



## Society for Oncology Massage

### Standards of Practice

Amended 6/2/2008

#### Background

Individuals diagnosed with cancer face a multitude of physical, emotional and spiritual challenges. These challenges often begin before diagnosis and continue through treatment, sometimes for the rest of life.

#### Intent

Massage therapy benefits cancer patients both physically and emotionally, often providing benefits not available from other therapies. The mission of the Society for Oncology Massage is providing information, guidelines, standards and resources to cancer patients, caregivers, massage therapists, medical professionals and the public.

Recognizing that education, modalities and philosophies vary, the Society for Oncology Massage has established these Standards of Practice to promote the safe, ethical and appropriate application of massage therapy for those diagnosed with cancer. These Standards are guidelines for conduct by members of the Society. By upholding these Standards members demonstrate their commitment to competent and professional care.

These Standards of Practice also provide medical practitioners and the general public with an understanding of the roles, responsibilities and principles that massage therapists adhere to as members of the Society for Oncology Massage.

These Standards of Practice apply to all clients diagnosed with cancer, at any time in their lives.

#### Standards of Practice

##### 1. Safety

a. Education. The practitioner shall complete a basic course of study that meets the minimum requirements of the Society for Oncology Massage, including:

i. The Disease. The general nature of cancer and its impact on the body, mind and spirit.

ii. Challenges of the Disease. The risk and challenges posed by the disease and its complications and the massage adjustments they make necessary.

iii. Treatments. The various treatments for cancer and their impact on the body, mind and spirit.

iv. Challenges of the Treatments. The risks and challenges posed by the various treatments and the massage adjustments they make necessary.

b. Scope of Work. The practitioner shall not provide work outside of their education, knowledge and experience.

d. Right of Refusal. The practitioner shall decline to use any massage technique that the practitioner judges may be detrimental to either client or practitioner.

e. Consultation. If the practitioner encounters an unfamiliar condition that cannot be adequately evaluated through research, the practitioner shall consult with a knowledgeable professional to determine the best course of action.

f. Medical Referral. The practitioner shall refer the client to a medical professional if the practitioner is concerned that the client has a condition requiring medical diagnosis or treatment.

g. Diagnosis. The practitioner shall not diagnose any medical condition.

h. Health History/Condition. In order to accurately ascertain the client's health and provide for the safest care, the practitioner is responsible for inquiring about the conditions that determine adaptations to massage.

i. Safe Environment. The practitioner shall provide a safe and clean environment for massage. Specific care will be given to accessibility, safety, sanitation and comfort. Equipment and supplies will be clean and sanitary. Oils, lotions and creams will be evaluated for potential reactions or complications.

j. Client Wishes. The practitioner shall respect the client's wishes to limit or stop the massage.

k. Client/Patient Notes. In order to adequately track progress and provide a more complete assessment of the client's ongoing condition, the practitioner shall keep a form of progress notes on the client.

## 2. Ethics

l. Commitment to Work. The practitioner shall be fully focused and engaged during the session, avoiding distractions that diminish the work or suggest that less than full attention is being paid.

m. Undue Influence. The practitioner shall not negatively influence the client by a suggestion or recommendation that is outside the practitioner's scope of practice. Negative influence includes redirecting the client's course of medical care, exploiting the client for personal gain or entering into a personal relationship.

n. Draping. The practitioner will utilize draping practices that do not expose areas of the body unnecessarily. The practitioner will also respect the client's desires for specific areas, if any, to remain clothed or draped.

o. Areas Massaged. Prior to the session, the practitioner shall discuss with the client the areas of the body to be massaged and shall proceed only after clear consent is received.

p. Consent to Massage Plan. Prior to the session, the practitioner shall discuss with the client the proposed massage modalities and methods to be used and shall proceed only after clear consent is received.

q. Boundaries. The practitioner shall avoid entering into any relationship outside of the practitioner/client relationship that may the impair the judgment of practitioner or client.

## 3. Confidentially

r. Protection of Confidentiality. The practitioner is responsible for knowing and following HIPPA mandates and state regulations regarding confidentiality.

s. Storage of Records. The practitioner shall store all records securely to maintain confidentiality.

t. Disposal of Records. The practitioner shall destroy unneeded records securely to maintain confidentiality.

## 4. Legality

u. Laws and Requirements. The practitioner shall comply with applicable local, state and federal laws, regulations and ordinances.

v. Discrimination. The practitioner shall not discriminate with respect to race, color, creed, sexual orientation, religious preference or other factor prohibited by law.

w. Accurate Records. Consistent with state and local law, the practitioner shall maintain accurate records reflecting the client's ongoing progress.

## 5. Professionalism

x. Appearance. The practitioner shall maintain a professional appearance when interacting with clients or medical professionals. Cleanliness, grooming, and attire shall be appropriate for massage and shall comply with the standards of the facility in which the practitioner is working.

y. Conduct. To cultivate mutual respect, the practitioner's conduct with clients and medical professionals shall be courteous and professional.

z. Professional Courtesy. The practitioner shall respect the qualifications and abilities of physicians and other medical professionals. With the client's prior approval, the practitioner shall share information with the client's care team to provide for the best interest of the client.

