



Therapeutic Massage

Course Syllabus



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Therapeutic Massage - Course Syllabus

Structure taken from IFPA course syllabus

The student will complete 60 hours of in-class study and 50 hours of unsupervised documented massage practice, to be assessed in-house.

Aims:

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

- To explain the historical and philosophical foundations of therapeutic massage.
- To develop a range of skills in therapeutic massage and be able to respond to a client's expressed needs
- To demonstrate competence with a variety of strokes and identify their effects.
- To demonstrate the ability to combine strokes to meet the needs of the individual.
- To develop a knowledge and awareness of soft tissue characteristics as they relate to therapeutic massage, e.g. skin, superficial fascia, deep fascia, muscles, etc.
- To examine the concept of health, illness, a range of conditions and the factors(physical, mental and emotional), which may impact upon Massage as a therapeutic intervention.
- To identify the importance of creating a safe and appropriate working environment, taking into account the socio-economic and political influences, which may impact on professional practice
- To develop sensitivity, empathy and respect within the therapeutic relationship
- To develop an understanding of the ethical, legal and professional bases for the use of therapeutic massage
- To evaluate the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual effects of therapeutic massage, both theoretically and experimentally.

- To explore the use of touch as therapy, e.g. comparison of different forms of therapeutic bodywork
- To evaluate the use of touch, e.g. discussion and debate of touch across culture, race, age and gender
- To recognise opportunities for, and limitations to, practice.
- To demonstrate and utilise knowledge of an evidence base to support decisions for chosen Aromatherapy treatment plans.
- To explore and practice related techniques, e.g. relaxation techniques, earthing and centering techniques, self help massage techniques
- To utilise reflective practice and the use of personal and professional development within the boundaries of client management.

History and Theory of Massage

The student will be able to:

- Explain the evolution of massage from earliest documented times to present day
- Evaluate the various types of massage and their philosophy: Swedish, shiatsu, acupressure, manual lymph drainage, holistic, therapeutic
- Identify and describe the classical strokes used in massage and evaluate their effects:
 - effleurage
 - petrissage
 - frictions
 - tapotement
 - vibrations
- Explain the essentials of the following techniques:
 - neuromuscular technique
 - trigger points
 - soft tissue manipulation
 - passive stretching
 - joint mobilisation
 - muscle energy techniques
 - acupressure
 - therapeutic touch
- Evaluate the physiological effects of massage on:
 - muscular tissue
 - connective tissue
 - the circulatory system, including the lymphatic system
 - the nervous system
 - the integumentary system
 - the digestive system
 - the respiratory system
- Examine and critically appraise the application of massage for specific conditions as itemised in the IFPA Anatomy & Physiology Syllabus (at least 5 common conditions per body system)
- Identify from the list above, the conditions, both local and general, which would require caution when offering massage and state the reasons for caution, along with possible action, including conditions with which the practitioner is unfamiliar with or not confident to treat

- Identify situations which might necessitate referral to other practitioners and demonstrate an understanding of the process of referral, and the roles of other practitioners.
- Evaluate the psychological effects of massage:
the mental and emotional benefits of massage
the placebo effect and mind – body links
psychoneuroimmunology
- Explain the use and appropriate adaptation of massage for special client groups:
skin care & associated conditions
pregnancy
stress-related conditions
physical & learning difficulties
the elderly
cancer care

Clinical Practice – Client Management

The student will be able to:

- Explain the requirement for professionalism
- Explore the maintenance of professional boundaries
- Discuss the importance of personal hygiene, dress, footwear and jewellery appropriate to a professional therapist
- Assess the equipment (couches, linen, couch roll and other accessories) and environmental requirements (heating, lighting, ventilation) for the treatment room
- Identify and discuss issues relating to safety of client and therapist
- Identify and explain the possible reactions to treatment
- Assess the client's health status through verbal communication
- Assess the client's health status through physical observation:
 - irregular / bleeding warts, freckles
 - contagious diseases, where visible on the skin
 - lacerations
 - skin features (heat/cold, colour, texture, papules, bruising, etc)
 - nodules, tumours
 - elasticity and friction resistance
 - fibrotic changes
- Assess the client for direct / referred pain, hypersensitivity
- Explain when referrals should be made, why and to whom
- Identify and provide appropriate and timely aftercare and home care advice
- Understand the principles for adapting treatment techniques to suit a range of client groups and conditions including:
 - pregnant women
 - the elderly
 - the terminally ill
 - HIV and AIDS
 - those with disabilities; physical and learning
 - racial, religious and ethnic groups

Clinical Practice - Practical Treatment

The student will develop the knowledge and skills required for the safe and effective clinical practice of massage.

The student will be able to:

- Prepare the treatment area in accordance with the guidelines set out in the IFPA code of conduct.
- Create a safe and appropriate working environment, taking into account the socio-economic and political influences, which may impact on professional practice.
- Identify and evaluate the necessary skills to assess individual needs and the
- implementation of appropriate treatment, based, wherever possible, on sound research-based evidence
- Compile a consultation sheet / record card and justify the items included.
- Obtain consent for treatment from the client or their representative and understand the importance of this.
- Complete a consultation sheet / record card in an accurate and legible manner
- 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
 - assessment of the client's needs and suitability in terms of massage.
- Perform a range of diagnostic tests to include:
 - postural and skin analysis
 - fascia mobility
 - identification of cellulite and oedema
- Identify and justify clinical contraindications which require the avoidance of specific areas of the body or treatment methods.

- Demonstrate an awareness and understanding that the client's personal, cultural or religious situation will have a bearing on the treatment performed.
- Devise a treatment plan to meet individual client needs
- Select and apply appropriate massage techniques specific to the client's 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

Application of Massage Skills

The student will be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- Correctly and appropriately perform a range of massage techniques including as a minimum:
 - effleurage
 - petrissage
 - frictions
 - tapotement
 - vibrations
- Apply the massage techniques appropriate to the client's needs and requests, taking into account their physical and emotional state, the area treated and possible imitations of culture, ethnicity, and religion.
- Use appropriate speed, rhythm and pressure in respect of the above.
- Use correct body positioning and posture and good use of body weight
- Practice using techniques to safeguard vulnerable joints
- Exert sensitivity in the making and breaking of contact
- Adapt techniques for working on clients in the prone, supine, side-lying and seated positions

Professional Practice Management

The student will have a working knowledge of the ethical management of a professional massage practice

The student will be able to:

- Assess the implications for the practitioner of the appropriate codes of conduct and ethics with regards to:
 - maintenance of up-to-date and secure client records
 - confidentiality and data protection
 - 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 Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC)
 - British Massage Therapy Council (BMTTC)
- Explain the requirements for the establishment of
 - a sole trader
 - a partnership
 - a limited company
- Identify and evaluate the issues for the massage therapist 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
 - RIDDOR

Local authority by-laws
Data Protection Act
Consumer Protection Act
Goods & Services Act
Trades Description Act
Inland Revenue
Public Performance License (in terms of playing music for clients)

Research Skills

The student will develop appropriate skills to enable them to source and evaluate information pertinent to their work as a professional massage therapist.

The student will be able to:

- Source and critically evaluate a variety of research papers and information about massage therapy.
- Demonstrate an awareness of a variety of outcome measures to allow them to evaluate their practice
- Provide evidence of use of at least one measure in their practical work
- Demonstrate an understanding of the process of audit and its relevance to professional practice

Professional Development

The student will develop an understanding of the key elements of continuing professional development and research

The student will be able to:

- 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
- Demonstrate an understanding of 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 and critically appraise 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