

Code of Ethics

Acknowledgement

The College of Massage Therapists of Newfoundland and Labrador gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (CMTO) in granting us permission to publish under our name the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice document originally prepared for and published by the CMTO.

This document, originally published in 1996 and revised in 2005, has set the standard for practice of massage therapy for thousands of registrants in Ontario. We greatly appreciate the open-handed willingness of the CMTO to share with other provinces the benefits of their expertise and experience and thank them on behalf of our registrants.

Preface

The Act Respecting Massage Therapy came into force in Newfoundland and Labrador June 1, 2002 and the Newfoundland and Labrador Massage Therapists' Board was constituted later that year. The Massage Therapy Act, 2005 was proclaimed in December 2005, changing the name of the regulatory board to the College of Massage Therapists of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Massage therapists practising in this province are required by law to respect the conditions and requirements outlined in the Act, its Regulations, and Bylaws. Although published separately, the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice are referenced in the Regulations and Bylaws. Massage therapists in Newfoundland and Labrador are required to abide by the principles and practices as set forth in this document.

A few changes have been made to the revised CMTO text in order to make it relevant to Newfoundland and Labrador. For therapists trained in the Ontario curriculum, please note that there is only one act regulating massage therapists in this province. Although informed consent is not required as it is detailed in the specifics of the Ontario law, we believe that following the principles and procedures outlined in the Standards of Practice offers the best protection to massage therapy clients in Newfoundland and Labrador.

This Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice document is the result of the thoughtful consideration and deliberation of many dedicated therapists. In its breadth and scope, in its clarity and precision, it provides guiding principles and practical procedures for all massage therapists to follow in order to maintain the highest standards of professional service and client care.

CODE OF ETHICS

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*Touching with Our Hands— Healing With Our Hearts
Serving With Integrity In Touch*

by Cidalia Paiva

To touch and cherish the worth and dignity of each person
as a blessed and unique expression of life
Is to affirm the value of life.

To touch and accept each other in our different skins,
our wounded parts and our hoping hearts
Is to create safety and trust.

To touch and know the vulnerability of aching flesh,
a despairing brow, a trickling tear
Is to create empathy and compassion.

To touch with gentle strength and knowing softness
Is to restore the healing power of touch.

To touch and express sincere praise, kind thoughts,
considerate deeds and gestures
Is to create confidence and self-esteem.

To touch with integrity
Is to create truth, honesty and wholeness within ourselves,
our fellows and in our world.

To touch with our hands and heal with our hearts
Is to renew the miracle and the majesty of serving
with integrity in touch.

PREFACE STATEMENTS

What is a Code of Ethics?

A Code of Ethics is a statement, which expresses the primary ethical values, obligations and goals of the profession. It is a commitment, which serves to bear witness to our promise as a profession to uphold the values and ethical obligations expressed in the Code.

Why do we need a Code of Ethics?

A Code of Ethics gives definition to our commitment to practice in ethical terms. As regulated health professionals, we have made a promise to society to accept the responsibility and maintain the trust with which we have been invested.

What does a Code of Ethics do?

It lays out clearly the massage therapy profession's values and explains what they are in terms of what we ought to do in order to protect and promote the public good, and what we must avoid doing in order to prevent harm to the public.

To whom does this Code apply?

Massage Therapists who act as practitioners, educators, researchers, administrators or policy makers are all expected to maintain a commitment to massage therapy values and to follow the principles outlined in this Code.

What is the College of Massage Therapists of Newfoundland and Labrador's Vision Statement?

The College of Massage Therapists of Newfoundland and Labrador is a regulatory authority that establishes the integrity and value of massage therapy as an integral and respected health care profession through nationally established standards and evidence-based outcomes.

What is Massage Therapy?

Massage practice is a therapeutic, integral healing relationship in which the therapist assists the client in restoring, maintaining and enhancing the well-being of the client.

What is the Massage Therapy Scope of Practice?

"The practice of massage therapy is the assessment of the soft tissue and joints of the body and the treatment and prevention of physical dysfunction and pain of the soft tissues and joints by manipulation to develop, maintain, rehabilitate or augment physical function, to relieve pain, or to promote health." (*Massage Therapy Act, 2005*)

GENERAL PRINCIPLES, WHICH GUIDE THE PRACTICE OF MASSAGE THERAPY

Principle I - Respect for Persons

Principle II - Responsible Caring

Principle III - Integrity in Relationships

Principle IV - Responsibility to Society

PRINCIPLE I - RESPECT FOR PERSONS

Meaning:

To value the dignity and worth of all persons regardless of age, race, culture, creed, sexual identity, gender, ability and/or health status.

Application:

Client autonomy is demonstrated by:

- a) Ensuring that clients are as fully involved as possible in the planning and implementation of their own health care
- b) Providing complete and accurate information in a sensitive and timely fashion to enable clients, or when necessary a client's substitute decision maker, to make informed choices
- c) Listening to and respecting a client's values, opinions, needs, and cultural beliefs
- d) Encouraging and being responsive to a client's choice to accept, augment, modify, refuse or terminate treatment
- e) Being informed about moral and legal rights of a client
- f) Advocating for and supporting a client in exercising his/her moral and legal rights
- g) Safeguarding the client's right to privacy and confidentiality by holding all personal and health information in confidence unless otherwise required by law.

PRINCIPLE II - RESPONSIBLE CARING

Meaning:

Providing sensitive, compassionate and empathetic quality massage therapy.

Application:

Responsible care of a client is demonstrated by:

- a) Listening to and respecting the client's values, opinions, needs, and cultural beliefs
- b) Promoting the client's best interest and well-being, through the highest possible standard of professional practice
- c) Seeking assistance when conflicts arise between the value systems of the practitioner and the client
- d) Recognizing and referring the client to other health care providers when it is in the client's best interest to do so
- e) **Approaching and co-operating with substitute decision makers in assessing the client's wishes and best interests in the event of incapacity**
- f) Protecting the client's physical and emotional privacy
- g) Collecting only that information which is relevant to the provision of health care.

PRINCIPLE III - INTEGRITY IN RELATIONSHIPS

Meaning:

To practice with integrity, honesty and diligence in our professional relationships with ourselves, our clients, our professional colleagues and society.

Application:

Commitments to Clients are demonstrated by:

- a) Ensuring that we always act in our client's best interest as defined by the client's wishes and consistent with the standards of practice of the profession
- b) Informing the client about health care services available to support them
- c) Referring to other health care providers as necessary and appropriate
- d) Obtaining assistance when value conflicts arise which threaten to impede client autonomy
- e) Providing client-centered health care which includes the following:
 - i) Explaining to the client and advocating for his/her right to receive information about, and take control of his/her health care
 - ii) Providing information about the proposed treatment, alternative courses of action, the material effects, risks and side effects in each case and the consequences of not having the treatment
 - ii) Assisting the client to comprehend information
 - iv) Responding to questions about our client's health care/treatment

Commitments to Self are demonstrated by:

- a) Being pro-actively committed to our own health and personal and professional development
- b) Being competent, conscientious and empathetic practitioners
- c) Being aware of our personal values and being able to identify when value conflicts interfere with client care
- d) Keeping our professional commitment by integrating massage values and principles in our daily practice

Commitments to our Professional Colleagues are demonstrated by:

- a) Respecting our colleagues and working co-operatively with them
- b) Intervening in situations where the safety and well being of a client is in jeopardy
- c) Referring to other health care providers when necessary and appropriate
- d) Co-operating with regulatory functions of the profession
- e) Contributing to continuous quality improvement initiatives
- f) Upholding standards and guidelines of the profession
- g) Advocating with other health care providers to promote and support social changes that enhance individual and community health and well-being
- h) Representing ourselves honestly, and performing only those services for which we are qualified.

PRINCIPLE IV - RESPONSIBILITY TO SOCIETY

Meaning:

To be accountable to society and conduct ourselves in a manner that fosters and promotes high ethical standards.

Application:

Ethical practice is demonstrated by:

- a) Pursuing continued career-long, professional learning
- b) Advocating for and supporting a client's ethical and moral rights
- c) Participating in the promotion of the profession of massage therapy through advocacy, research and maintenance of the highest possible standards of practice
- d) Being committed to promoting the welfare and well-being of all persons in society
- e) Making every reasonable effort to ascertain that our clinical environment will permit provision of care consistent with the values in the Code of Ethics
- f) Committing to continuous improvement and implementation of standards of massage practice
- g) Collaborating with members of the other health professions to meet the health needs of the public
- h) Continuing to develop ways to clarify massage therapists' accountability to society.