


C (https://well-
 LA connected-twin-
 SS cities-
 ES classes.teachable
 .com/p/home)
 L (https://wellconne
 O ctedtwincities.co
 GI m/login/)
 N

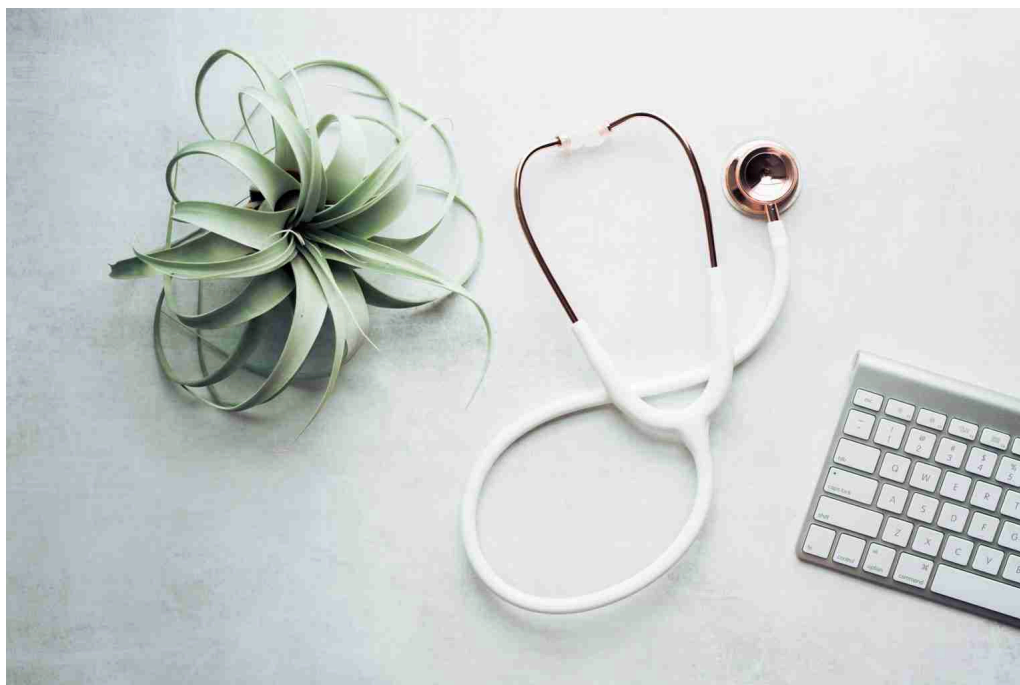
Share this article



Functional Medicine vs Naturopathic Doctors: Similarities and Differences

© Alex Stalberger(<https://wellconnectedtwincities.com/author/alex-stalberger/>) 📅 April 1, 2024(<https://wellconnectedtwincities.com/2024/04/01/>)
 📌 Integrative Health (<https://wellconnectedtwincities.com/category/integrative-health/>)

 Looking for something specific? Let us help 🤖 ✕



Comprehensive comparison of Functional Medicine vs Naturopathy. When seeking holistic and integrative healthcare, two primary types of practitioners are often starting points: functional medicine doctors and naturopathic doctors.

In a lot of ways, they are very similar. They share a common goal of promoting overall health and wellness through natural means, however they approach patient care in distinctly different ways. In this post, we've outlined the similarities and differences between functional medicine doctors and naturopathic doctors to help you understand their unique approaches to holistic and integrative healthcare, their common testing protocols, and variances in their educational backgrounds and certifications.

Find Functional Medicine MD Near Me (https://wellconnectedtwincities.com/single-category-page/integrative-medicine/?directory_type=general)

Find a Naturopathic Doctor Near Me (https://wellconnectedtwincities.com/single-category-page/integrative-medicine/?in_cat=2479)

Navigate this article

- At-a-glance Similarities and Differences
- Comparing Fundamental Principles
- A Comparison of Testing Protocols
- Common Educational Certifications and Backgrounds
- Find a provider near you

Functional Medicine vs Naturopathic Medicine at a glance

Similarities:

1. **Holistic and Whole–Person Approach:** Both functional medicine providers and naturopathic doctors take a whole–person approach to healthcare, focusing on treating the root cause of illness rather than just managing symptoms. They consider the interconnectedness of body systems, lifestyle factors, genetics, and environmental influences on health.
2. **Patient–Centered Care:** Both types of practitioners prioritize individualized, patient–centered care. They take the time to listen to patients' concerns, gather comprehensive health histories, and develop personalized treatment plans tailored to each patient's unique needs and goals. This often means that appointments are thorough and longer than you would find in a conventional care clinic.
3. **Preventive Medicine:** Functional medicine providers and naturopathic doctors emphasize optimizing health and preventing chronic disease. They educate patients about lifestyle modifications, nutrition, stress management, and other factors that can support long–term well–being. Their care doesn't stop when the symptoms disappear, these providers are your partner in achieving optimal wellbeing.



Looking for something specific? Let us help 🤖

4. Use of Natural Therapies: Both types of practitioners utilize natural therapies such as dietary supplements, herbal medicine, lifestyle interventions, and mind-body practices to promote health and healing. They may also incorporate conventional medical treatments when necessary, but with a preference for more natural, less invasive options whenever possible. For the reason, the cost over time may be significantly less than its conventional counterparts since these providers hope to avoid unnecessary and often expensive pharmaceuticals and surgical procedures if possible.

Differences:

- 1. Educational Background:** One key difference between functional medicine doctors and naturopathic doctors lies in their educational backgrounds. Naturopathic doctors (NDs) attend accredited naturopathic medical schools, where they receive comprehensive training in conventional medical sciences as well as holistic and natural therapies. On the other hand, functional medicine providers come from various healthcare backgrounds, including conventional medicine, osteopathy, chiropractic medicine, and others. They often undergo additional training in functional medicine principles and practices through certification programs or postgraduate education.
- 2. Scope of Practice:** Naturopathic doctors have a broad scope of practice that encompasses primary care, preventive medicine, and natural therapeutics. They are licensed to diagnose and treat a wide range of acute and chronic health conditions using holistic approaches. Functional medicine providers typically specialize in functional medicine, focusing on identifying and addressing underlying imbalances in the body's systems to promote health and wellness. While they may also offer holistic therapies, they often work in collaboration with other healthcare professionals to provide comprehensive care.
- 3. Treatment Philosophy:** Naturopathic doctors follow the principles of naturopathic medicine, which include supporting the body's inherent ability to heal itself, using the least invasive treatments first, and addressing the whole person—body, mind, and spirit. Functional medicine providers adopt a systems biology approach, looking at the interconnectedness of physiological processes and how they contribute to health or disease. They use advanced testing and personalized treatment plans to optimize bodily function and restore balance.

In summary, both functional medicine providers and naturopathic doctors play valuable roles in the field of holistic healthcare. While they share similarities in their holistic approach, patient-centered care, and emphasis on preventive medicine, they differ in their educational backgrounds, scope of practice, and treatment philosophies. By understanding these distinctions, individuals can make informed decisions about their healthcare options and find the right practitioner to support their journey to optimal health and wellness.

Find a Naturopathic Doctor Near Me (https://wellconnectedtwincities.com/single-category-page/integrative-medicine/?in_cat=2479)

Well Connected Twin Cities Podcast

Ep 147 Hormone Replacement Therapy with Dr. Cassie Wilder

Jun 06, 2024

00:00


36:32

Ep 147 Hormone Replacement Therapy with Dr. Cassie Wilder	Well Connected Twin Cities / Dr. Cassie Wilder	Jun 06, 2024	36:32
Ep 23 Dr. Brittany Stamer Healing with Flower Essences	Well Connected Twin Cities / Dr. Brittany Stamer	Sep 22, 2020	26:56
Ep11 Dr. Danielle Vogler-Bos A Naturopathic Approach to Fertility	Well Connected Twin Cities / Dr. Danielle Vogler-Bos	Jun 30, 2020	43:43
Ep5 Dr. Natalia Pellegrino Illness-Fighting Tips + Tricks	Well Connected Twin Cities	Apr 07, 2020	37:42

Fundamental Principles : Functional Medicine vs Naturopathy

Principles of Naturopathic Medicine

Naturopathic medicine is a holistic approach to healthcare that emphasizes the body's inherent ability to heal itself and seeks to address the root causes of illness. Naturopathic doctors (NDs) adhere to six core principles that guide their practice:



Looking for something specific? Let us help 🙋‍♀️

1. **The Healing Power of Nature (Vis Medicatrix Naturae):** Naturopathic medicine recognizes the body's innate ability to heal itself and seeks to support and enhance this healing process. NDs believe in the body's inherent wisdom and strive to remove obstacles to healing while promoting the body's natural self-healing mechanisms.
2. **Identify and Treat the Root Cause (Tolle Causam):** Naturopathic doctors focus on identifying and addressing the underlying causes of illness rather than merely treating symptoms. By understanding and addressing the root cause of disease, NDs aim to restore balance and promote long-term health and wellness.
3. **First, Do No Harm (Primum Non Nocere):** Naturopathic medicine emphasizes the use of safe and minimally invasive therapies to avoid harm to patients. NDs prioritize gentle, non-toxic interventions and aim to minimize the risk of side effects or adverse reactions associated with treatments.
4. **Treat the Whole Person (Tolle Totum):** Naturopathic doctors take into account the interconnectedness of body, mind, and spirit in assessing and treating patients. They consider each individual as a whole person with unique physical, mental, emotional, genetic, environmental, and social factors influencing their health.
5. **Doctor as Teacher (Docere):** Naturopathic doctors serve as educators and guides, empowering patients to take an active role in their health and well-being. They provide education, support, and resources to help patients make informed decisions about their healthcare and adopt healthy lifestyle practices.
6. **Prevention is the Best Cure (Preventativen):** Naturopathic medicine emphasizes preventive medicine strategies to promote optimal health and wellness and prevent the onset of chronic disease. NDs focus on identifying and addressing risk factors, promoting healthy behaviors, and supporting the body's natural defenses against illness.

These principles form the foundation of naturopathic medicine and guide NDs in their approach to patient care. By honoring the body's inherent healing abilities, addressing the root causes of illness, and promoting holistic well-being, naturopathic doctors aim to support patients in achieving optimal health and vitality.

Principles of Functional Medicine

Functional medicine is a patient-centered approach to healthcare that focuses on addressing the root causes of illness and promoting optimal health and wellness. The principles of functional medicine guide practitioners in understanding the interconnectedness of the body's systems and creating personalized treatment plans for patients. Here are the key principles of functional medicine:

1. **Biochemical Individuality:** Functional medicine recognizes that each person is biochemically unique, with individual genetic makeup, environmental exposures, lifestyle factors, and health history. Practitioners assess each patient's unique biochemical profile and tailor treatment plans to address their specific needs and imbalances.
2. **Patient-Centered Care:** Functional medicine prioritizes the patient's needs, preferences, and goals in the healthcare process. Practitioners take the time to listen to patients' concerns, gather comprehensive health histories, and develop personalized treatment plans that address the root causes of illness and promote optimal health and wellness.
3. **Systems Biology Approach:** Functional medicine views the body as an interconnected network of systems, rather than a collection of isolated organs or symptoms. Practitioners consider the interactions between different physiological processes, such as the immune, digestive, hormonal, and neurological systems, and how they contribute to health or disease.
4. **Addressing Root Causes:** Functional medicine focuses on identifying and addressing the underlying root causes of illness, rather than just treating symptoms. Practitioners use advanced diagnostic testing and comprehensive health assessments to uncover imbalances in the body's systems, such as inflammation, oxidative stress, nutrient deficiencies, and toxic exposures.
5. **Promotion of Health and Vitality:** Functional medicine emphasizes the promotion of health and vitality, rather than just the absence of disease. Practitioners educate patients about the importance of lifestyle factors such as nutrition, physical activity, sleep, stress management, and social connections in supporting overall well-being.
6. **Integration of Conventional and Integrative Therapies:** Functional medicine integrates the best of conventional medicine with evidence-based complementary and alternative therapies to provide comprehensive care. Practitioners may recommend a combination of dietary and lifestyle interventions, nutritional supplements, botanical medicine, mind-body practices, and conventional treatments as needed to support patients' health goals.
7. **Personalized Treatment Plans:** Functional medicine emphasizes personalized, patient-centered care, with treatment plans tailored to each individual's unique needs, preferences, and goals. Practitioners collaborate with patients to develop individualized strategies for optimizing health and addressing underlying imbalances.
8. **Lifestyle Medicine:** Functional medicine recognizes the importance of lifestyle factors in influencing health and well-being. Practitioners emphasize the role of nutrition, physical activity, sleep, stress management, and social connections in supporting optimal health and preventing chronic disease.



Looking for something specific? Let us help 🤖

By adhering to these principles, functional medicine practitioners aim to empower patients to take an active role in their health and well-being, address the underlying causes of illness, and promote lifelong vitality and resilience.

Ep 148 The Spiritual & Psychological Benefits of Sauna & Thermic Bathing with ...

Jun 20, 2024

00:00

41:45

Ep 148 The Spiritual & Psychological Benefits of Sauna & Thermic Bathing with John Pederson	Well Connected Twin Cities / John Pederson	Jun 20, 2024	41:45
Ep 147 Hormone Replacement Therapy with Dr. Cassie Wilder	Well Connected Twin Cities / Dr. Cassie Wilder	Jun 06, 2024	36:32
Ep 146 Lymphatic Drainage Massage for Detox with Macy Grishaw	Well Connected Twin Cities / Macy Grishaw	May 23, 2024	35:31
Ep 145 Performance Tests for Human Health & Longevity with Evan Strewler	Well Connected Twin Cities / Evan Strewler	May 09, 2024	29:30

Compare Testing Strategies Between Functional and Naturopathic Medicine

Functional medicine doctors and naturopathic doctors often utilize a variety of tests to assess underlying imbalances, identify root causes of symptoms, and personalize treatment plans for their patients. Here are some commonly performed tests by each:

Functional Medicine Approach to Testing:

- 1. Comprehensive Blood Chemistry Panels:** These panels provide detailed information about various markers related to organ function, nutrient levels, blood sugar regulation, inflammation, and metabolic health. Functional medicine doctors may request comprehensive panels to assess overall health and identify potential areas of dysfunction.
- 2. Hormone Testing:** Functional medicine doctors often order hormone tests to evaluate levels of hormones such as cortisol, thyroid hormones (T3, T4, and TSH), estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, and DHEA. These tests can help assess hormonal imbalances, adrenal function, thyroid health, and reproductive health.
- 3. Food Sensitivity Testing:** Functional medicine doctors may recommend tests to identify food sensitivities or intolerances, such as IgG antibody testing (<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/immunoglobulins-blood-test/>) or elimination diets. Identifying and eliminating trigger foods can help reduce inflammation, improve digestive health, and alleviate symptoms related to food sensitivities.
- 4. Gut Health Assessments:** Functional medicine doctors may order tests to assess gut health, such as comprehensive stool analysis (CSA), intestinal permeability testing (also known as leaky gut testing), and microbiome analysis. These tests can provide insights into digestive function, gut flora composition, and intestinal barrier integrity.
- 5. Genetic Testing:** Functional medicine doctors may recommend genetic testing, such as DNA analysis or single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) testing (<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/understanding/genomicresearch/snp/>), to assess genetic predispositions and identify potential areas of risk for certain health conditions. Genetic testing can help inform personalized treatment plans and lifestyle modifications.

Naturopathic Medicine Approach to Testing:

- 1. Comprehensive Health Assessments:** Naturopathic doctors conduct thorough health assessments, including detailed medical history, physical examinations, and lifestyle evaluations. They may also use tools such as questionnaires and health inventories to gather information about patients' overall health and well-being.
- 2. Clinical Laboratory Testing:** Naturopathic doctors may order conventional laboratory tests, including blood tests, urine tests, and imaging studies, to assess organ function, nutritional status, inflammation, and other physiological parameters. These tests help naturopathic doctors identify underlying health issues and monitor treatment progress.
- 3. Nutritional Assessments:** Naturopathic doctors may recommend nutritional assessment tools, including dietary diaries and functional nutritional evaluations, to assess patients' dietary intake, nutrient status, and help identify nutrient imbalances and guide personalized dietary recommendations and supplementation.
- 4. Functional Assessments:** Naturopathic doctors may use functional assessments, such as iridology, tongue diagnosis, and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) diagnostic techniques, to evaluate patients' overall health and identify imbalances in the

Looking for something specific? Let us help 🤖

body's systems. These assessments help naturopathic doctors develop individualized treatment plans based on patients' unique constitution and health needs.

5. **Specialized Testing:** Depending on patients' specific health concerns, naturopathic doctors may recommend specialized tests, such as hormone testing, adrenal function testing, food sensitivity testing, gastrointestinal testing, or environmental toxin testing. These tests help naturopathic doctors identify underlying causes of symptoms and develop targeted treatment approaches.

Overall, both functional medicine doctors and naturopathic doctors utilize a combination of laboratory testing, clinical assessments, and specialized evaluations to assess patients' health status, identify underlying imbalances, and develop personalized treatment plans tailored to each individual's unique needs and goals.

Educational Background and Certifications: Functional Medicine vs Naturopathy

Providers can take many career paths that prepare them for excellent integrative care. Here's a short list of some of the most reputable schools for functional medicine and naturopathic medicine you might recognize as you compare providers and seek out a best fit for you and your family:

Functional Medicine Schools:

1. The Institute for Functional Medicine (IFM): (<https://www.ifm.org/>) IFM offers comprehensive educational programs, including the Functional Medicine Certification Program for healthcare professionals and advanced training courses for practitioners seeking to specialize in functional medicine. IFM's approach is evidence-based and focuses on addressing the root causes of illness.
2. The Kresser Institute for Functional & Evolutionary Medicine: (<https://kresserinstitute.com/>) Founded by renowned functional medicine practitioner Chris Kresser, the Kresser Institute offers online training programs, including the ADAPT Health Coach Training Program and the ADAPT Practitioner Training Program. These programs provide in-depth education in functional medicine principles and practices.
3. **The Functional Medicine University (FMU):** (<https://www.functionalmedicineuniversity.com/>) FMU offers online courses and certification programs in functional medicine for healthcare professionals, including physicians, nurse practitioners, chiropractors, and nutritionists. Their curriculum covers a wide range of topics, including genetics, gut health, hormone balance, and detoxification.
4. The School of Applied Functional Medicine: (<https://schoolafm.com/>) The School of Applied Functional Medicine offers online education and training programs for healthcare professionals seeking to integrate functional medicine into their practice. Their curriculum emphasizes a systems biology approach and provides practical tools for assessing and treating complex chronic diseases.

Naturopathic Medicine Schools:

1. Bastyr University: (<https://bastyr.edu/>) Bastyr University is one of the leading institutions for naturopathic medicine education, with campuses in both Washington state and California. It offers accredited Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine (ND) programs that focus on holistic healthcare, natural therapies, and preventive medicine.
2. National University of Natural Medicine (NUNM) (<https://nunm.edu/>): Located in Portland, Oregon, NUNM is a prominent institution for naturopathic medicine education. It offers accredited ND programs with a strong emphasis on evidence-based medicine, clinical training, and integrative healthcare.
3. Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine & Health Sciences (SCNM) (<https://www.sonoran.edu/>): SCNM, located in Tempe, Arizona, is another respected institution for naturopathic medicine education. It offers accredited ND programs that combine traditional naturopathic therapies with modern medical science and research.
4. Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine (CCNM) (<https://ccnm.edu/>): CCNM, located in Toronto, Ontario, is one of the leading naturopathic medical schools in Canada. It offers accredited ND programs that provide comprehensive training in naturopathic medicine, including clinical internships and hands-on experience.

These schools are known for their academic programs, experienced faculty, and commitment to excellence in functional medicine and naturopathic medicine education. Graduates from these institutions tend to be well-prepared to pursue careers as healthcare practitioners dedicated to integrative, person-centered care.

Functional Medicine Degrees and Certifications:

Functional medicine providers and naturopathic providers may hold a variety of certifications and specific training and professional background. Here's a list of some common certifications and



Looking for something specific? Let us help 🤖

1. **Doctor of Medicine (MD):** Many functional medicine providers are medical doctors who have completed medical school and residency training in conventional medicine. They may pursue additional training and certification in functional medicine through specialized programs.

- 2. Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO):** Like MDs, osteopathic physicians may also practice functional medicine. DOs receive training in osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT) as well as conventional medical practices.
- 3. Doctor of Chiropractic (DC):** Chiropractors may specialize in functional medicine and receive additional training in functional assessment, nutrition, and lifestyle interventions to support holistic health and wellness. Many local DC's receive their training from Northwestern Health Sciences University. (<https://www.nwhealth.edu/>)
- 4. Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine (ND):** While NDs are more commonly associated with naturopathic medicine, some may also integrate functional medicine principles into their practice. NDs receive comprehensive training in natural therapies, lifestyle medicine, and preventive healthcare.
- 5. Advanced Certification in Functional Medicine:** Healthcare professionals from various backgrounds, including MDs, DOs, DCs, NDs, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants, may pursue advanced certification in functional medicine through programs such as those offered by the Institute for Functional Medicine (IFM) (<https://www.ifm.org/>) or the School of Applied Functional Medicine (<https://schoolafm.com/>).

Naturopathic Medicine Degree and Certifications:

- 1. Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine (ND or NMD):** Naturopathic doctors are primary care physicians who have completed accredited ND programs, which typically include extensive training in natural therapies, clinical nutrition, botanical medicine, homeopathy, physical medicine, and lifestyle counseling.
- 2. Master of Science in Acupuncture (MSAc) or Master of Science in Oriental Medicine (MSOM):** Some naturopathic doctors specialize in acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and hold master's degrees in acupuncture or oriental medicine.
- 3. Board Certification in Naturopathic Medicine:** Naturopathic doctors may obtain board certification in naturopathic medicine through organizations such as the North American Board of Naturopathic Examiners (NABNE) (<https://www.anmcb.org/>). Board-certified NDs have demonstrated competency through rigorous examinations.
- 4. Additional Certifications in Specialized Therapies:** Naturopathic doctors may pursue additional certifications in areas such as intravenous (IV) nutrient therapy, environmental medicine, functional endocrinology, and naturopathic oncology (<https://www.oncanp.org/naturopathic-oncology>) to expand their scope of practice and expertise.
- 5. Licensed Acupuncturist (LAc):** Naturopathic doctors who specialize in acupuncture may also hold licensure as acupuncturists and have completed training and certification in acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM).

These are just a few examples of the certifications and degrees that functional medicine providers and naturopathic providers may hold. The specific qualifications and credentials of individual practitioners may vary based on their educational background, training, and professional experience.

Find a Provider Near You

Use the Well Connected Twin Cities Directory to find providers near you (<https://wellconnectedtwincities.com/>)



Looking for something specific? Let us help 🤖



About the Author – Alex Stalberger, NBC-HWC

Alex Stalberger is the owner and founder of Well Connected Twin Cities. She is an integrative health and wellness coach with a passion for empowerment and behavior psychology. She writes guides to help health-seekers like you find the perfect partners for your own integrative health and wellbeing team.


◀ (<https://wellconnectedtwincities.com/10-common-types-of-integrative-s://wellconnectedtwincities.com/holistic-hormonal-health-with-herbalism/>)



Hello!

At Well Connected Twin Cities, we're co-creating with local health + wellness practitioners to bring you the best resources that will inform and inspire you to take the next step in your wellness journey.

LEARN MORE ABOUT US
(/ABOUT/)

 Looking for something specific? Let us help 🤖

More to Love...



(<https://wellconnectedtwincities.com/whats-the-deal-with-cbd/>)

What's the deal with CBD? (<https://wellconnectedtwincities.com/whats-the-deal-with-cbd/>)



(<https://wellconnectedtwincities.com/meet-the-pros-marnie-dachis-marmet/>)

Meet the Pros: Marnie Dachis Marmet (<https://wellconnectedtwincities.com/meet-the-pros-marnie-dachis-marmet/>)



Looking for something specific? Let us help 🤖



(<https://wellconnectedtwincities.com/meet-the-pros-bethany-hansen/>)

Meet the Pros: Bethany Hansen (<https://wellconnectedtwincities.com/meet-the-pros-bethany-hansen/>)



(<https://wellconnectedtwincities.com/meet-the-pros-rachel-jensen/>)


Meet the Pros: Rachel Jensen (<https://wellconnectedtwincities.com/meet-the-pros-rachel-jensen/>)

Stay Connected

Sign Up to receive our newsletter!

Name
Email

SUBMIT

 Looking for something specific? Let us help 🤖

Are you a
Holistic Wellness Professional?

Get listed & join the premier community of holistic health providers in the Twin Cities.

LEARN MORE
(/WELL-CONNECTED-PRO-MEMBERSHIP/)




Looking for something specific? Let us help 🙋

(ht
(ht tp
tp s:/ /w
s:/ /w w
/w w w.
w w.f yo
w.i ac ut
nst eb ub
ag oo e.c
ra k.c o
o m/
m/ ch
co W an
m) ell nel
we - /U
llc Co Cc
on nn CS
ne ec yl_
ct te JW
ed .

(<https://wellconnectedtwincities.com>)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBER COMMUNITY LOG IN
([HTTPS://PRO.WELLCONNECTEDTWINCITIES.COM/SIGN_IN](https://pro.wellconnectedtwincities.com/sign_in))

 Looking for something specific? Let us help 🤖

© 2022 WELL CONNECTED TWIN CITIES, LLC. | PRIVACY POLICY (<https://wellconnectedtwincities.com/privacy-policy/>) | TERMS & CONDITIONS (<https://wellconnectedtwincities.com/terms-and-conditions/>)

© ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

WEBSITE MADE BY WELLSPIRED CO. (<https://wellspired.co/>)

twi d- -2
nci Tw 7lq
tie in- Fyt
s/) Cit 8K
ies Cv
) M
Q)



Looking for something specific? Let us help 🤖