

# Creating Exciting Opportunities in your Post-Covid Practice

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As the title suggests, I am offering advice on how to move ahead once we are out of this crisis. While we are sat at home, with time on our hands, and possibly struggling with the creeping inertia that follows being inactive from reflexology work, it is worthwhile to reflect on what we can do and prepare accordingly.

We can all agree that life will never be the same after this, but it is essential that we do not lose the momentum that this new reality will allow us to build. We must move past the old-style human condition of slipping back into believing things will be OK once we return to the same lifestyle. We also need to ask ourselves what kind of normal we would be in a rush to get back to. Consequently, this is an excellent opportunity to reinvent ourselves both personally and collectively.

There have been numerous opportunities for change before but never at such a collective level. All aspects of our lives are potentially up for re-evaluation and our role as reflexologists within our communities has never been more in need of redefinition than now. The vast majority of us (as therapists) are in the same financial position as self-employed practitioners, but one thing I have learned, even before this emergency, is that worrying does not change the situation.

This new reality has forced us all to reassess what is important, and I mean really important to life. Looking at the fundamentals, this whole crisis has been about survival: it has been focusing on life and death. Now is not the time to be talking to our patients and clients about the need for seeing things past this reality. I know of a couple of colleagues who have tried to push the message that, if we change our reality, the virus will no longer exist. This is at a time when thousands of families are grieving. Now is not the time for that message – not just yet.

However, it is definitely the time to plan how we can further spread the word about how amazing reflexology is - about how it can help not only the immune system but act in a preventative way against disease. Now is the time to communicate that message. Indeed, communication at all levels has become the watchword as we are confronted with social distancing - we are being asked to examine our separateness in a stark way and to craft a different way of interacting with each other.

As part of that plan we are possibly spring cleaning our houses and gardens. Why not sort out our clinic environment, especially if working from home? We can sort out the irrelevance and reinvent ourselves that way. Clearing out the old will lead to a massive influx of new and vibrant energy to enthuse us as we move ahead into this new life.

Therapists are using social media and the internet to keep in touch, and I know that, personally, my global network has increased vastly in the last few weeks by making connections with more reflexologists and other therapists in the same situation all over the world.

Looking past the Covid crisis, the aim for me certainly (and I'm sure for you too) would be to look past Facebook and Instagram, and start to make some real links within the community. People's behaviour has changed to the point where every interaction has a more powerful significance but we can use that to positive effect.

Here are just a few ideas to stimulate your imagination in a productive way as we redefine how we interact with each other and maintain our strong focus on good health.

- ✚ Never has there been more need for an integrated health service, regardless of the country you are in. We should now be considering which GPs and health experts we will be targeting when the storm has passed. Seek out the open-minded clinicians and start building connections. You can get that list underway now.
- ✚ Think about building your clinic around a certain specialty. You can offer services around supporting back clinics, rheumatology clinics and other orthodox treatments. Again, get your list together and put the argument for change and closer cooperation. The health services, even in the most developed nations, are being stretched to breaking point and there needs to be a campaign for a realignment of resources and for recognition alongside other medical services.
- ✚ In your promotional work, obviously you need to be aware of the need not to claim cure (which is actually illegal in most countries) but you can promote the idea of helping to strengthen the body in times of crisis so that it is better prepared. The public will have a stronger fascination on how their immune systems work following this outbreak and want to know about ways to prevent it happening again.
- ✚ Remember to do small things well. Working within your local community at a time when it is rebuilding may mean that you offer treatments or sessions for supermarket staff or hospital cleaners, possibly at a reduced rate. Your altruism at this stage will have longer-lasting business benefits.
- ✚ Offering reduced treatments or even free taster sessions will definitely be a way forward as people ponder over both their finances and their health, realizing that one has been more important than the other possibly!
- ✚ Once you are up and running again, think about conducting small-scale research projects, which may be entirely anecdotally-based or through testimonials. Get your questionnaires and study forms prepared now. If you have a website, you now have time to update it and to start putting past case studies on to it to demonstrate how effective reflexology is.
- ✚ The media has been heavily involved in disseminating information (most of it accurate) so why not contact them to discuss the positive stories about your reflex work and to promote the therapy in general. Contact the papers, radio and TV: they will all be keen to have a different angle on the Post-Covid worldview. I know this, with certainty, from my years of experience as a journalist.
- ✚ Don't be bashful about 'bigging up' our amazing therapy. It has *already* found a new position within healthcare and it is up to us to push to the front and claim the limelight. Everyone now recognizes the importance of looking after ourselves and those we care most about. There is even a re-ignited solidarity for caring for those we don't know. We have to 'go for it' and stick our necks out – take a risk on something that we love doing rather than hide it away, believing it is not as good as orthodox medicine. Everything has its place, regardless of whether you see our role as complementary, alternative or integrated. We are entering a new age of cooperation and we must not allow ourselves to be knocked back.
- ✚ Remember that we will be working with people's mental and emotional welfare. They will have been asked to let go of so much and to alter the dreams that they had. Faith and not hope is the key. We will get through this together. You can direct your publicity to highlight the calming effect of reflexology while not reminding them of the chaos they have been through. Phrase your words to show that there is a way forward.

✚ If members of your community have lost their jobs, or their re-evaluation has led to think about another career then – guess what – get them to train as a therapist! There are plenty of excellent schools out there,

We have had it demonstrated to us quite blatantly there is no real security in our lives. Equally it has been shown that there are few things that really matter other than health. We are definitely in the right profession!

The world will be re-assembling soon and trying to analyse and scrutinize what happened, and what we can do to ensure it doesn't happen again. Lives will attempt to rebuild and grieving will eventually give way to reminiscing. In the meantime, people will be looking for direction. We can play our part in creating that direction with our positive viewpoint on people taking responsibility for their own health - with our help. If we all come together our voices will be louder, whether at a local community level or even on the political stage.

The underlying human spirit will shine through after all of this chaos has subsided. We will pick ourselves up and carry on. However, we must learn valuable lessons from it and not return to the pre-Covid days. As therapists we can lead the way through our promotion work to ensure that the public place more importance on their health and the prevention of disease.

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