

College of Massage Therapists of Ontario

Charter on Professionalism

Basic Principles

- I. **Client Centered** - dedication to professional excellence in responsible caring, altruism, and serving the best interests of the client, including enabling them to exercise their fundamental right to make informed choices about their treatment.
- II. **Therapist Autonomy** – acceptance of independent responsibility and accountability for managing their practice, including making appropriate choices regarding how, where, when, and with whom they provide services.
- III. **Social Justice** – respect for the dignity and worth of all clients, advocating for equitable access to care, and promoting effective distribution of resources.

Commitments and Expectations

1. Professional competence, responsibility to self, and accountability to others

Therapists must be committed to lifelong learning and be responsible for maintaining the skills, knowledge, and judgment necessary for the provision of the highest possible quality of care. More broadly, the profession as a whole must strive for competence in all of its members and ensure that appropriate mechanisms are available for therapists to accomplish and maintain this goal.

As members of a profession, therapists are expected to work collaboratively to enhance client care, be respectful of themselves and one another, and participate in the processes of self-regulation. This includes remediation and discipline of members who have failed to meet professional standards and ethics. The profession is also obligated to participate in defining and organizing the educational and standard-setting process within the scope of regulatory authority. These obligations include engaging in self-assessment and accepting, and supporting, external scrutiny of all aspects of their professional performance.

2. Honesty and appropriate relations with clients

Therapists must ensure that clients are completely and honestly informed before consenting to treatment, as well as during and after treatment. This expectation means that clients must be empowered to decide on the course of therapy and not that they should be involved in every minute decision about their care. Therapists must obtain feedback and reactions from the client in order to appropriately address the outcomes and future options of the treatment process. Therapists must also acknowledge that errors sometimes occur and clients must be informed promptly of any adverse effects or reactions that may cause harm.

Therapists must take whatever precautions are necessary to protect the welfare of their clients. Given the inherent imbalance of power by virtue of authority, and the vulnerability of clients, therapists must never exploit clients for any sexual advantage, personal financial gain, or other private purpose. Therapists must recognize the seriousness and extent of harm or injury that is caused by any form of abuse or negligence and act in accordance with the Standards of Practice and the Code of Ethics at all times.

3. Maintaining client confidentiality and trust

Earning the trust and confidence of clients requires that appropriate confidentiality and privacy safeguards be applied to disclosure of, and access to, client information. This commitment extends to discussions with persons acting on a client's behalf or any other person involved in treatment.

Massage therapists and their organizations must recognize situations that have the potential to compromise their professional responsibilities. They have an obligation to disclose and deal with conflicts of interest that arise in the course of their professional duties and activities. Not to do so can seriously compromise client trust.

4. Improving quality and scientific knowledge

Therapists must be dedicated to excellence in knowledge, skills, and judgment by maintaining and enhancing clinical competence. They are expected to work individually and collectively with other professionals to reduce risks, increase client safety, and optimize the outcomes of care. Therapists must actively participate, both individually and through their professional associations, in the creation and implementation of mechanisms for continuous improvement in the quality of care including complying with, and supporting, quality assurance and peer review requirements.

Part of a massage therapist's contract with society is based on the integrity and appropriate use of scientific knowledge. Therapists have a duty to ensure its appropriate use by upholding standards, promoting research, and creating new knowledge. The profession is responsible for the integrity of this knowledge, which is based on scholarship, scientific evidence, and therapist experience.

5. Access to appropriate care and effective distribution of resources

Professionalism demands that the objective of all health care services be the availability of a uniform and adequate standard of care. Therapists must individually and collectively promote public health through advocacy, and strive to reduce barriers to equitable access to treatment without any form of discrimination, and without concern for the self-interest of the therapist or the profession.

While meeting the needs of individual clients, therapists are required to provide treatment that is based on the wise and appropriate use of limited resources. They must be

committed to working with other therapists, healthcare professionals, third party payers, and the public to develop guidelines for cost-effective care. The provision of unnecessary or inappropriate services not only exposes clients to avoidable harm and expense, but also diminishes the resources available for others.

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