

June 2009



## **Code of Ethics, Conduct and Practice © GCMT 2007**

The General Council for Massage Therapies (GCMT) was set up to establish procedures to regulate the practice of Massage Therapy in the UK.

The goal of the GCMT is to establish, improve and maintain the standards of all Massage Therapies. The primary professional duty of Massage Practitioners is to competently assist the client to optimum health within the circumstances of the client's condition and within their boundaries of training and Scope of Practice.

Practitioners engaged in the accepted practice of Massage Therapy, having satisfied the GCMT of their competence in such therapies, shall adhere to the following Code of Ethics, Conduct and Practice.

### **Code of Ethics**

Registrants are required to:

- 1.1. Represent their qualifications honestly, including their educational achievements and professional affiliations and will provide only those services they are qualified to perform.
- 1.2. Be aware of cautions and contraindications for massage and bodywork and refrain from treatment where appropriate.
- 1.3. Acknowledge the limitations of massage and refer clients/patients/users on to the appropriate health professionals when necessary.
- 1.4. Provide treatment only where there is reasonable expectation that it will be advantageous to the client/patients/users.
- 1.5. Consistently maintain and improve their professional knowledge, developing a portfolio of education which meet the requirements of their professional organization.
- 1.6. Conduct their business and professional activities with honesty, integrity, and respect the views and beliefs of their clients/patients/users in regard to gender, ethnic origins, cultural background, sexuality, lifestyle, age and social status.
- 1.7. Refrain from unjust discrimination against clients or other healthcare professionals. They must seek to maintain good relationships and co-operate with other health care professionals.
- 1.8. Ensure that clients/patients/users have an understanding about what is involved in their treatment and that voluntary informed consent is obtained either verbally or in

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a written form prior to treatment commencing.

- 1.9. Respect the client/practitioner relationship, the confidentiality of the client and endeavour to foster and maintain trust at all times.
- 1.10. Respect the clients' right to refuse or terminate treatment at any time, regardless to prior consent given.
- 1.11. Members may exercise the right to refuse treatment to any person, or part of the body, for just and reasonable cause.
- 1.12. Respect the clients/patients/users right to total confidentiality, including the confidentiality of clients/patients/users who maybe suicidal, unless it threaten the physical safety of others.
- 1.13. Any GCMT registrant undertaking research must adhere to the Code of Ethics and Standards laid down by the Education Research Trust.

### **Code of Conduct**

- 2.1. Practitioners should be sensitive to a clients/patients/users modesty at all times and provide appropriate draping and treat in a way that ensures their comfort and privacy. Also to be sensitive to any special needs e.g. language difficulties, disability or if they wish a companion to be present.
- 2.2. Physical examinations or treatments of children under the age of 16 (18 years for Scotland) must be in the presence of a parent or guardian unless written consent has been given.
- 2.3. Where a client is already receiving medical treatment for their presenting condition, treatment should not be commenced without prior consent from the respective practitioner.
- 2.4. Provide information (if requested) to other health professionals with clients written consent only.
- 2.5. Report all notifiable disease states according to applicable laws.
- 2.6. Ensure by means of continuous update of information and training, a level of competence consistent with the highest standards of the profession.
- 2.7. Maintain a portfolio of continuing professional development.
- 2.8. Deal with complaints and criticisms efficiently using appropriate procedures.
- 2.9. Abstain from any claim or statement misrepresenting the therapeutic benefits of massage and bodywork.
- 2.10. A practitioner should at all times maintain the correct appearance, behaviour and conduct expected of the professional person; any abuse of alcohol, drugs, or good order is deemed to be a serious offence against this code. A practitioner should not practice if illness, physical or mental, affects their practice.

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2.11. A Practitioner may not:

- i) Address or refer to an assistant as “Nurse” unless the person referred to holds a nursing qualification in the country in which the practitioner is operating a clinic.
- ii) Call himself/herself “Doctor” unless they hold a recognized medical qualification in the country in which the Member is practicing.
- iii) Undertake to attend women in childbirth or treat them 10 days thereafter without permission from the healthcare professional unless they hold an appropriate qualification in midwifery, or have the necessary massage specialist competence in massage, pregnancy and labour.
- iv) Undertake to treat clients/patients/users who are mentally unstable addicted to drugs or alcohol, severely depressed, suicidal, or hallucinating unless they have the necessary competence or have written medical consent.
- v) Knowingly apply massage therapy to a person who is already receiving similar medical treatment for the same condition without the respective practitioner’s consent.
- vi) Carry out any massage on a client/patient/user who has already received similar treatment for the same condition from another practitioner unless the client has, of his/her own volition, decided to abandon the original practitioner’s treatment.
- vii) Treat animals without express permission from a veterinary surgeon.

**Code of Practice**

**Records**

- 3.1. Members should maintain up-to-date records of all clients in regard to medical history, presenting complaint, assessment and procedures performed.
- 3.2. The record keeping process should be as transparent as possible, and clients should be made aware that records are being kept.
- 3.3. All records should be kept according to the 8 principles of the Data Protection Act (1998). These state that data must be:
  - i) fairly and lawfully processed
  - ii) processed for limited purposes
  - iii) adequate, relevant and not excessive
  - iv) accurate

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- v) not kept for longer than is necessary
  - vi) processed in line with your rights
  - vii) secure
  - viii) not transferred to countries without adequate protection.
- 3.4. Where a practitioner works as a part of a group practice or clinic, members should ensure that the practice or clinic is registered under the Data Protection Act (1998) where appropriate.
- 3.5. Records must be kept in a secure place, adequately safeguarded and not accessible to third parties. Computerised records must be kept secure from unauthorised access. Registrants are advised to seek advice relating to the requirement to register under the Data Protection Act where client records are computerised.
- 3.6. Practitioners should safeguard the confidentiality of all client/patients/users information. Disclosure to third parties, including other healthcare professional should be only with the client's written permission. (Where information is disclosed to other parties, advice should be sought relating to the requirement to register under the Data Protection Act. Where credit card payments are taken by individuals not covered by a group Data Protection Registration, it is recommended that advice is sought relating to the requirement to register.)
- 3.7. Client/patients/users records need to be kept for seven years, in the case of children for 5 years after their 21st birthday, for terminally or seriously ill clients/patients/users records should be retained indefinitely.

#### **Personal**

- 3.8. Practitioners must have a current first aid certificate. (Minimum level "Appointed Persons").
- 3.9. Practitioners must hold adequate professional and public liability insurance cover.

#### **Premises**

- 3.10. Treatment areas must be hygienic, safe and equipped to clinical standards. Any couch used must have an adequate working weight for the client and techniques used.
- 3.11. Treatment rooms and public areas all must comply with current health and safety regulations. Staff facilities and public areas (waiting rooms, hallways, stairs, toilet facilities etc.) must also comply with current health and safety regulations.

#### **Advertising**

- 3.12. Any advertising must be legal, decent, honest, truthful and in accordance with the Advertising Standards Agency.
- 3.13. Advertisements must not abuse the trust of existing or potential clients/patients/users or exploit their lack of knowledge or make claims of cure.

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- 3.14. They must be of good character and not bring the profession into disrepute.

**Stationary and Other Products**

- 3.15. Professional letterheads should be of good quality and print.

**Publications**

- 3.16. Nothing may be published in the name of the GCMT without prior agreement.