



# **Clinical Aromatherapy**

## **Course Syllabus**



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# **Aromatherapy - Course Syllabus**

Structure taken from IFPA course syllabus

## **Aims**

By the end of the course the student will have:

- Developed a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the principles of Aromatherapy from a historical and philosophical perspective.
- Have explored and developed an in depth understanding of the art and science of using aromatic materials safely, in a range of therapeutic treatments.
- Have identified and evaluated the necessary skills to assess individual needs and the implementation of appropriate treatment based on sound research-based evidence.
- Be able to recognise and critically appraise the importance of personal and professional development and the need for lifelong learning in a critical and systematic way.
- Explored and discussed the socio-economic and political factors from a national and local perspective.
- Developed the skills necessary for effective consultation and safe treatment with essential oils and related products
- Be able to utilise reflective practice and the use of personal and professional development within the boundaries of client management.
- Be able to identify the factors required to create a safe and appropriate working environment, taking into account the socio-economic and political influences, which may impact on professional practice.
- Developed an understanding of the ethics, limitations and business requirements of the practice of aromatherapy
- Developed an awareness of current research into aromatherapy and associated products used in its practice and evaluate its usefulness to practice

## Historical and Philosophical Perspectives

By the end of the course the student will be able to:

- Trace the development of aromatherapy from its roots in the ancient use of aromatics to its emergence as a 21st Century system of natural medicine.
- Explain the meaning of health and illness and the role of aromatherapy in modern health care.
- Describe the evolution of aromatherapy:
  - The traditional use of aromatics;
  - The development of distillation
  - The modern history of essential oil use to the present day
- Explain what is meant by modern natural medicine in relation to:
  - The holistic principles of Aromatherapy
  - Make comparisons between biochemical, energetic, structural and psychological forms of natural medicine
- Evaluate the importance of:
  - The relationship between orthodox and complementary medicine
  - Briefly summarise the CAM therapies in groups 1 & 2 of the House of Lords report
  - Current issues with regards to socio-economic and political factors, integrated healthcare and the creation of the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC)
  - Self v. statutory regulation and protection of title

## Science & Safety

By the end of the course the student will:

- Have developed an understanding of the science and issues around the production and composition of essential oils and related products, and apply this in safe practice
- Be able to define and discuss terms such as:
  - Aromatherapy
  - Essential oil
  - Essence
  - Aromatic extract
  - Resinoid
  - Chemotype
  - Fixed oil
  - Hydrolat
  - Absolute
  - Synergy
- Describe the taxonomic classification of aromatic plant
- Describe a typical plant cell, explaining the structure and related function of:
  - Nucleus
  - Central vacuole
  - Golgi bodies
  - Chloroplasts
  - Cell wall
  - Cell membrane
- Explain basic plant structure and functions including:
  - Tissue, Root, Stem
  - Leaf, Flower, Fruit, Seed
  - Glandular structures
  - Essential oil biogenesis
  - Pathways of biosynthesis
  - Roles of essential oils within the plant
  - The influence of external factors on the development and quality of essential oil within the plant
- Define and describe transpiration, photosynthesis, respiration, diffusion and osmosis

- Define the terms atom, element, molecule, organic and inorganic compounds
- Briefly describe the structure of an atom.
- Explain the following terms in relation to aromatherapy:
  - Ions,
  - Valency,
  - Single and double bonds
  - Co-valency
  - Hydrogen bonds
  - Saturates
  - Polyunsaturates
  - Polar and non-polar solvents
  - Isomers
- Define the terms oxidation and reduction and explain their relevance in relation to essential oil storage and safety
- Describe essential oil chemistry including the relevant principles of organic chemistry:
  - Major families of essential oil components (Monoterpenes, sesquiterpenes, diterpenes, alcohols, phenols, aldehydes, ketones, acids, esters, oxides, ethers)
  - And, where appropriate, relate the therapeutic action or possible hazard to the presence of a functional group.
- Understand and critically appraise safety issues relating to chemical composition
- Define and apply the terms “precaution” and “contraindication” in relation to the safe practice of aromatherapy
- Explain essential oil safety and its relevance to clinical practice, including:
  - Hazard and risk
  - Dermal irritation
  - Sensitisation
  - Essential oil metabolism & excretion cross sensitisation
  - Anaphylactic shock
  - Photosensitivity
  - Allergic contact dermatitis
  - Acute and chronic toxicity
  - Cross sensitisation
  - Safety for the therapist

## Essential Oil Production & Quality

By the end of the course the student will have:

- Developed a knowledge and understanding of how essential oils and related products are produced and identify the factors that influence their purity and quality.
- Be able to demonstrate the ability to apply this knowledge within safe practice
- Will be able to describe the following methods of extraction:
  - Hydrodistillation, water and steam distillation
  - Steam distillation
  - Expression
  - Solvent extraction
  - CO2 extraction
  - Enfleurage
- The ability to evaluate the criteria for essential oil identification:
  - Organoleptic analysis (colour, viscosity, aroma profile and taste)
  - Physical analysis
  - Adulteration
- The knowledge to describe methods of essential oil analysis and understand their relevance to the aromatherapist, including:
  - Gas Liquid Chromatography (GLC)
  - Specific Optical Rotation
  - Mass Spectroscopy (MS)
- The knowledge to explain the significance of the principles of safe handling and storage of essential oils
- The ability to demonstrate and apply knowledge of the issues surrounding safe bottling and labelling
- An understanding of how shelf life is affected by oxidation
- The skills to evaluate related botanical products in terms of their production, quality control, importance and therapeutic uses:
  - Hydrolats (aromatic waters)
  - Tisanes
  - Decoctions
  - Tinctures
  - Fixed and Herbal oils

- Have acquired knowledge of at least 10 of the following fixed oils in terms of their botanical name, production, quality control, importance and therapeutic uses:
  - Sweet almond
  - Apricot kernel
  - Avocado
  - Borage
  - Castor oil
  - Cocoa butter
  - Coconut
  - Evening primrose
  - Hazelnut
  - Jobba
  - Kukui
  - Macadamia nut
  - Neem
  - Olive
  - Peach kernel
  - Rose hip
  - Safflower
  - Sesame seed
  - Sunflower seed
  - Tamanu
  - Walnut
  - Wheatgerm
  
- The understanding of at least 4 of the following herbal oils in terms of their botanical name production, quality control, importance and therapeutic uses:
  - Arnica
  - Calendula
  - Wild carrot
  - Lime blossom
  - Comfrey
  - Devil's claw
  - Echinacea
  - Meadowsweet
  - Fenugreek
  - Gotu kola
  - Hypericum

## Methods of Application & Blending

The student will be able to

- Show an understanding of the various routes through which essential oils are absorbed by the body, together with the ways they are applied therapeutically.
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the mechanisms of actions of essential oils in relation to:
  - Inhalation (olfaction, respiratory absorption)
  - Theories of olfaction
  - Theories of how essential oils work at a cellular level
  - Skin absorption
  - Internal administration (for reference only)
  - Effects of aromatherapy massage
- Identify and critically appraise the ways in which essential oils might be used therapeutically:
  - Baths
  - Compresses
  - Massage
  - Inhalation
  - Douches
  - Poultices
  - Direct / neat application
  - Creams / ointments / lotions / gels
  - Clay applications
  - Hair, skin and mouth care products
- Demonstrate knowledge and application of the different approaches and theories of blending:
  - According to fragrance
  - Chemistry
  - Taxonomy
  - Aesthetic
  - Clinical and psychological approaches to blending
  - Principles of synergy and antagonism
- Critically assess and demonstrate the ability to blend essential oils with various media:
  - Carrier oils
  - Herbal oils
  - Creams
  - Lotions

Gels  
Floral waters  
Clay

- Examine and justify the theoretical principles and demonstrate the practical skills relating to the accurate diluting of essential oils according to the therapeutic requirement of the individual and the method of application.

## Individual Essential Oils

The student will be able to demonstrate:

- An in depth knowledge of the following 30 essential oils, resinoids and essences and their main chemotypes, including:
  - Botanical name
  - Synonyms
  - Botanical family
  - Geographical origin
  - Chemotypes
  - Habitat
  - Plant morphology
  - Extraction method
  - Aroma
  - Relevant chemical composition
  - Physical characteristics
  - Traditional & general uses
  - Therapeutic indications uses (researched and anecdotal)
  - Cautions and contraindications

Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*)

Bergamot (*Citrus bergamia*)

Black pepper (*Piper nigrum*)

Cardamom (*Elettaria cardamomum*)

Cedarwood (*Cedrus atlantica* & *C. deodara*)

Chamomiles:

Chamomile, German (*Matricaria recutita*)

Chamomile, Roman (*Chamaemelum nobile*)

Moroccan chamomile (*Ormenis mixta*)

Cinnamon Leaf (*Cinnamomum zeylanicum* (fol))

Citronella (*Cymbopogon nardus* & *C. winterianus*)

Clary sage (*Salvia sclarea*)

Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*)

Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus* spp)

Frankincense (*Boswellia carteri*)

Geranium (*Pelargonium graveolens*)

Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*)

Grapefruit (*Citrus x paradisi*)

Jasmine (*Jasminum officinalis*)

Juniper Berry (*Juniperus communis*)

Lavenders:

Lavender, Stoechas (*Lavandula stoechas*)

Lavender, Spike (*Lavandula latifolia*)

Lavender, True (*Lavandula angustifolia*)

Lavandin (*Lavandula x intermedia*)

Mandarin; Tangerine (*Citrus reticulata*)  
Marjoram, Sweet (*Origanum majorana*)  
Neroli (*Citrus aurantium* ssp *amara* flos)  
Orange, sweet (*Citrus sinensis*)  
Palmarosa (*Cymbopogon martini* var *motia*)  
Peppermint (*Mentha piperita*)  
Petitgrain (*Citrus aurantium* ssp *amara* fol.)  
Pine (*Pinus* spp)  
Ravensara (*Ravensara aromatica*)  
Rose Otto (*Rosa damascena*)  
Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis* chemotypes)  
Sage (*Salvia* spp)  
Tea Tree (*Melaleuca alternifolia*)  
Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris* chemotypes)

The student will also have chosen a further 10 oils from the following list and study these oils in the same manner as those above:

Aniseed (*Pimpinella anisum*)  
Angelica Root and Seed (*Angelica archangelica*)  
Benzoin (*Styrax benzoin*)  
Cajeput (*Melaleuca cajeputi*)  
Caraway (*Carum carvi*)  
Cistus (*Cistus ladaniferus*)  
Clove bud (*Syzygium aromaticum*)  
Coriander seed (*Coriandrum sativum*)  
Everlasting (*Helichrysum italicum*)  
Fennel, Sweet (*Foeniculum vulgare*)  
Ho leaf and wood (*Cinnamomum camphora* CT linalol)  
Hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis*) 43  
Laurel (*Laurus nobilis*)  
Lemon (*Citrus limon*)  
Lemongrass (*Cymbopogon citratus*)  
Lime (*Citrus limetta*)  
Melissa (*Melissa officinalis*)  
Myrrh (*Commiphora myrrha*)  
Myrtle (*Myrtus communis*)  
Niaouli (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*)  
Orange, bitter (*Citrus aurantium* ssp *amara*)  
Patchouli (*Pogostemon cablin*)  
Rosewood (*Aniba roseodora*)  
Sandalwood (*Santalum album*, *Santalum spicatum*, *Santalum austrocaledonicum*)  
Savory, Mountain (*Satureia montana*)  
Spikenard (*Nardostachys jatamansi*)  
Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*)

Vetiver (*Vetivera zizanoides*)  
Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)  
Ylang Ylang (*Cananga odorata* var *genuina*)

The student will be able to discuss environmental issues, which may influence the current use and / or availability of essential oils, for example rosewood and sandalwood.

## **Research Skills**

The student will:

- Have developed the appropriate skills to enable them to source and evaluate information pertinent to their work as a professional aromatherapist.
- Acquired the knowledge to source and critically evaluate a variety of research papers and information about essential oils.
- Be able to demonstrate an awareness of a variety of outcome measures to allow them to evaluate their practice
- Be able to demonstrate an understanding of the process of audit and its relevance to professional practice

## **Aromatherapy in Clinical Practice**

The student will:

- Have developed the knowledge and skills required for the safe and effective clinical practice of aromatherapy
- Be able to Prepare the treatment area in accordance with the guidelines set out in the IFPA code of conduct
- Be able to identify and evaluate the necessary skills to assess individual needs and the implementation of appropriate treatment, based wherever possible on sound research based evidence
- Have the skills to identify and justify key points in the compilation of a consultation sheet / record card
- Be able to complete a consultation sheet / record card in an accurate and legible manner
- Demonstrate and apply a knowledge of procedures required in order to perform a client consultation and assessment for treatment
- Be able to conduct an effective consultation to demonstrate the following:
  - Empathetic listening skills
  - Appropriate use of open and closed questions
  - Analysis of body language
  - Offer suggestions regarding diet and lifestyle
  - Session closing skills
  - Monitoring of on-going progress
- Have the knowledge to perform a range of diagnostic tests to include:
  - Postural and skin analysis
  - Fascia mobility
  - Identification of cellulite and oedema
- Be able to identify and justify clinical contraindications which require the avoidance of specific products or treatment methods
- Have the skills to demonstrate an effective approach to treatment:
  - Appropriate, detailed and researched essential oil selection
  - Safe, hygienic and accurate blending
  - Appropriate and safe treatment
- Be able to devise a treatment plan to meet individual client needs

- Give advice on aftercare and make recommendations for home care
- Identify and analyse potential situations & conditions which require client referral to medical and non-medically trained healthcare professionals
- Identify and evaluate the importance of recognising one's own limitations as a therapist
- Examine and critically appraise the application of aromatherapy for specific conditions as itemised in the IFPA Anatomy & Physiology Syllabus (at least 5 common conditions per body system)
- Explain the use of aromatherapy for special client groups: the use of essential oils and related products in special situations:
  - Skin care & associated conditions
  - Pregnancy
  - Baby and child care
  - Stress-related conditions
  - The elderly
  - Cancer care
  - Physical & learning difficulties
- Evaluate the use of essential oils and related products in clinical environments; persons who are debilitated or on intensive medication
- Explain the term "Psychological" aromatherapy and its application in a variety of settings:
  - The mental – emotional benefits of essential oils
  - Placebo effect and mind – body links

## **Practical Aromatherapy Skills**

The student will be able to:

- Apply a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of Aromatherapy in assessing the needs of the individual.
- Demonstrate the ability to blend oils safely and appropriately for clients' needs.
- Demonstrate and justify the use of a variety of therapeutic skills within a chosen practice setting.
- Create a safe and appropriate working environment, taking into account the socioeconomic and political influences, which may impact on professional practice.
- Demonstrate and utilise knowledge of an evidence base to support decisions for chosen Aromatherapy treatment plans, including suitable after care advice and home treatments.

## Professional Practice Management

The student will have a working knowledge of the ethical management of a professional aromatherapy practice. They will be able to:

- Assess the implications for the practitioner of the IFPA codes of conduct and ethics with regards to:
  - Maintenance of up-to-date and secure client records
  - Confidentiality
  - Time management
  - Health and safety in the clinic / home setting
  - Boundaries of the therapeutic relationship
  - Liaison with other health care professionals
  - Working within an orthodox healthcare setting
- Demonstrate an understanding of the roles of the following bodies:
  - The UK Medicine and Healthcare Regulation Authority (MHRA)
  - The UK Aromatherapy Trade Council (ATC)
  - The Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC)
  - The Aromatherapy Council
- Explain the requirements for the establishment of:
  - A sole trader
  - A partnership
  - A limited company
- Identify and evaluate the issues for an aromatherapist in connection with the following:
  - Curriculum vitae
  - Scope of practice
  - Insurance: professional indemnity / public / product liability
  - Advertising and marketing
  - Financial management and accountability:
    - Accounts
    - Taxation
    - Data protection
    - NI contributions
    - Pensions
  - Development of practice
- Explain the implications of legal requirements for good practice:
  - Health, Hygiene and Safety at Work Act
  - COSHH
  - RIDDOR

## **Professional Self-Development**

The student will develop an understanding of and be able to understand:

- The key elements of continuing professional development and research.
- Critically appraise the value of personal self-development
- Demonstrate an understanding of the current CPD requirements of the IFPA
- Recognise and critically appraise the importance of personal and professional development and the need for lifelong learning in a critical and systematic way
- Appreciate the necessity of keeping up to date with changes in the profession
- The advantages of participation in local support groups
- Appreciate the value of understanding research in terms of:
  - Introduction to research methodologies
  - Ethics of conducting research
  - Conducting literature searches
  - Accessing scientific data
  - Read and critically analyse research papers
- Identify strategies for maintaining practitioner health and well-being
- Develop an awareness of other complementary therapies, in particular those discussed in the House of Lords Report 2000