



## NCCAOM Diplomate Spotlight: Andrea White



Andrea Tarka White, L.Ac., has been in practice for 10 years and is the owner and lead practitioner of Pintuition, located in Havertown, PA. After receiving her Master of Science degree in acupuncture from Pacific College of Oriental Medicine, White studied at Beijing University of Chinese Medicine, with clinical rotations at He Ping Li Hospital, Mei Tan Hospital and Tian Tan Hospital in Beijing, China. White works at Mirmont Treatment Center, an inpatient drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility in Lima, PA, where she provides daily acupuncture treatments for members of the detox community going through acute withdrawal.

**1. It is wonderful that you are an NCCAOM National Board-Certified Acupuncturist at Mirmont Treatment Center. How were you able to obtain your position at the Mirmont Treatment Center as an acupuncturist?**

When I was going to acupuncture school, I had an externship treating people going through acute withdrawal from drugs and alcohol and it was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. When I first began my private practice I was inspired to create a program of my own.

I learned about Mirmont Treatment Center through family and friends, and drafted a business proposal including a summary of how acupuncture could help the facility, the benefits and costs of implementing a program there, and a possible timetable for how and when to start.

Three months after I submitted my proposal I was able to get a meeting with the President and then offered a free demonstration and information session for him and the rest of the staff. Everyone fell in love with the idea of adding acupuncture, so we started right away.

**2. How do you see your role as an NCCAOM National Board-Certified Acupuncturist at Mirmont Treatment Center, a local drug and alcohol facility, treating those with acute withdrawal from drugs and alcohol?**

My colleagues really appreciate what I do because they know our clients are much more receptive to traditional treatment after receiving acupuncture. And when our clients are less stressed, we as clinicians are less stressed. Acupuncture plays an important part in our treatment protocol and is one of the things that sets us apart as a facility.



At the same time, I believe my services are underutilized due to budgeting constraints. It would be helpful if our clients could receive acupuncture for their entire time at the facility (30 days instead of 3-5 days.)

**3. How were you initially attracted to the field of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine?**

Like many of us, I had a lot of health issues that were not responding to traditional Western medical treatments. I was experiencing pain, mental and emotional distress, and felt powerless and alone in trying to find answers. I received a treatment at a nearby acupuncture school and felt like I was seen and heard for the first time. I was diagnosed with a broken heart, which I thought was the most poetic thing I had ever heard, and after that I couldn't get enough. I was better in about 3 weeks and so I decided to take a class to see if I was really interested. The answer was yes and I've been hooked ever since.

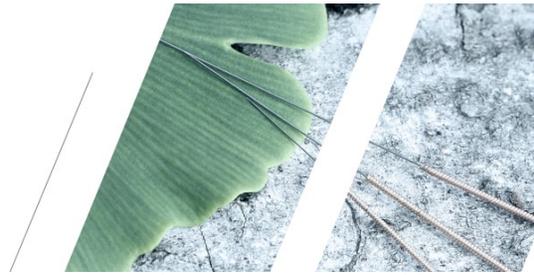
**4. Would you recommend working or volunteering as an acupuncturist to help treat those with acute withdrawal from drugs and alcohol?**

I would recommend it if: you are a person who has had exposure to addiction either personally or through a friend or family member, you have a lot of love to give and love being in service to others, you have respect for other people's experience and believe in something greater than all of us.

It's hard to work with people going through acute withdrawal because they are in a lot of pain, they are anxious and scared, and they typically act out because they feel like their lives are in danger. It takes a lot of patience and humility to be ignored, fought with, and disrespected. But I also find it's the most rewarding work because it is a truly courageous act to get clean and sober. Most of the people I treat have survived traumatic events that I can't even imagine. And I have the utmost respect for anyone trying to figure out a way to live after having had those experiences.

**5. Do you know where other National Board-Certified Acupuncturists can find out more about how to get involved with treating patients with acute withdrawal from drugs and alcohol?**

That's a great question! I think it depends on the where you practice. The [National Acupuncture Detoxification Association](#) (NADA) is an amazing resource for training in the



NADA protocol and learning about the disease of addiction. Twelve step programs like [Alcoholics Anonymous](#) or [Narcotics Anonymous](#) are also great resources for professionals looking to learn more about the disease of addiction and possibly learning more about the local network of people working in the field of addiction. I am also developing a training program specifically for acupuncturists looking to work in the field of addiction, and there's more information available on my [website](#).

**6. What do you think are the most beneficial aspects and challenging aspects of practicing acupuncture?**

The most beneficial aspect for me is that practicing acupuncture is very rewarding. I love to help people regain their sense of themselves and their happiness. Every time I help someone feel better, I feel better, and there's nothing like it. Like that old adage says, "if you love what you do, you'll never work a day in your life." The most challenging part for me is staying on top of everything at the same time. For example, honing my skills as an acupuncturist, and making sure to answer my email at the same time.

**7. What do you wish patients who have not had acupuncture treatment knew about this medicine?**

Haha, that it doesn't hurt. I swear I get asked that every other day. And I have so many people not trying it because they think it hurts. That and how helpful and effective acupuncture is for treating physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual symptoms. I guess I wish people knew that acupuncture gives us a higher quality of life, and that we deserve that increase in well-being and happiness.

**8. As an acupuncturist working at a local drug and alcohol facility, what trends do you see happening in the future for our profession?**

I see two things, more integration and more professional appropriation. If we're able to rise to the challenge and offer to integrate our services into any traditional model (medicine, sports, education, etc.) I think we'll see a rise in acceptance of acupuncture and an increase in demand for our services. (Which I think is already happening.)

And because acupuncture is becoming more mainstream and acceptable, I'm seeing more advertising of "dry needling" services performed by doctors and physical therapists instead of acupuncturists. So, if we don't create a space for ourselves and our services, someone else will.

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