



POSITION STATEMENT

CONDUCTING PUBLIC EDUCATION CLASSES

Position

Education of the public through the use of community education opportunities is recognized as a valuable mechanism to promote optimal public health. These classes are often conducted by health professionals on a voluntary basis as part of the individual professional's public service or for a nominal fee. Massage Therapists are often asked to lead or facilitate classes offered through fitness centres, public health departments, education institutions and community centres.

The MTAA does not believe that members of a public education class are patients of the Massage Therapist. This is because no health history is taken, no individual assessment or treatment is provided, no health record is maintained and no fee is collected for any treatment provided.

Guidelines

Massage Therapists who conduct public education classes need to consider the following:

- The difference between the education provided to individuals during a treatment and the education provided to the general public in a classroom setting;
- The type of education opportunity that they are offering; and
- The expectations of the participants regarding the information they have obtained.

Individual Versus Group Education

The information provided in a public education class should be general in nature. It may be related to the management of a particular condition i.e. stress or pregnancy, but should not pertain to directly to a specific individual's medical condition. Class members need to be advised of this prior to participation in the class and should be directed to their health care professional if they ask questions specifically relating to their condition.

The Type of Program Being Offered

Massage Therapists must be clear about the type of class they are conducting. The most common types of classes include:

- Educational seminars of a general nature focusing on such topics as wellness or stress management; and
- Instruction in basic Massage Therapy techniques offered to the general public, i.e., couples as an adjunct to pre-natal education or new mothers who wish to use Massage Therapy techniques on their babies.

Massage Therapists who offer any courses that provide instruction in specific Massage Therapy techniques should advise participants that these techniques are for use on family and/or friends only. The public should understand that the instruction they are receiving does not qualify them to call themselves a Massage Therapist or any other like title and or terminology nor use the information for commercial purposes.

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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.

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Massage Therapists should not offer a certificate of completion at the conclusion of the course as this may lead participants to believe that they are now qualified to practice Massage Therapy. The certificate could also be used to mislead the public.

Massage Therapists should have information on formal Massage Therapy training available in the event that participants show an interest in obtaining formal education.

Expectations of Participants

The Massage Therapist, in any written literature about the class and as part of the introduction to the session, should clearly identify:

- Their qualifications and relationship to the sponsoring agency; and
- The learning objectives for the program.

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