

Standard SPOTLIGHT

Prevention of Sexual Abuse

About the Standard Spotlight

Standard Spotlights are educational resources to help Registered Massage Therapists (RMTs) reflect on whether they are practising in a way that meets the expectations established by CMTO's *Standards of Practice (2022)*. This document is not a *Standard of Practice* or a regulation.

What are some of the key expectations within the Standard?

The key expectation for the *Standard* includes the requirement to never sexually abuse clients. Obtaining informed consent, protecting the client's personal and physical privacy, and applying touch with sensitivity are also emphasized.

Why are these expectations important?

RMTs must protect clients from experiencing sexual abuse.

- Sexual abuse includes behaviour and remarks of a sexual nature because sexualizing the client relationship in any way is inappropriate.
- Concurrent sexual and treating relationships are not permitted. The legislation defines that as sexual abuse.
- Consent by the client is never a defence to sexual abuse because there is always a power imbalance in favour of the healthcare professional.
- Revocation of registration is the mandatory penalty for many acts of sexual abuse because of the seriousness of the harm caused by sexual abuse.

How do you assess whether you are meeting the expectations of the Standard?

Questions to help you reflect on whether you are meeting the expectations of the *Standard* include:

- How is sexual abuse defined for regulated healthcare professionals?
- What steps do you take to ensure that the client is comfortable?
- When do you re-verify consent with the client?
- What steps do you take to set clear boundaries and prevent inappropriate relationships?