

Executive Summary

The College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (the College) commissioned Collis & Reed Research to independently identify the changes and needs that are anticipated in the massage therapy profession and estimate the future demands for massage therapists across Ontario. As part of this project, Collis & Reed Research independently surveyed opinions of clients of massage therapists in Ontario. Collis & Reed's mandate was to assist in the development of two surveys, conduct the on-line surveys, analyze the survey data and prepare a written report of the findings.

Design & Implementation

Massage therapists were asked to provide, with consent, the names of clients who would be interested in participating in on-line consumer panel surveys. Two consumer panel surveys were developed and utilized. The first survey entitled *The Massage Therapy Client Census 2003* was comprised of 49 questions. This survey was designed to query clients about demographics, their impressions of massage therapy, and their health care resources. The second survey entitled *Client Relations* was comprised of 13 questions and was designed to query clients about their knowledge of massage therapy and Regulations.

Data Collection and Demographics

Two surveys were administered as on-line surveys to clients of massage therapists. The first survey entitled *Massage Therapy Client Census 2003* was conducted between Tuesday June 3, 2003 and Tuesday June 24, 2003. The second survey entitled *Client Relations* was conducted between Tuesday September 2, 2003 and Tuesday September 23, 2003. A total of 153 surveys were completed.

Survey Results and Observations:

Client Impressions

1. Most common reasons for seeking therapy were relaxation, regular health care, chronic physical problems and chronic injury.
2. Reasons for choosing massage therapy over other therapies included:
 - Massage therapy was recommended
 - Massage therapy helps with pain in back, neck and muscles
 - Massage therapy works
 - Massage therapy compliments other forms of treatments
 - Massage therapy is good for stress and relaxation

Health Care Resources

1. Most clients receive health care information from health care professionals.
2. Most clients report that they also receive treatment from chiropractors, physiotherapists and naturopaths.

Client Knowledge and Relations

1. Most clients were aware that:
 - Massage therapists receive two to three years of specialized training
 - Massage therapists must pass a certification examination
 - Ontario has a regulatory body that establishes and ensures standards
2. Most clients were unaware that:

- The general public can verify the credentials of massage therapists through the College
 - The College can address concerns made by the general public
 - The College is a regulatory organization and not a teaching institution
 - Massage therapists must periodically complete a Self Assessment Tool
 - The College has continuing education requirements for massage therapists
 - The College sends peers to review massage therapists practices to ensure public safety
 - Massage therapists are required to participate in a QAP that promotes life long learning and maintenance of high standards
 - The College has a mandate to educate the public about the prevention of all forms of abuse
3. Clients recalled that their therapist had:
- Explained treatment and assessment
 - Explained informed consent
 - Explained reasons for referrals
4. More than 72% of clients were confident that their massage therapist kept their health information confidential and were aware of the College's role and obligations.

General Observations

The general objective of the client survey was to better understand knowledge of clients about massage therapy and massage therapy Regulations in Ontario. The following describes general observations.

1. Overall, clients were knowledgeable about the College, education of massage therapists and the certification examination. Clients also noted that their therapists explained treatment, assessment, consent and referrals. Clients stated that they learned of health care issues through health care providers. This suggests that one way to further educate current clients is through practicing massage therapists.
2. Clients sought treatment from massage therapists for a variety of reasons and point out the benefits of choosing massage therapy over other therapies. This suggests that clients could be a valuable source of information about standards and regulation.

Clients of Massage Therapists

Survey Objectives and Content

The general objective of the survey was to better understand client demographics, impressions of massage therapy, health care resources and knowledge of regulation. The content areas of the client surveys were as follows:

- I. General demographics including:
 - Age, gender and years receiving therapy
- II. Descriptions of client impressions of therapy including descriptions of:
 - Reasons for seeking therapy
 - Reasons for choosing therapy
 - Frequency of therapy
- III. Descriptions of client health care resources
- IV. Knowledge of Regulation and Standards including:
 - Knowledge of massage therapy regulation
 - Client relations and confidentiality

Survey Design, Implementation & Response Rate

The objective of this on-line survey was to obtain a general indication of the current health care practices and knowledge levels of clients of massage therapists in Ontario. Both the *Massage Therapy Client Census 2003* and the *Client Relations Survey* were designed as online surveys. To obtain a sample of clients massage therapists were asked to provide Collis & Reed Research with a list of client names and email addresses, after seeking verbal consent from these clients. Clients were sent via email a secured link to each survey. Both surveys were administered between Tuesday June 3, 2003 and Tuesday September 23, 2003. The surveys included a brief description of the survey intent followed by forty-nine questions for the first survey and thirteen questions for the second survey. Overall, 153 clients completed these surveys.

Data Analyses

Statistical analyses were conducted on each question from the client surveys. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the analyses of these data. Percentages reported on the full sample (153 respondents) are accurate when applied to the population of clients within eight percent nineteen times out of twenty. In instances when only part of the sample is used for analyses, error rates are slightly higher.

For questions that required the respondents to make qualitative comments, a content analysis was conducted which included:

- The number of respondents that answered the question
- The frequency and percent of particular responses

- A general description of respondents' opinions

For questions that required the respondents to provide scale ratings, the following analyses were conducted which included:

- The number of respondents that answered the question
- The mean (average) rating for the question
- The percent of respondents that gave ratings below neutral, at neutral, or above neutral

Survey Results: Client Survey

Part I: Demographic Information

Age and gender

Age	Percent
< 35 years	21.1%
35-54	59.9%
>54	19.1%

Overall, 76% of the respondents were female and 24% percent were male.

Number of years seeking massage therapy

Years since first treatment	Percent
< 2 years	28.9%
3 to 5 years	32.4%
6-10 years	23.2%
11-20 years	13.4%
>20 years	2.1%

How long since you started with your current massage therapist?

Years since starting with current MT	Percent
< 1 years	31.7%
2-3 years	34.5%
4-5 years	18.3%
6-10 years	12.0%
> 10 years	3.5%

Occupation of clients

Occupation	Percent
Office Work	24.2%
Health Sciences	11.8%
Business	9.2%
Education	9.2%
Homemaker	8.5%

Trades	7.2%
Professional	7.2%

No other profession was chosen by more than five percent of the sample.

What level of education have you completed?

Education	Percent Choosing
High School	37.3%
Some College	13.7%
College Diploma	23.5%
Trade School	2.0%
Some University	15.7%
University Degree	17.3%
Professional School	7.8%
Post Graduate	14.4%

* Clients selected all that apply

Part II: Client Impressions of Therapy Summary of Results

1. Most common reasons for seeking therapy were:
 - Relaxation
 - Regular health care
 - Chronic physical problems
 - Chronic injury

2. Reasons for choosing massage therapy over other therapies included:
 - Massage therapy was recommended
 - Massage therapy helps with pain in back, neck and muscles
 - Massage therapy works
 - Massage therapy compliments other forms of treatments
 - Massage therapy is good for stress and relaxation

3. On average, clients receive massage therapy once a month or more.

Results in Detail

Are your massage therapy sessions paid for by extended health coverage?

Yes	No
74.7%	25.4%

What were your reasons for seeking massage therapy?

Reason	Originally	Currently
For Relaxation	36.0%	39.9%
Chronic Injury	19.0%	20.9%
Sports Injury	7.2%	6.5%
MVA	11.8%	10.5%
Work Place Injury	7.8%	5.9%
Regular Health Care	19.0%	36.0%
Chronic Physical Problem	25.5%	27.5%

Why did you choose massage therapy over other forms of treatment?

Overall, clients stated that they chose massage therapy over other forms of treatment because:

- Massage therapy was recommended
- Massage therapy helps with pain in back, neck and muscles
- Massage therapy works
- Massage therapy compliments other forms of treatments
- Massage therapy is good for stress and relaxation

How frequently do you receive treatment from your massage therapist?

Frequency	Percent
Weekly	18.4%
A few times a month	28.4%
Monthly	39.0%
Every other month	5.0%
A few times a year	9.2%

Part III
Client Health Care Resources and Media Preferences
Summary of Results

1. Overall, clients received health care information from health care professionals.
2. Clients reported that they also received treatment from chiropractors, physiotherapists and naturopaths.

Results in Detail

Where do you obtain your health care information?

Overall, clients received their healthcare information from health care professionals and from family and friends.

Excluding physicians and dentists, what health care professionals are treating you on a regular basis currently?

Professional	Percent
Chiropractor	34.6%
Physiotherapist	12.4%
Naturopath	12.4%

What other health care professionals have you previously used on a regular basis?

Most clients noted that they had previously seen chiropractors, physiotherapists, naturopaths and psychologists.

Part IV
Knowledge of Massage Therapy and Regulation
Summary of Result

1. Overall, 75% or more of clients were aware that:
 - Massage therapists receive two to three years of specialized training
 - Massage therapists must pass a certification examination
 - Ontario has a regulatory body that establishes and ensure standards
2. Between 50% and 74% of clients were aware that:
 - Massage therapists have certificates of registration and photo ID
3. Between 25% and 49% of clients were aware that:
 - The general public can verify the credentials of massage therapists through the College
 - The College can address concerns made by the general public
 - The College is a regulatory organization and not a teaching institution
 - Massage therapists must periodically complete a Self Assessment Tool
 - The College has continuing education requirements for massage therapists
 - The College sends peers to review massage therapists practices to ensure public safety
 - Massage therapists are required to participate in a QAP that promotes life long learning and maintenance of high standards
4. Less than 25% were aware that:
 - The College has a mandate to educate the public about the prevention of all forms of abuse
5. Clients recalled that their therapist had:
 - Explained treatment and assessment
 - Explained informed consent
 - Explained reasons for referrals
6. More than 72% of clients were confident that their massage therapists keep their health information confidential and were aware of the College's role and obligations

Results in Detail

Clients indicated which aspects of regulation they are familiar with. These are listed below.

Fact	Percent Yes
Massage therapy students receive two to three years of specialized training	83.5
Graduates of massage therapy programmes must pass a certification examination	86.4
Ontario has a regulatory body that establishes and ensure standards	75.0
Massage therapists have certificates of registration and photo ID	56.1
The general public can verify the credentials of massage therapists through the College	41.8
The College can address concerns made by the general public	39.9
The College is a regulatory organization and not a teaching institution	33.6
Massage therapists must periodically complete a Self Assessment Tool	27.8
The College has continuing education requirements for massage therapists	41.0
The College sends peers to review massage therapists' practices to ensure public safety	26.3
Massage therapists are required to participate in a QAP that promotes life long learning and maintenance of high standards	26.8
The College has a mandate to educate the public about the prevention of all forms of abuse	20.5

Some clients commented that their therapist had explained these issues to them. In addition, many stated that they had seen the registration certificate in their therapist's office. However, some mentioned that they had not seen photo ID. Some clients had positive opinions about safety monitoring and education for therapists.

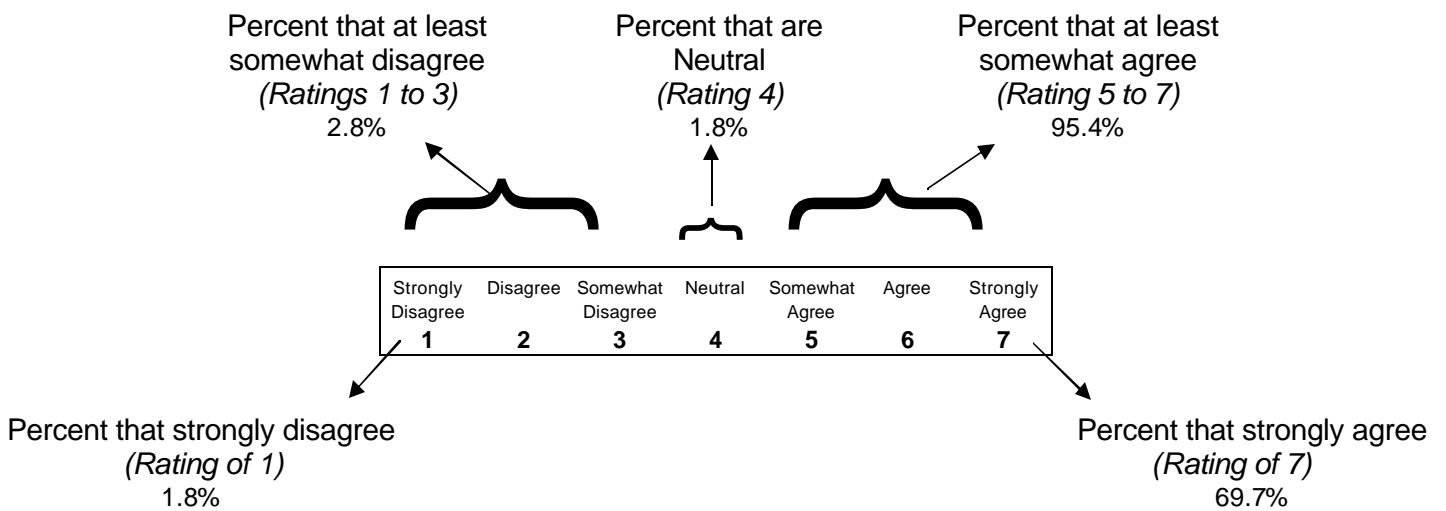
Client Relations

I recall my massage therapist telling me what she/he was proposing to do during treatment.

Yes	No
90.7%	9.3%

If yes, I fully understood what my massage therapist told me about my proposed treatment.

The average rating for this question: 6.50 (Strongly Agree)



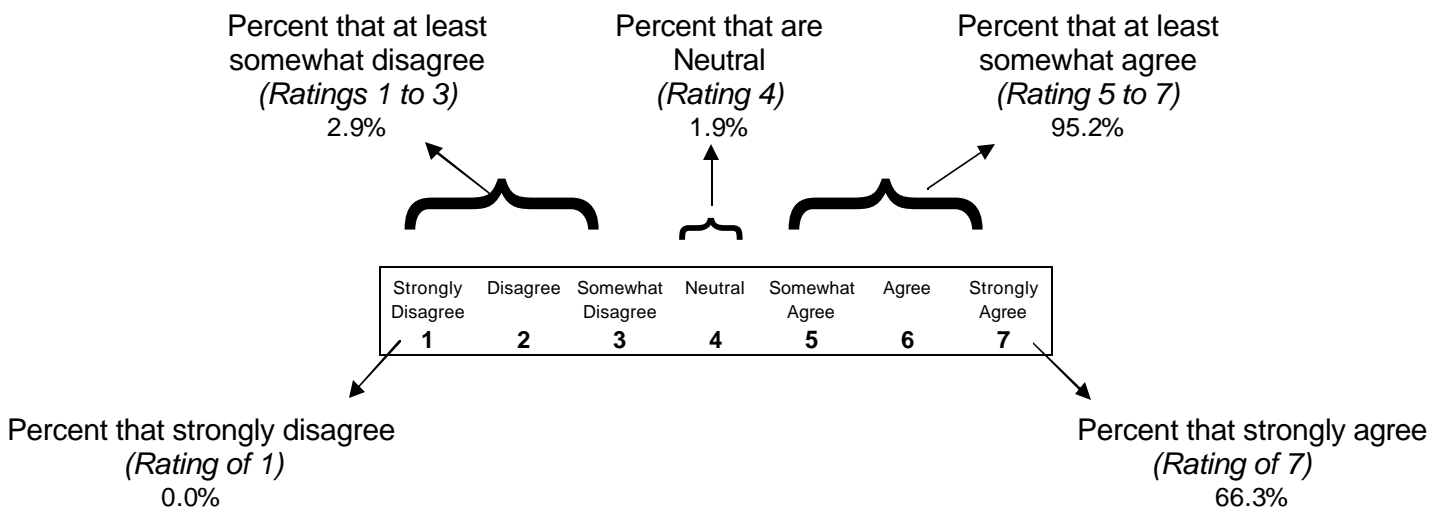
Some clients commented that their therapists were very specific and clear in explaining treatment before each session.

I recall my massage therapist describing the results of my initial assessment.

Yes	No
88.5%	11.5%

If yes, I fully understood my massage therapist’s explanation of my initial assessment

The average rating for this question: 6.52 (Strongly Agree)



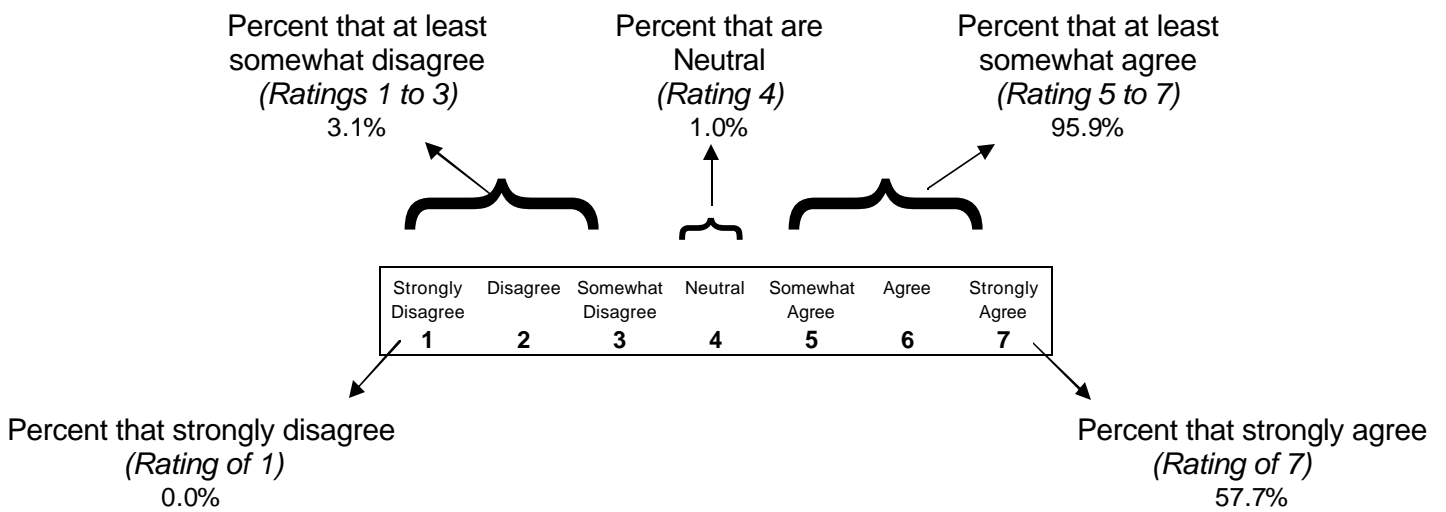
Some clients elaborated that their therapist was very clear in explaining initial assessments.

I recall my massage therapist explaining how my treatment plan would benefit me.

Yes	No
86.0%	14.0%

If yes, I fully understood how my treatment plan would benefit me.

The average rating for this question: 6.38 (Agree)



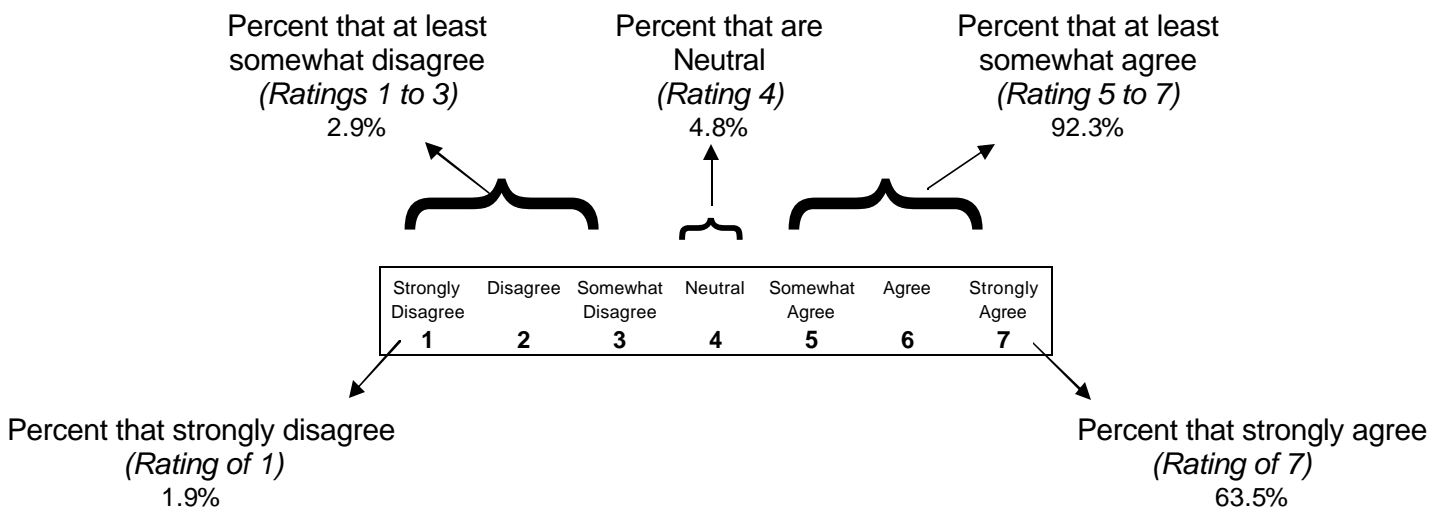
Some clients elaborated that their therapist was clear in explaining benefits of treatment. Most clients agreed that assessment and treatment plans were well explained. A few clients felt that they would like to know how many treatments would be needed for specific problems. A few clients felt terminology could be simpler in explanations.

I fully understood that I had the right to change, alter or stop treatment at anytime.

Yes	No
96.6%	3.4%

I fully understood what is meant to give consent to treatment

The average rating for this question: 6.37 (Agree)



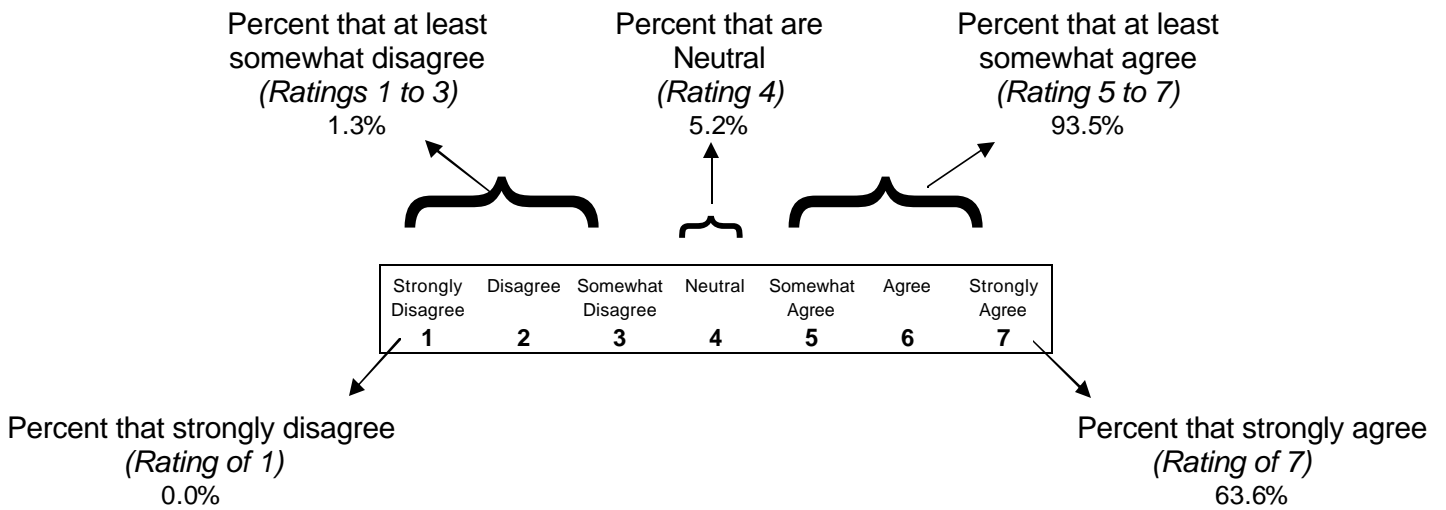
Some clients commented on their knowledge of the consent process. A few clients felt that consent was given to remove liability on the therapist. A few clients suggested having a form to sign could help with the consent process. Some clients felt consent issues should be available in a brochure.

I recall receiving a re-assessment to determine if the goals of my treatment plan had been achieved.

Yes	No
67.9%	32.1%

If yes, I fully understood the results of my re-assessment.

The average rating for this question: 6.45 (Agree)



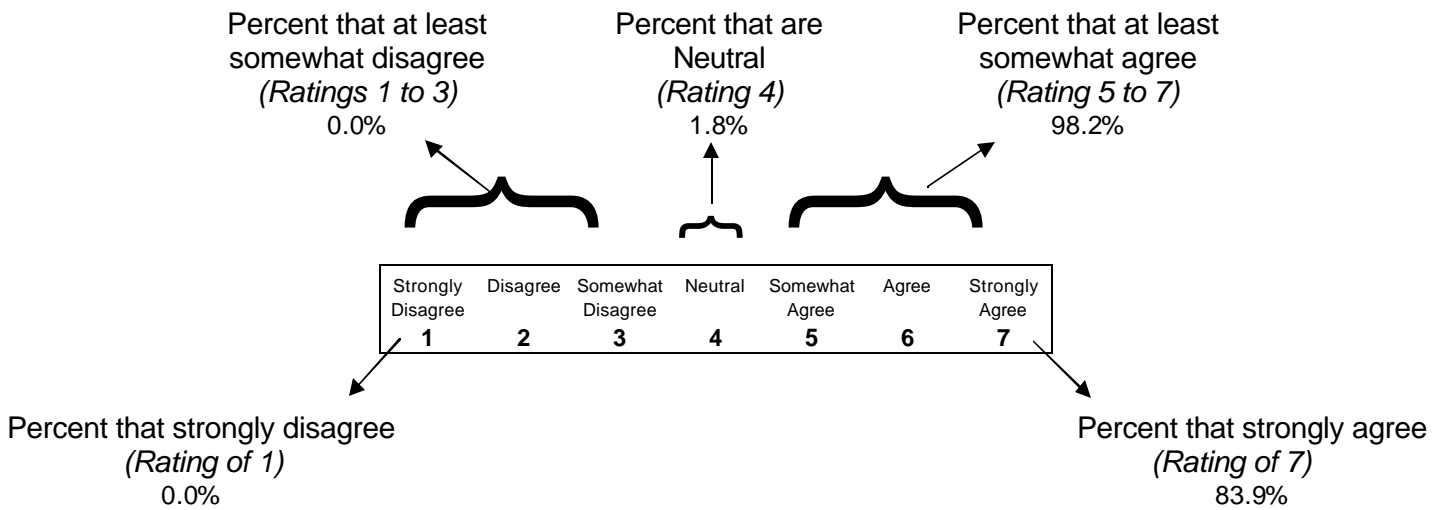
Some clients elaborated that their therapist regularly discussed their treatment with them.

Has your massage therapist ever recommended/referred you to another massage therapist or health care provider because he/she felt that additional treatment would be of benefit?

Yes	No
47.8%	52.2%

If yes, I fully understood why this referral was being recommended.

The average rating for this question: 6.79 (Strongly Agree)



Some clients described their referrals and were generally positive about them.

Client Knowledge of Consent and Confidentiality issues

Issue	% Yes
Are the receipts you receive from your massage therapist appropriate to receive reimbursement from your carrier without any problems?	94.4
Do you feel confident that the confidentiality of your personal health information is being maintained by your massage therapist?	98.3
Are you aware that upon your written consent your massage therapist must release a copy of your records to an individual you have designated?	74.1
Has your massage therapist told you that the College exists to protect the public from abuse or mistreatment by its members?	72.2
Did you know the College has a formal process for investigating complaints regarding the conduct of massage therapists?	72.1

General Observations

The general objective of the client survey was to better understand knowledge of clients about massage therapy and massage therapy regulation in Ontario. The following describes general observations.

1. Overall, clients were knowledgeable about the College, education of massage therapists and the certification examination. Clients also noted that their therapists explained treatment, assessment, consent and referrals. Clients stated that they learned of health care issues through health care providers. This suggests that one way to further educate current clients is through practicing massage therapists.
2. Clients sought treatment from massage therapists for a variety of reasons and point out the benefits of choosing massage therapy over other therapies. This suggests that clients could be a valuable source of information about standards and regulation.