



POSITION STATEMENT

TRADING / BARTERING MASSAGE THERAPY TREATMENTS

Position

Trading, or bartering, of Massage Therapy treatments is something that is quite common within the profession at large. Trading or bartering as a Massage Therapist can be a good idea from the aspect that you can 'trade' a massage for just about anything. Whether the trade / barter is being made with a colleague, peer or a vendor, Massage Therapists should think carefully about the risks involved before entering into an exchange of any kind. Bartering creates a dual relationship, combining the Therapeutic Relationship with another transaction. Risks are usually minimal if the exchange is limited to a one-for-one exchange. If the exchange is unsatisfactory, then the therapist has only lost one hour of time and energy. However, a longer-term exchange represents considerably higher risk to the individual therapist.

It is the position of the Massage Therapist Association of Alberta (MTAA) that any treatments that are 'traded' between members, colleagues, peers, patients or vendors are considered to be a barter arrangement and all applicable Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics requirements apply. Additionally, it is the position of the MTAA that all trades of this sort are to be considered as a barter, which is described as 'a cashless exchange of goods and services'¹. All MTAA members are expected to be aware of, and comply with, Canada Revenue Agency requirements in respect of bartering or trading. While many MTAA members regularly 'trade' treatments with one another for the purposes of self-care and self-maintenance, it is important to understand that this is still considered to be a barter – an exchange – of goods or services and is to be treated as such.

Guidelines

When entering into a bartering arrangement, ensure that all appropriate Standards of Practice are being followed, including, but not limited to:

1. Standard 1 - Ensuring the treatment area is prepared with freshly laundered linen, towels and a blanket as well as cleaning and disinfecting the table and any other equipment that may be used during the treatment.
2. Standard 3 - Washing your hands and any other skin surface that will come into contact with the patient.
3. Standard 4 - Interviewing the patient to obtain his/her treatment goals.
4. Standard 6 - Obtaining, updating and recording the patient's health history.
5. Standard 7 - Consent
6. Standard 8 - Determine the Client's Condition by Conducting Assessment/Re-Assessment.
7. Standard 9 - Treatment and Treatment Plans.
8. Standard 10 - Pre / Post Treatment Protocol.
9. Standard 11 - Draping.
10. Standard 13 - Establish and Update Clinical Records.

¹ Benjamin, Ben E. and Sohnen-Moe, Cherie. "The Ethics of Touch; 2nd Edition", Tucson: Sohnen-Moe Associates, Inc., 2014.

The Massage Therapist Association of Alberta leads the practice of its members in Alberta. Contact us for more information on this or other position statements.