doctors is to remain true to your core values while trusting the process. Practice positive self-talk and maintain an optimistic outlook, even when the path isn't linear. Look for the opportunities hidden within challenging situations; often, those moments of friction are where you find the most significant room for growth.

What do you like most about being a naturopathic doctor and what are some of your challenges?

What I value most is the 'ND lens'—the philosophy never changes, regardless of the setting or



role. Currently, I serve within the VA strictly in the role and scope of an acupuncturist. While it is a challenge to work in an environment where I cannot utilize my full ND scope of practice, it does not change how I perceive the patient in front of me. The primary challenge is navigating those systemic boundaries, but the reward is found in maintaining a holistic view of the person in front of me.

What makes your membership with AANP valuable as a naturopathic doctor?

AANP membership is vital for the continued advocacy and the effort to expand our scope of practice. In settings like the VA, we see firsthand how much our veterans could benefit from the full spectrum of naturopathic care. Supporting the AANP helps ensure we are moving toward a future where our skills are fully recognized and integrated into the wider healthcare system.

How do you maintain balance between work and personal life?

Being that I've always needed to maintain an extremely busy schedule, my strategy is to 'sprinkle' joy and self-care throughout the day. Rather than waiting for a big block of time or a major commitment, I find small increments of restoration. The key is to make these moments a non-negotiable part of the daily flow and routine. Locking into that consistency allows me to show up fully for my patients while maintaining my own well-being.

What do you think is important for the naturopathic profession to take note of?

We need to highlight how our multimodal approach addresses the numerous aspects of the chronic pain experience. This isn't just about physical symptoms; it's about health and well-being on multiple levels. Naturopathic medicine's emphasis on active strategies and patient self-efficacy can make significant contributions to the wider healthcare system, providing sustainable solutions for complex conditions.

7. Anything else we've missed that is important?

I want to emphasize the importance of optimism and trusting the process. Even when navigating challenging roles or limited scopes, there is always an opportunity to provide high-level care. If we stay true to ourselves and look for the potential in every situation, the 'ND lens' remains a powerful tool in any healthcare setting.