

Standard SPOTLIGHT

Prevention of and Zero Tolerance for Sexual Abuse

About Standard Spotlights

Standard Spotlights are educational resources to help Registered Massage Therapists/Massage Therapists (RMTs/MTs) reflect on whether they are practising in a way that meets the expectations established by CMTO's *Standards of Practice*.

Key expectations of this Standard

Key expectations include the requirement to never sexually abuse patients and to ensure that informed consent is an ongoing process. Protecting the patient's personal and physical privacy and applying touch with sensitivity are also emphasized.

Importance of these key expectations

RMTs/MTs must protect patients from experiencing sexual abuse.

- Sexual abuse includes unwanted touching of a patient by an RMT/MT and any sexual relationship with a patient, even if the patient is a spouse or current sexual partner.
- Patient consent is never a defence for sexual abuse because there is always a power imbalance in favour of the healthcare professional.
- CMTO has zero tolerance for any form of abuse: verbal, physical, emotional, financial or sexual, by an RMT/MT. Revocation of registration is the mandatory penalty for many acts of sexual abuse because of the seriousness of the harm caused.

Meeting these key expectations

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

- How is sexual abuse defined for regulated healthcare professionals?
- How do you determine if assessment or treatment of sensitive areas is clinically indicated?
- When do you re-verify consent with the patient?
- What steps do you take to prevent sexual abuse from occurring in your practice?