



College of
Massage
Therapists of
Ontario

STRiVE: Be the Best You Can Be FEEDBACK REPORT

**Summary of Feedback Received in Survey and
Focus Groups**

May 8, 2023

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Executive Summary

Part 1 of STRiVE: Be the Best You Can Be, is being reviewed, updated and better aligned with Part 2, Risk-based Assessment. To inform these changes, Registered Massage Therapists (RMTs) were invited to complete a STRiVE: Be the Best You Can Be feedback survey and to participate in focus groups. 2020 RMTs provided survey feedback and 24 RMTs participated in focus groups.

The survey responses indicated a wide diversity of opinion with the average response being near neutral for most questions. The average responses to the components of STRiVE: Be the Best You Can Be indicated a relatively more positive view of the e-Learning Module and Self-Assessment and a relatively more negative view of the Experiential Learning Exercise (ELE). For those with a negative view of STRiVE, much of the open-ended feedback related to challenges with use of the STRiVE platform.

The focus groups indicated diverse understandings of what STRiVE is and how it can be used along with preferences regarding length of STRiVE opening period and timing in the year. Similarly to the survey, the focus groups also indicated a preference for the e-Learning Module and Self-Assessment components and concerns with platform navigation and ease of use.

Background

All regulated health professions are legislated to have a Quality Assurance Program that ensures practicing health care providers are up to date with changes in practice, that there is a culture of continual improvement, and that care is safe and effective.

In 2015, CMTO undertook redevelopment of the Quality Assurance Program as part of a strategic initiatives. In alignment with other changes in approach to Massage Therapy education, the new program would be underpinned by competencies that apply across the entire career of Registered Massage Therapists (RMTs).

A consultation in 2018 with the profession that gathered feedback on the proposed Career-Span Competencies (CSCs), was approved for use by Council as the basis of the new program. Development of STRiVE - the Quality Assurance Program started in earnest with additional consultation on Self-Assessment and the online platform. STRiVE was approved by Council and launched in 2019 with an initial round of feedback gathered to inform changes to the online platform in 2020.

The initial launch of STRiVE focused on the first part of STRiVE: Be the Best You Can Be. Part 1 has four components: an e-Learning Module, Self-Assessment, Learning Plan, and Experiential Learning Exercise (ELE). RMTs have completed these requirements each year since 2019.

From the outset, STRiVE has intended to have a second part underpinned by the Standards of Practice and developed in a second phase. After the release of the 2022 Standards of Practice, development of Part 2 of STRiVE; Risk-based Assessment was started. With review and approval by CMTO Council, new risk-based assessments were launched on April 4, 2023, which has two components: Practice Profile and Practice Assessment.

In 2023, Part 1, STRiVE: Be the Best You Can Be is undergoing a review and update to ensure incorporation of feedback and further alignment with Part 2 of STRiVE: Risk-based Assessments.

Continual improvement of STRiVE falls under Regulatory Excellence in the 2023-2025 Strategic Plan as an extension of modernization and improvement of efficiency and effectiveness.

Methodology

Feedback Survey Methods

Following submission of STRiVE requirements in 2022, RMTs received a completion email that included a link to the feedback survey and ensured all RMTs were invited to provide feedback

voluntarily. Timing for the survey was selected for two reasons: to allow for the majority of RMTs to have completed STRiVE requirements on an annual basis for four years (2019-2022) and to ensure feedback was provided prior to the introduction Part 2 of STRiVE: Risk-based Assessment, in 2023.

The survey was opened at the beginning September and closed on December 15, 2022.

The STRiVE feedback survey had two parts: demographics questions and STRiVE questions. The demographics questions included gender, age, years of practice, and number of times they had completed STRiVE.

Respondents to the survey were anonymous unless they chose to share their contact information. At the end of the survey, respondents that provided contact details could be invited to be potentially included in further feedback opportunities, such as focus groups or interviews.

Data analysis was conducted on the feedback provided. The initial analysis of the survey feedback and the themes identified helped to inform the questions used in the focus groups.

Focus Groups Methods

A list of potential focus groups participants was created using the volunteers who provided contact information in the survey. The list was organized by overall feedback type into three categories: RMTs whose average responses were mostly positive, neutral, and negative. The categories allowed the selection process to ensure diverse representation of all opinions and experiences of STRiVE to be included. From these categories, four focus groups were randomly selected:

- Group 1: Mostly positive
- Group 2: Mostly neutral
- Group 3: Mostly negative
- Group 4: A mix of all three (with 2-3 representatives from each category)

The groups were checked to ensure diversity of practice location, good standing with CMTO, and no history of CMTO discipline or compliance issues. RMTs not in good standing or with a conduct history were replaced by another RMT randomly selected from the same category.

Potential participants were asked to indicate their continued interest in participating and to share availability for potential focus group meeting dates. Final participants were selected based on availability. For potential participants where scheduling was not possible due to

availability or last-minute cancellation, additional participants were invited from RMTs who previously expressed interest in providing feedback to CMTO.

Each of the four focus groups were conducted by CMTO staff in one hour video teleconference meetings between February 27 and March 1, 2023. The meetings were started with a welcome and introductions followed by an overview of STRiVE: Be the Best You Can Be and the aims of the session. A guided discussion was then used to gather feedback.

Responses to the guided discussion questions were recorded through note taking by multiple observers for each focus group. Afterwards, notes were collated and analyzed for common themes.

Results

Feedback Survey Results

The survey was opened at the beginning September and closed on December 15, 2022. At least one question of the survey was answered by 2020 survey respondents.

Respondents had the following demographics:

- Gender: 84% female, 15% male and 1% X (not directly associated with male or female, including but not limited to Trans, Two-Spirit, Non-Binary, and/or Binary people. CMTO recognizes that there may be more terms that represent the diverse and unique gender experiences, including those of the LGBTQ2S community)
- Age:
 - 21-30 (11%)
 - 31-40 (25%)
 - 41-50 (35%)
 - 51-60 (21%)
 - 61+ (8%)

In comparison to the demographics for all current RMTs, the respondents have slightly higher proportion of females and more older RMTs. While the respondents' sample skews slightly more female and older than the profession as a whole, all groups were well represented with multiple respondents in each sub-group.

Respondents provided the following feedback:

- Satisfaction:
 - The e-Learning Module and Self-Assessment were the highest rated components.
 - The Experiential Learning Exercise (ELE) was the lowest rated component.
- Usefulness day-to-day:
 - The Self-Assessment was the highest rated component.
 - The Experiential Learning Exercise (ELE) was the lowest rated component.
- Reaching career goals:
 - All components were rated below neutral on average.
 - The Experiential Learning Exercise was the lowest rated component.
- Agreement or disagreement with statements about STRiVE.

- Average agreement above neutral:
 - “Encouraged me to reflect on my practice.”
 - “Helped me identify areas of strengths and opportunities for learning.”
 - “I don’t understand how Be the Best You Can Be part of STRiVE has helped me”?
- Average agreement very near neutral:
 - “Allows me to independently plan and identify professional learning goals.”
- Average agreement below neutral:
 - “Helped me define areas of learning I want to explore.”
 - “Allows me to align my learning activities with my professional learning goals.”
 - “Provides a way to track my progress and record my achievements.”
 - “Helps me consider opportunities for career development.”
 - “I don’t understand how Be the Best You Can Be part of STRiVE has helped me”?
- Helpfulness in profession development (average ranking from best (1st) to worst (4th)):
 - 1: e-Learning Module, 2: Self-Assessment, 3: Learning Plan, 4: Experiential Learning Exercise (ELE).
- User-friendliness of STRiVE platform:
 - Average score below neutral.
- Completion of STRiVE if not mandatory.
 - Majority response of “No”.
- Helpfulness of Career-Span Competencies (CSCs) in professional development.
 - Average score above neutral.
- STRiVE resulted in more or less time spend on professional development.
 - Majority response of “The Same”.
- The value of professional development to RMTs.
 - Average score between “Somewhat valuable” and “Very valuable”.

For all rated responses but one, the average response was closer to neutral than any other rating; the exception being the value of professional development to RMTs. This indicates that for any component of STRiVE, the average opinion is near neutral. However, as shared above, there are some patterns in relative rating: regardless of question, the e-Learning Module and

Self-Assessment tended to be rated highest while the Experiential Learning Exercise (ELE) tended to be rated lowest.

RMT quote: “the experiential learning exercise seem unnecessarily repetitive”

The near neutral average response trend included the user-friendliness of the STRiVE platform (below neutral), if STRiVE resulted in more or less time spent on professional development (below neutral), and helpfulness of Career-Span Competencies (CSCs) (above neutral).

The completion of STRiVE if not mandatory also had a clear majority of respondents selecting “No”.

Generally, those who viewed STRiVE negatively were more likely to provided open-ended feedback than those who viewed it positively. Some themes shared in open ended responses included:

- Appreciation of the flexibility of STRiVE for breadth of goals and activities.
- Indications that STRiVE was too easy or simple.
- Concerns with platform user friendliness and navigation challenges including frustration with completion of some STRiVE steps (Learning Plan, e-Learning Module quiz).

RMT quote: “The platform is not very use friendly at all. There is far too much changing of pages between inputting learning goals, and saving activities, etc.”

- Concerns that time spent completing STRiVE was not valued.
- STRiVE did not help encourage continuing education.
- Desire for additional guidance on goal setting or continuing education options.
- Challenges with some terminology.

RMT quote: “I found the wording of the e quiz very difficult this year”

- Indication of not needing STRiVE as they were already regularly participating in continuing education.
- Preference for previous approaches to Quality Assurance.
- Challenges with understanding Career-Span Competencies (CSCs).
- STRiVE can be overwhelming or overly time consuming.
- Suggestions for different e-Learning Module content (such as modalities or anatomy).
- Concerns with the STRiVE deadline being in a busy time of year.

**RMT quote: "Timing of STRIVE is terrible.
Heaviest client load at the end of the year."**

Focus Group Results

The four focus groups were conducted from February 27 to March 1, 2023, with a total of 24 participants as follows:

- Group 1: 6 participants
- Group 2: 7 participants
- Group 3: 6 participants
- Group 4: 5 participants

Participants were from across Ontario with 18 different municipalities represented. Participants also indicated, when introducing themselves, a variety of practice settings and years of experience in practice.

For each of the guided discussion topics, the following themes were most prevalently shared:

- Difficulty (amount of effort) to complete STRiVE.
 - Difficulty because of challenges with platform navigation and step submission.
 - Difficulty to set goals and connect those to activities.
 - Sense of redundancy of steps and too many checkboxes.
 - Difficulty in completing e-Learning Module quiz.
 - Challenges with some terminology.
- Difficulty to understand STRiVE concepts.
 - STRiVE concepts were simple and straightforward.
 - Not difficult because just clicking through boxes.
 - Some e-Learning Module questions were long and complex.
 - Additional resources or instructions would help.
 - Self-reflection was beneficial to understating practice strengths and weaknesses.
- How STRiVE connects to practice and is used in professional development.
 - The e-Learning Module should relate to everyday practice.
 - More guidance on goals would help.
 - RMTs already know what they need to improve on.
 - STRiVE is better suited to new RMTs.
 - Goal setting should be secondary to learning activities.
 - The self-reflection helps to connect STRiVE to practice.

- The STRiVE helps track continuing education.
- The experiential leaning exercise was not always relatable to practice experience.
- Which components of STRiVE are most helpful and why/least helpful and why.
 - The e-Learning Module was the most helpful component.
 - The Self-Assessment and Experiential Learning Exercise (ELE) were the least helpful components.
 - The Learning Plan was both a most liked and least helpful component.
 - The Experiential Learning Exercise (ELE) was too time consuming and had too many steps.
 - The Learning Plan was too repetitive.
- Thoughts on the Self-Assessment component of STRiVE.
 - The Learning Plan steps were too repetitive.
 - Self-Assessment helps in thinking about areas to improve.
 - Self-Assessment is easy to click through without considering the answers.
 - People are not good at self-assessment; it is too subjective.
 - The more you put into Self-Assessment, the more you get out of it.
- Time needed to complete STRiVE (platform content only).
 - One hour or less: 3 participants.
 - Two to three hours: 13 participants.
 - Four or more hours: 7 participants.
 - No participant indicated more than eight hours.
 - Less time could have been spent.
 - It is easier to complete if worked on over multiple days/sessions.
- STRiVE length of time open and time of year open.
 - Having STRiVE open for 60 days or more was appreciated.
 - Having STRiVE open for 60 days was enough time for most.
 - Fall is a busy time for RMTs.
 - Having multiple parts and deadlines might help.
 - For some the timing does not matter or any time can be challenging depending on individual circumstances.
 - Shorter length of time open might lead RMTs to rush.
 - Having 60 days or more allows time for reflection.

At the end of the focus group time, participants were offered the opportunity to share other feedback about STRiVE. Some additional themes shared then or at other times during discussions, not already mentioned above, include:

- Individual learning differences, learning challenges, and accessibility concerns can contribute to difficulty with STRiVE.
- Unclear how Career-Span Competencies (CSCs) are used and how they connect to STRiVE.
- Making the connection from Self-Assessment to learning goals to learning activities was challenging.
- Requiring 100% correct responses on the e-Learning Module quiz was a source of frustration.
- STRiVE was perceived as being the activity instead of a tool to assess learning needs, set goals, and record outcomes.
- Additional information on STRiVE and how to use STRiVE would be helpful.
- STRiVE was not perceived to align with the completion of courses or formal continuing education; these were not perceived as potential learning activities.

Summary for Proposed Changes

The feedback for the survey indicated a wide range of opinions about STRiVE, averaging out to something near neutral for most questions. However, when compared relatively, some components of STRiVE were perceived more positively than others. This included relatively high average ratings for the e-Learning Module and Self-Assessment and a relatively low rating for the Experiential Learning Exercise (ELE). Participants on average agreed that professional development was important and that they would not do STRiVE if it was not mandatory. For those that perceived STRiVE negatively and left comments, concerns with the platform, its navigation, and difficulty completing the steps needed to submit STRiVE contributed to their dissatisfaction.

The focus groups provided additional context for the varied opinions about STRiVE by sharing how participants differently perceived and used STRiVE. This included some enjoying the use of STRiVE as a tool of documentation for continuing education, an aid in exploring strengths and weaknesses in their own practice, as a source of information on important topics, and as a reminder to continually improve. While other expressed that STRiVE was something that they just had to complete.

During discussion, some of these differences were connected to how STRiVE was perceived and how self-reflection was incorporated into continuing education. Participants indicated a desire for more supports in connecting professional learning goals with learning activities. This included more information on STRiVE as a reporting tool for annual requirements instead of as a replacement for professional development.

Both survey and focus group participants feedback agreed in the average relative ranking of STRiVE components from most preferred to least preferred as: e-Learning Module, Self-Assessment, Learning Plan, and Experiential Learning Exercise (ELE).

The focus groups suggested that perception of the Self-Assessment may relate to the degree of interest and effort put into the process; those that invested more interest and effort in the Self-Assessment perceived it to be more valuable.

While the e-Learning Module was perceived positively, the focus groups also suggested that this varies according to the topic and perceived degree of difficulty of the quiz. For topics that closely related to practice were generally perceived more positively, and for those that perceived certain topics as difficult, and were unable to answer the quiz in the first attempt indicated frustration with being required to get 100%.