



**Continuing  
Professional  
Development**  
for Osteopaths

# **Case study: Carrying out a group Peer Discussion Review**

Northern Ireland osteopaths

The Northern Ireland osteopaths CPD Group is a group of osteopaths who meet regularly to discuss practice. The osteopaths have different experiences of practice, ranging from newly-qualified osteopaths to those who have been in practice for more than 40 years. The osteopaths practise using a range of different approaches and treatments with a variety of patients.

## **Summary**

This case study outlines how to undertake a Peer Discussion Review within a group forum.

## **Planning**

The osteopath undergoing the Peer Discussion Review must bring their CPD folder and make a prepared presentation to the group about their practice. All participating osteopaths should take the opportunity to look through the Peer Discussion Review Guidelines and materials before the meeting.

## **What happens at the group review?**

1. An introduction is made, setting out the purpose and process to be followed. The scene is set and it is important and necessary for everyone to agree to create a trusting and supportive environment.
2. The osteopath(s) being reviewed each make a 15-30 minute presentation, covering the questions in the Peer Discussion Review document, and should include:
  - a. A general presentation of material covered over three years of CPD
  - b. A more in-depth presentation of how their CPD learning has informed their professional life (or why it did not prove useful personally/professionally). This will help all in the group to gauge the usefulness of certain CPD activities.
3. At the end of the presentation, there is a 15–20 minute discussion between peers in a relaxed interview process. This discussion should explore the reasoning behind chosen CPD activities and further professional development. The exchange will help peers ensure all aspects of the CPD Standards have been met and also provide an opportunity for clinical discussion around particular cases and approaches, creating a learning forum for all.
4. Following the peer discussion, there is a 5-10 minute peer feedback session to discuss what was good/bad, strong/weak about the osteopath's ability to understand the concepts behind CPD use and whether they have covered the aspects of CPD that keep their professional standards and skills up to date. This feedback will highlight areas where further work is needed and/or areas of strength that could be shared with others to aid in their development through use of the group review system.
5. There is a further 10-minute informal discussion relating to what needs to be addressed, if anything. This allows each individual to learn from their peers as a group. It helps everyone to understand the Peer Discussion Review process and to develop that process in more detail, leading to a better appreciation of what is expected from everyone. Certain protocols will hopefully be made available for this final stage, so that the osteopath under review can address any weaknesses after the meeting, if this is felt by peers to be necessary, and demonstrate that they have done so.

## **What have been the concerns/barriers and how were these overcome?**

Within the Belfast group, it was recognised that some people do not function well in groups or in discussions with larger numbers of people. Until the process of reviewing is more widely understood, the Peer Discussion Review process may appear to some osteopaths to resemble a trial by jury. It is important for participants to understand that this is not what is intended.

Osteopaths found themselves willing and able to share details of their practice in a constructive group environment and that it was a good learning experience to have a variety of perspectives focusing on their practice.

## **What do participants learn?**

Participants have the opportunity to receive feedback from more than one peer and to benefit from several opinions on whether their CPD was helping them to keep up to date. The group involvement can also make the process more objective and robust as it decreases the chance of 'friends' ticking boxes. It also allows individuals to learn from others taking part in the process and builds confidence for osteopaths to discuss their own work within a group setting.

## **Was it useful?**

Yes, it enables up to seven or eight osteopaths to undertake a Peer Discussion Review on one day and hopefully provides a learning experience for all taking part, regardless of whether they are being reviewed or conducting the review. It also enables a community to understand the standards of practice of colleagues, and promotes collegiality and a strong sense of professionalism.

## **How long did it take?**

About an hour for each osteopath.

## **Would you do it again?**

Yes.