



# Creating Healing Relationships *via* Ongoing Professional Development and Outreach

Dorothea Hover-Kramer, Ed.D., RN, D.CEP

**M**ost of us, who have a private practice of energy therapy, tend to think of meeting our clients' needs first, and then, as we experience deeper insights, we come to realize that all healing comes from within both client and practitioner. A third, and sometimes less well-understood, part of the healing triangle is that of ongoing commitment to personal and professional development and of building connections with our wider communities.

As practitioners, we can facilitate another person's access to their healing path through our essential personal work of self-awareness, meditation, centering, and grounding. But, unless we, as practitioners, can reach the greater public in a professional and ethical way, we cannot establish or maintain other people's access to our healing gifts. In simple terms, we must reach out to be "found."

Completion of a program in energy medicine with a recognized standard curriculum is the beginning step to those of you who wish to develop public recognition as a professional. In addition, certification entitles you to the respect and trust that communities around the world are placing in the practices of energy medicine. We might say those are big shoes to fill because our founders, instructors, and peers have already led the way in building name-recognition. To fulfill those high expectations, ever-increasing inner wisdom and insight is required from you.

It is an ongoing and, in my experience, a lifelong commitment to resonate fully with what it means to be an effective energy medicine practitioner. First off, recognize that your healing path is one of persistent learning for your whole life. The good news from this is that life becomes an unending adventure. You will never stagnate or lose your creative spark. Better yet, you can continue to be nurtured and inspired by the work of other energy therapy colleagues and leaders. Joining energy medicine professional organizations like the Healing Touch Professional Association (HTPA) and the Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology (ACEP) is part of being a professional and a win/win commitment to stay informed about your profession while at the same time receiving support for your continued growth.

Another step in your professional development is to set out with the intention of learning as much as possible from each of your clients' needs. No one expects you to know everything or to be the only source of information for your clients. Seeking out other professionals and developing your own, trusted network of referral sources is an essential and highly ethical step. Of course, you want to ensure that clients with physical issues have adequate medical care and that clients with severe emotional burdens have counseling help. Knowing what you do not know is essential because it invites you to quest. I have also found the imperative to network on behalf of my clients brings about surprising, deepening friendships with colleagues from other disciplines.



In addition, dedication to meet your own personal needs requires your full participation. From an energetic point of view, we cannot hide from our clients who we are or the information that registers in our energy fields. Developing trusted relationships with people who can nurture the growth of your “inner advisor,” whether they are close friends or professionals, allows you to develop a deepening sense of integrity. This inner compass can help you to distinguish when you are in sync with your skills and talents and

readers, the people who read the local newspaper, or my regional network of professionals? My answer would be—All of the above!

The guiding ethical principle for me in my work and writings is to *create healing, right, appropriate relationships with first myself through personal development; with my clients through practice skills; and with my community through intentional and focused outreach. Connecting with my community requires me to treat*

## Every contact you make in your daily life is potentially with a person in need or someone who knows a person in need.

when things go a bit awry or you step into a situation that brings uneasiness.

Every contact you make in your daily life is potentially with a person in need or someone who knows a person in need. Thus, who you are and what you say about your chosen practice of energy medicine can open doors to expanding your work and creating connections that may result in many, and often unexpected, positive outcomes over time. The dynamic of community relationships is, of course, that they are constantly growing and changing as your contacts and interests broaden. What needs to remain steady is your intentional and open-hearted willingness to nurture new affiliations. In other words, “*Bloom where you are planted.*”

There is responsibility for all of us practitioners to honor the trust placed in energy modalities by presenting ourselves, our backgrounds, and practices clearly and without misleading or excessive claims. Everything you write, say or put on the Internet is a form of contact with the public and with your community. You may want to ask, who is my community? Is it my friends, or neighborhood, my group that focuses on one or more special interests, my website or blog

*my colleagues and professionals from other disciplines with respect and to educate them and the general public about my specific skills along with the theoretical and research basis of the work.*

This builds the foundation for a healthy and healing relationship with all the significant others in ever-expanding networks. Our definition of informed consent, then, must also extend to this broader understanding. Informed consent is not only concerned with telling clients about the benefits and risks of an energy therapy session and recognizing their right to choose their level of participation; informed consent with the greater public is about accurately presenting the tenets of energy practice, sharing our remarkable stories, and answering questions, even challenges, with objectivity and finesse.

With this in mind, I wish to offer the following ideas as foundations for building your own standards and goals for creating positive and intentional HT community outreach:

- **Actively seek out** learning opportunities



- **Take responsibility** to define your energy healing practice with brochures, fliers, website information, etc., to other professionals and the public
- **Offer to donate** time and energy to increase public awareness as a form of giving back, spreading the good news
- **Encourage open exchanges** of ideas by participating in meaningful community activities
- **Consider developing a community network** like a local HTPA Chapter or joining one that exists
- **Participate in public forums** on relevant topics such as healthcare and needs of specific age groups
- **Become a known and reliable resource** for information about complementary modalities and their place in healthcare
- **Respond to inquiries** about other professionals in an objective fashion and refrain from making disparaging remarks
- **Discuss differences of opinion** regarding someone's conduct in private, as directly as possible, or, if that is not possible, seek established pathways for arbitration, mediation, and intervention
- **Educate the public about criteria for selecting an energy-oriented practitioner** such as knowing their educational preparation level, specific experience and skills, willingness to refer, knowing limits and scope of practice, personal style, and effective outcomes.

While some of these concepts may seem too far-reaching at first, the good news is that time is on your side. As you reach out to your community with open

mind and heart, you will find “key people,” often natural leaders, who can align with you and other like-minded people. You may find some who can serve as mentors or consultants with whom you build trust relationships to ask your important questions.

The starting place for any outreach is, as always, to nurture the gift of your presence from within. Then, in your quiet times, ask how you can best serve in the community of your choice. As ideas come or resonant information pops up, respond and learn more.

As the gospels teach, do not hide your light under a bushel. Instead, let your light shine! 