



“Follow your passion and your work will be fulfilling. Don’t be afraid to start!”



NAME: Kirsty Baxter

WEBSITE:
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QUALIFICATIONS: MSc (Advanced Nutrition), DipION, BA (FA), AFMCP.

TRAINING: Institute for Optimum Nutrition and throughout NCA accredited by London South Bank University.

How long did it take for you to qualify?

Science Access course one year, three years for the DipION, and three years for the MSc (Advanced Nutrition).

What stands out for you about your training?

I think a profound part of the DipION course was clinical practice, role-playing with classmates and then seeing actual clients, as this provided a solid foundation with which to start practising with more confidence.

Reflection during the interviewing of participants in the research study of my phenomenological-oriented dissertation

was a game-changer for me in terms of making me become a better practitioner, by being empathic and in tune with my clients' experiences. As well as what my dad said to me in my teens: "There is no substitute for experience".

How long have you been in practice?

Nearly eight years.

Where do you practise?

Zimbabwe and online into the UK, South Africa, Zambia, and Mozambique.

What's your main therapy/modality?

Metabolism and IBS/Food Sensitivity Testing. When I started practising, I soon realised that the number of people living with overweight or obesity was growing at an alarming pace and that nutrition could play a vital role in reducing co-morbidities related to excess bodyweight. Gut issues were so prevalent in so many of my initial weight-loss clients that I undertook further training in this area to support the demand.

Why did you decide to become a practitioner?

Moving from South Africa to Zimbabwe when I married a Zimbabwean, I needed to find a new career, as I had worked in the corporate world for nearly 12 years, and no opportunities existed for me in my new home. After living in Zimbabwe for four years I needed to find a new career to fulfill my new life.

I looked to my passion as a potential opportunity. I was a big fan of Patrick Holford, owned over a dozen of his books, and had always been passionate about my own health and fitness. There was only one dietician in Harare, where I lived, and I realised this could be a gap for me to pursue. As a founding member of the institute of Optimum Nutrition (ION) Patrick's work inspired me to reach out to see if I could study online with ION, and the rest is history.

Who or what has been the main influence/inspiration on your practice?

There have been various inspiring books and people along my journey, from an ION clinical practice lecturer and later an MSc supervisor Maggie Thorpe, to Mark Hyman and various influential metabolic specialists like Dr Robert Lufkin (<https://www.robertlufkinmd.com>), Dr David Unwin, and my MSc lecturers/supervisors Jane Nodder and Paula Seth, who is also a homeopath.

What conditions or types of clients do you see most?

Metabolic conditions are the majority of clients, with 60% of my business referrals from doctors, GPs, physicians for diabetes, insulin resistance, PCOS (polycystic ovary syndrome), metabolic syndrome, cholesterol and weight loss. Gut dysbiosis/IBS and FST testing are rapidly growing areas. I am booked up at least four weeks in advance, which is fulfilling.