



# Code of Ethics

Amended November 1, 2011



## Massage Therapist Association of Alberta Code of Ethics

### **MTAA Members Shall:**

- Have a sincere commitment to provide the highest quality of care to those who seek their professional service.
- Acknowledge the confidential nature of all professional relationships and respect them accordingly.
- Strive for professional excellence through regular assessment of personal strengths, limitations and effectiveness.
- Respect the integrity of all persons by respecting their verbal, physical, sexual and financial borders.
- Refer clients with conditions beyond their expertise and education to the appropriate health care professional.
- Endeavor to protect all members of the Massage Therapist Association of Alberta collectively and individually from misrepresentation and misunderstanding.
- Not misrepresent themselves or their work to the public or their professional Association.
- Always develop the client-therapist relationship in the best interest of the client.
- Ensure that all persons basic rights are upheld at all times.
- Conduct themselves in their professional lives in a manner that will enhance the image of the Massage Therapy Profession as a whole.



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### Preface Statements

#### **What is a Code of Ethics?**

A Code of Ethics is a statement which expresses the primary ethical values, obligations and goals of the member. It is a commitment which serves to bear witness to our promise as a profession to uphold the values and ethical obligations expressed in the Code.

#### **Why do we need a Code of Ethics?**

A Code of Ethics gives definition to our commitment to practice in ethical terms. As practitioners, we have a commitment to society to accept the responsibility and maintain the trust with which we have been invested.

#### **What does a Code of Ethics do?**

It lays out clearly the MTAA's values and explains what they are in terms of what we ought to do in order to protect and promote the public good, and what we must avoid doing in order to prevent harm to our clients.

#### **To whom does this Code apply?**

Massage Therapists who are members of the MTAA are expected to maintain a commitment to massage therapy values and to follow the principles outlined in this Code.

#### **What is MTAA's Mission Statement?**

We are confident, inspired health professionals dedicated to patient centred care.

#### **What is the MTAA Scope of Practice?**

In their practice, massage therapists do one or more of the following:

- Assess, diagnose and treat the soft tissues and joints of the body, with the intent of producing a therapeutic outcome or providing preventative care, and
- Contribute to the development and improvement of primary and complementary health policy, and
- Teach, manage and conduct research in the science, techniques and practice of Massage Therapy.



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### **General Principles which Guide the Practice of Massage Therapy**

- Principle I - Respect for Persons
- Principle II - Responsible Caring
- Principle III - Integrity in Relationships
- Principle IV - Responsibility to Society

#### **Principle I - Respect For Persons**

##### **Meaning:**

To value the dignity and worth of all persons regardless of age, race, culture, creed, sexual identity, gender, ability and/or health status.

##### **Application:**

Client autonomy is demonstrated by:

- a) Ensuring that clients are as fully involved as possible in the planning and implementation of their own health care
- b) Providing complete and accurate information in a sensitive and timely fashion to enable clients, or when necessary a client's substitute decision maker, to make informed choices
- c) Listening to and respecting a client's values, opinions, needs, and cultural beliefs
- d) Encouraging and being responsive to a client's choice to accept, augment, modify, refuse or terminate treatment
- e) Being informed about moral and legal rights of a client
- f) Advocating for and supporting a client in exercising his/her moral and legal Rights
- g) Safeguarding the client's right to privacy and confidentiality by holding all personal and health information in confidence unless otherwise required by law.

#### **Principle II - Responsible Caring**

##### **Meaning:**

Providing sensitive, compassionate and empathetic quality massage therapy.

##### **Application:**

Responsible care of a client is demonstrated by:

- a) Listening to and respecting the client's values, opinions, needs, and cultural beliefs
- b) Promoting the client's best interest and well-being, through the highest possible standard of professional practice
- c) Seeking assistance when conflicts arise between the value systems of the practitioner and the client
- d) Recognizing and referring the client to other health care providers when it is in the client's best interest to do so
- e) Being alert to and reporting, as required, any unethical practice by any member of the regulated health professions
- f) Approaching and co-operating with substitute decision makers in assessing the client's wishes and best interests in the event of incapacity
- g) Protecting the client's physical and emotional privacy
- h) Collecting only that information which is relevant to the provision of health care.



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### **Principle III - Integrity in Relationships**

#### **Meaning:**

To practice with integrity, honesty and diligence in our professional relationships with ourselves, our clients, our professional colleagues and society.

#### **Application:**

Commitments to Clients are demonstrated by:

- a) Ensuring that we always act in our client's best interest as defined by the client's wishes and consistent with the standards of practice of the profession
- b) Informing the client about health care services available to support them
- c) Referring to other health care providers as necessary and appropriate
- d) Obtaining assistance when value conflicts arise which threaten to impede client autonomy
- e) Providing client-centered health care which includes the following:
  - i) Explaining to the client and advocating for his/her right to receive information about, and take control of his/her health care
  - ii) Providing information about the proposed treatment, alternative courses of action, the material effects, risks and side effects in each case and the consequences of not having the treatment
  - iii) Assisting the client to comprehend information
  - iv) Responding to questions about our client's health care/treatment

Commitments to Self are demonstrated by:

- a) Being pro-actively committed to our own health and personal and professional development
- b) Being competent, conscientious and empathetic practitioners
- c) Being aware of our personal values and being able to identify when value conflicts interfere with client care and respond appropriately
- d) Keeping our professional commitment by integrating massage values and principles in our daily practice

Commitments to our Professional Colleagues are demonstrated by:

- a) Respecting our colleagues and working co-operatively with them
- b) Intervening in situations where the safety and well being of a client is in jeopardy
- c) Reporting to appropriate authorities practitioner who abuses a client physically, verbally, sexually or financially
- d) Referring to other health care providers when necessary and appropriate
- e) Contributing to continuous quality improvement initiatives
- f) Upholding standards and guidelines of the profession
- g) Advocating with other health care providers to promote and support social changes that enhance individual and community health and well-being
- h) Representing ourselves honestly, and performing only those services for which we are qualified.



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### **Principle IV - Responsibility to Society**

#### **Meaning:**

To be accountable to society and conduct ourselves in a manner that fosters and promotes high ethical standards.

#### **Application:**

Ethical practice is demonstrated by:

- a) Pursuing continued career-long, professional learning
- b) Advocating for and supporting a client's ethical and moral rights
- c) Participating in the promotion of the profession of massage therapy through advocacy, research and maintenance of the highest possible standards of practice
- d) Being committed to promoting the welfare and well-being of all persons in society
- e) Making every reasonable effort to ascertain that our clinical environment will permit provision of care consistent with the values in the Code of Ethics
- f) Committing to continuous improvement and implementation of standards of massage practice
- g) Collaborating with members of the other health professions to meet the health needs of the public
- h) Continuing to develop ways to clarify massage therapists accountability to society.