

# Kelli R. Hughart, PhD

*Mind-Body Medicine · Clinical Phytotherapy and Aromatherapy · Integrative Hypnosis*

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Sweetwater Wellness Center, LLC · West Virginia and Virginia

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## PROFILE

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Kelli Hughart is a doctoral-trained researcher and practitioner in mind-body medicine, with four decades of study and practice across herbalism, aromatherapy, functional nutrition, hypnosis, breathwork, and energy medicine. Her doctoral research at Saybrook University produced an integrative recovery framework for highly sensitive people living with complex post-traumatic stress, a population poorly served by pharmaceutical and conventional talk-therapy pathways. That framework is not theoretical. It runs her private practice, shapes the courses she teaches, and rests on a daily discipline of meditation, plant study, and medicine making that began in the family herbal traditions she was raised in.

With her doctorate newly conferred, she is focusing on graduate-level teaching and program design. Institutions developing offerings in clinical aromatherapy, Western herbalism, integrative hypnosis, or mind-body practice will find in her an uncommon combination: the clinical hours and lineage training these subjects require, alongside a master's degree in education and twenty years of instructional experience with learners ranging from children to credentialed clinicians.

## RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS

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- Psychoneuroimmunology and complex stress syndromes: CPTSD, PTSD, burnout, and chronic illness
- Sensory processing sensitivity and the highly sensitive person as a clinical population
- Clinical aromatherapy: therapeutic application, safety, and contraindication screening
- Western and Appalachian herbalism: materia medica, constitutional assessment, and medicine making
- Clinical and applied hypnosis, guided imagery, and somatic technique in trauma recovery
- Functional nutrition and the gut-brain axis
- Curriculum design for holistic practitioner training and continuing professional education
- Land-based education: naturalist study, ethical wildcrafting, permaculture, and plant conservation

## EDUCATION

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| <b>Doctor of Philosophy, Mind-Body Medicine</b><br><i>Saybrook University, College of Integrative Medicine and Health Sciences</i><br>Concentrations: Stress Management; Clinical and Applied Hypnosis. GPA 3.94.<br>Dissertation: <i>Whispers from the Light: Integrative Approaches for the Intuitive, Highly Sensitive Person Healing from Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder</i> | 2026 |
| <b>Master of Arts, Elementary Education</b><br><i>University of Phoenix</i><br>GPA 3.94.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 2004 |
| <b>Bachelor of Arts, Liberal Arts</b> (Regents degree, science emphasis)<br><i>West Virginia State University</i><br>GPA 3.20.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 2001 |

## TEACHING APPOINTMENTS AND INSTRUCTION

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**Adjunct Instructor**, Heart of Herbs Herbal School 2024 – 2025

Taught within an established certification program for practicing and student herbalists. Courses delivered:

- *Integrative Therapeutics for Pets*
- *Flower Power for CPTSD*
- *Digestive Bitters for the Gut Microbiome and Mental Health*
- *Client Consultation*

**Teaching Assistant**, Saybrook University Jan 2022 – Aug 2023

Supported doctoral and master's instruction within the College of Integrative Medicine and Health Sciences.

**Guest Instructor**, Saybrook University Self-Care Series 2024

- *Reiki: Ancient Practice for Modern Times* (full-length instructional session)
- *Mindful Pause: Catching Your Auric Bubble*, October 2024

**Invited Guest Lecturer**, undergraduate social work course [year]

[Institution to be confirmed.] Presented on integrative approaches to trauma recovery for students entering direct-service practice.

**Workshop Instructor**, La Paix Conference 2015

- *TREEmendous Trees*, tree medicine and materia medica

**Independent Herbal Educator**, private class series and apprenticeships 2008 – Present

- Write and deliver original class series in herbalism, plant identification, and medicine making for adult learners.
- Mentor apprentices in clinical herbal practice, formulation, and client work.
- Train Reiki students through a traditionally structured apprenticeship, Level I through Master and Teacher.

## CURRICULUM DESIGN AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

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**Clinical Hypnosis Curriculum for Holistic Practitioners** In development

A training sequence built for practitioners who already hold qualifications in herbalism, coaching, bodywork, or allied fields and want to integrate hypnotic technique into an existing scope of practice. Addresses induction, suggestion structure, ego-strengthening, and the ethical boundaries of adjunctive hypnosis.

**Course Development**, Heart of Herbs Herbal School 2024 – 2025

Built four continuing education courses from scratch, each pairing clinical application with the research base supporting it, for an established herbal school's certification track.

**Group Programs**, Sweetwater Wellness Center, LLC

Designed and facilitate cohort-based and self-paced programs, each with its own structure, sequencing, and outcomes:

- *Epigenetic Reset*, an integrative healing journey for highly sensitive people with chronic illness
- *Sacred Nervous System Reset*, a self-paced course
- *Anxiety Detox*
- *Warrior Within*, a workshop on dysautonomia, POTS, and complex stress syndromes
- *VIP Day*, a one-to-one intensive format

**Integrative Wellness Planning Model**, developed through doctoral research

A seven-modality framework for building individualized recovery plans, each modality matched to the literature supporting it and selected for low contraindication risk and daily usability: trauma-informed coaching, herbal nervines and adaptogens, aromatherapy, guided imagery, hypnosis, flower essences, and functional nutrition targeting the gut-brain axis. Now the working structure of her clinical practice and a transferable teaching tool for practitioner training.

## RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

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**Doctoral Research**, Saybrook University

Completed 2026

*Whispers from the Light: Integrative Approaches for the Intuitive, Highly Sensitive Person Healing from Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*

Examines recovery pathways for highly sensitive people with CPTSD who experience adverse drug reactions, poor response to conventional talk therapy, or both. Synthesizes evidence across phytotherapy, aromatherapy, functional nutrition, guided imagery, clinical hypnosis, flower essences, and trauma-informed coaching into a plan that a person can actually sustain outside a clinic.

**Conference Poster**

November 2021

- *Hypnosis for Women with CPTSD*, American Society of Clinical Hypnosis (ASCH)

**Book in Progress**

Herbal therapies and complex post-traumatic stress, written for practitioners and for the people they serve.

**Clinical Consultation**, peer-to-peer

Consulted by physicians, osteopaths, nurse practitioners, and doctoral-level clinicians on plant medicine questions, herb-drug interaction, and integrative options for patients who have exhausted conventional protocols.

## INVITED TALKS AND PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

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Selected appearances as guest subject matter expert:

- *Heart of Herbs Herbal School Podcast*, May 2025. Herbal traditions, ethical sourcing, and integrative hypnosis in complex PTSD recovery.
- *Navigating Holistic Healing Through Ancestral Wisdom*, March 2025.
- *Munira's Musings*, June 2022. Releasing without regression, imposter syndrome, and clinical specificity.
- *Share Your Story*, Episode 3: Kelli and the Sacred Reset.
- *Superwomen Wellness Connection*, July 2020. Herbal and grounding practices for practitioners and the public.

Guest teacher and speaker at herbal conferences and colleges. Interviewed by regional newspapers on wildlife rehabilitation and public naturalist education.

## CLINICAL AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

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**Founder and Lead Practitioner**, Sweetwater Wellness Center, LLC

2021–Present

- Deliver whole-person consultations to adults with complex stress syndromes, dysautonomia, and chronic conditions, working virtually across West Virginia and Virginia.
- Build individualized protocols combining hypnosis, guided imagery, breathwork, phytotherapy, aromatherapy, flower essences, functional nutrition, and Reiki.
- Screen for herb-drug interaction and contraindication in clients maintaining pharmaceutical regimens, and coordinate rather than compete with their medical teams.
- Position the work as adjunctive and collaborative, with clear scope-of-practice boundaries stated to every client.

**Clinical Herbalist and Aromatherapist**, independent practice

2004–Present

- Formulate botanical preparations, including tinctures, elixirs, teas, essential oil blends, and flower essences, and maintain a working apothecary.
- Conduct constitutional assessment and develop personalized wellness plans integrating plant medicine with lifestyle change.
- Grow at-risk and rare medicinal plants, and practice ethical wildcrafting and local sourcing.

**Reiki Master and Teacher**, traditional apprenticeship lineage

2008–Present

- Provide individual sessions and facilitate group practice.
- Train students through the full apprenticeship sequence to Master and Teacher level.

## CERTIFICATIONS AND ADVANCED CREDENTIALS

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### Hypnosis and Mind-Body Practice

- Board Certified Hypnotherapist (BCHt), International Medical and Dental Hypnotherapy Association. Current through January 2027.
- Certified Hypnotherapist, International Association of Counselors and Therapists (IACT)
- Trauma and Transpersonal Hypnotherapy, Charlotte Institute of Hypnotherapy
- Cognitive Behavioral Hypnotherapy and Hypno-EMDR, United Kingdom
- Integrative Hypnosis Practitioner
- Somatic Hypnosis
- Hypnosis for Sex and Intimacy
- Coaching the Unconscious Mind
- Certified Stress Management Consultant and Educator (CSMC)
- Mind-Body Master Class, CEU certification
- Mindfulness in Clinical Care, CEU certification
- Parts Work in Hypnosis

### Coaching

- Certified Professional Coach (CPC), Introspective Life Coaching Trauma-Informed Certification Program, ICF-approved, January 2021
- Functional Medicine Certified Health Coach (FMCHC), Functional Medicine Coaching Academy
- Results-Based Coaching, CEU certification
- L.E.A.N. and Prime Time Health Coaching, Dr. Sears Wellness Institute

### Phytotherapy and Aromatherapy

- Master Herbalist, Heart of Herbs Herbal School, 2,600-hour clinical course
- Master Aromatherapist, Heart of Herbs Herbal School, 650-hour clinical course
- Nationally Certified Clinical Aromatherapist (NCCA), National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy
- Green Spirit Wise Craft, Heart of Herbs Herbal School, 500 hours
- Sage Mountain Herbal School
- French Aromatherapy, East-West School of Aromatherapy (coursework completed)
- Constitutional Lessons 1 through 12, Southwest School of Botanical Medicine (coursework completed)
- Pharmacy of Flowers, Floracopeia (flower essence practice)

### Functional Medicine and Nutrition

- Nutritional Therapist, The Health Sciences Academy
- Functional Gastrointestinal Health, Levels 1 and 2, CEU certification
- Mitochondrial Nutrition, Functional Inflammation, and Inflammation Mastery, Dr. Alex Vasquez
- Functional Diagnoses, three-part series, CEU certification
- MTHFR Clinical Series, CEU certification
- Functional Ketogenics, CEU certification

### Energy Medicine and Breathwork

- Reiki Master and Teacher, traditional apprenticeship
- Breathwork Facilitator

### Instructional and Literacy Training

- Orton-Gillingham multisensory instruction
- Lindamood-Bell: Seeing Stars, On Cloud Nine, and LiPS

### Naturalist, Safety, and Field Credentials

- Certified Virginia Master Naturalist, with more than 2,500 volunteer service hours logged
- Kamana Naturalist Training, Levels 1 through 4
- State and federally permitted wildlife rehabilitator and educator
- Wilderness First Aid
- Psychological First Aid
- CPR and AED
- Doula training, To-Doula

### ADVANCED STUDY WITH SENIOR PRACTITIONERS

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Herbal and aromatic medicine is transmitted person to person. The following represents direct study, workshop training, and mentorship with practitioners who shaped the modern American herbal field:

- **Rosemary Gladstar** · foundational Western herbalism
- **Matthew Wood** · pulse assessment and traditional diagnostics
- **David Winston** · Cherokee medicine, local plant medicine, and weeds for medicine
- **Phyllis Light** · Appalachian folk herbalism
- **Paul Bergner** · clinical herbalism
- **Demetria Clark** · clinical herbalism, Ayurvedic medicine, green spirit wildcraft, and clinical aromatherapy
- **Margi Flint** · reading the body (clinical skills immersion)
- **Darryl Patton** · Southern folk medicine
- **Sam Coffman** · wilderness and herbal first aid
- **Lisa Ganora** · herbal constituents and phytochemistry
- **Kiva Rose** · herbal energetics
- **Thomas Easley** · blood work interpretation for herbalists
- **David Crow** · aromatic medicine, Floracopeia
- **7Song** · herbal first aid
- **Leslie Alexander** · dental herbalism
- **Steven Horne** · Thomsonian medicine
- **K.P. Khalsa** · holistic practice management
- **Darcey Blue** · shamanic herbalism

### SELECTED CONTINUING EDUCATION

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Clinical masterclasses and CEU coursework completed over roughly two decades. This list is representative rather than complete.

- Natural Women's Health; Natural Cardiology; Autoimmune Conditions; Natural Anxiety; Natural Depression; Natural Allergy
- Fibromyalgia, Fatigue, and Global Pain Syndromes
- Hair, Nail, and Tongue Diagnosis
- Phytonutrients with Dr. Deanna Minich
- Herbalism and Cardiology with Dr. Fratellone
- Differential Diagnosis; Western Phytotherapy; Botany and Wildcrafting; Doctrine of Signatures
- Natural Dog Masterclass and herbal approaches to animal health

- Full audio and video course libraries from David Winston (Herbalist and Alchemist) and Paul Bergner (North American Institute of Medical Herbalism)
- Shamanic herbalism

## CONFERENCES

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- Medicine from the Earth Conference, ongoing participation since 2008
- Southeast Women's Herbal Conference, 2013 and 2014
- Traditions in Western Herbalism Conference, 2014
- American Herbalists Guild Annual Conference, 2010
- La Paix Conference, 2015 (presenting instructor)
- Wildlife rehabilitation: Call of the Wild (annual), Wildlife Center of Virginia conferences, AWARE conferences, Sacred Friends Conference 2016, North Carolina Wildlife 2013

## PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS

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- American Herbalists Guild
- National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy, professional member
- United Plant Savers
- Co-Founder, Virginia Herbalist Society
- Former Director and permitted educator, AWARE

## COMMUNITY SERVICE AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

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### **Wildlife Rehabilitator and Educator**, state and federally permitted

Rehabilitate and release native wildlife, with specialization in box turtles, rabbits, and opossums. Serve as a permitted public educator and as a director with AWARE. Permitted for all species except bear, deer, and high-risk rabies species.

### **Virginia Master Naturalist**

More than 2,500 volunteer hours in conservation, habitat work, and public natural history education, supported by ongoing continuing education within the program.

### **Roots and Shoots Homeschool Group**, Jane Goodall Institute

Support youth environmental education through the Jane Goodall Institute's program for young people, connecting children to plants, animals, and the land they live on.

### **Rare and At-Risk Plant Cultivation**

Grow threatened medicinal species at home, in keeping with United Plant Savers conservation practice.

## EMBODIED PRACTICE AND MOVEMENT INSTRUCTION

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Nearly two decades of teaching physical discipline to students of every age, which informs how she teaches nervous system regulation and somatic technique to adults today.

- 5th Dan, Taekwondo-based eclectic martial arts, including stand-up, ground work, knife, sword, and bo staff
- Gracie Jiu-Jitsu, Gracie Combatives; seminar study with Ryon Gracie, 2016
- Tai Chi practitioner and instructor
- Current instruction: women's self-defense, Tai Chi, and private martial arts
- Specialized workshops: kubotan, 2013; firearm self-defense, 2016; edged-weapon self-defense